The Collaboration Playbook

A leader's guide to cross-sector collaboration

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WIG Cross-sector collaboration at work

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Foreword

Foreword from Fiona Ryland

I have had the privilege to work in a number of leadership roles across the higher education, public and private sectors during my career. Each organisation has faced unique challenges, barriers and opportunities alongside incredibly different visions for what success looks like.

There is a golden thread in all of these businesses; great and lasting impact is delivered by leaders that collaborate, leaders that span boundaries, leaders that draw out expertise, wisdom and experience by closing gaps, reducing any sense of corporate distance and inspiring others to care about their mission.

As Government Chief People Officer, I am fully aware that the expertise to address the big societal issues does not exist solely in Government, or any single sector alone. Leaders need to work better together to achieve outcomes that are not possible to achieve without calling on the resources, power and knowledge of other organisations. It is clear that to address challenges and seize the biggest opportunities for the UK, whether it be preparing our people or organisations to boost economic and productivity growth, reduce regional inequality, deliver world-class skills, or harness new technology, collaboration between the sectors will be vital. For this reason, we saw that partnership and by extension collaboration were major parts of the 2021 Declaration of Government Reform. It remains an ongoing theme.

Collaboration across boundaries and sectors is increasingly becoming the core of our expectations of what emerging great future leaders will excel at. That is not to say it is always easy to collaborate effectively; it takes time, effort and resilience. The more complex the challenge, the greater the need to deliver wide-spanning collaboration and gather in the incredible problem solving and learned experience it brings. When it is done right, in the right areas, the outcomes are plain to see: the UK's response during the pandemic showed us just this, time and again. There are also several good examples contained in this playbook.

The foundations of great collaboration are about the right leader deploying the right leadership, building great trust, understanding and using power dynamics and through all that learning and continuing to learn. Great collaboration across boundaries is after all a skill, a habit and a sense, and takes great investment for you with the aid of the foundations and lessons contained herein.

I hope leaders will use this Playbook to guide how we and our teams can collaborate to achieve the goals that no single sector can deliver on their own. It is not easy, but the outcomes will be further reaching, longer lasting and more impactful than anything we can achieve on our own.

Fiona Ryland Government Chief People Officer

Foreword from Jane Toogood

In the coming decades, the UK will have to undergo a radical transformation. Whether it be decarbonising modern life, defining our position as a R&D superpower or creating a world leading skills pipeline, collaboration between the public, higher education and private sectors will be essential. The pace of change globally is accelerating with a combination of mandates, incentives , market and consumer evolution and progress in technologies; we simply cannot afford to learn and develop everything we need in silos and from scratch.

Over the last few years, I have seen the importance of collaboration at work first hand. Serving as the Government's Hydrogen Champion and the Co-Chair of the Hydrogen Delivery Council, the need to get collaboration right has never been clearer. It has required a sustained and ongoing effort to align goals, develop relationships and a clear focus on producing outcomes. Across industry too, the partnership and collaboration between the sectors and within supply chains is now more key than it has ever been, though this can prove challenging in practice. A culture of trust, collaborative leadership and honesty between partners is pivotal, along with a conviction that the result is worth the effort.

This Playbook realises the core principles around collaboration, which in itself is not easy to get right and requires real commitment from all stakeholders. As leaders, we need to challenge our thinking and lead by example to support the development of new collaborative skill sets and mindsets. In the current dynamic environment the playbook can help lift our learning speed and increase the chances that collaborations deliver clear economic and societal returns.

Jane Toogood Former Chief Executive of Johnson Matthey and Co-Chair for the Hydrogen Delivery Council

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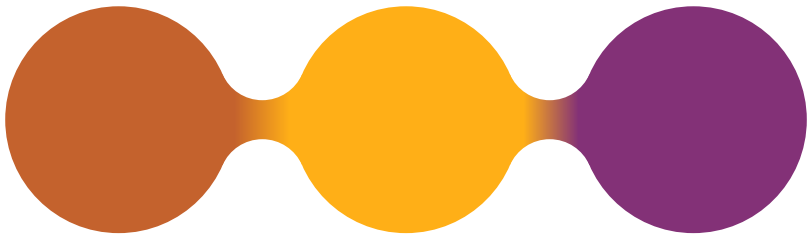


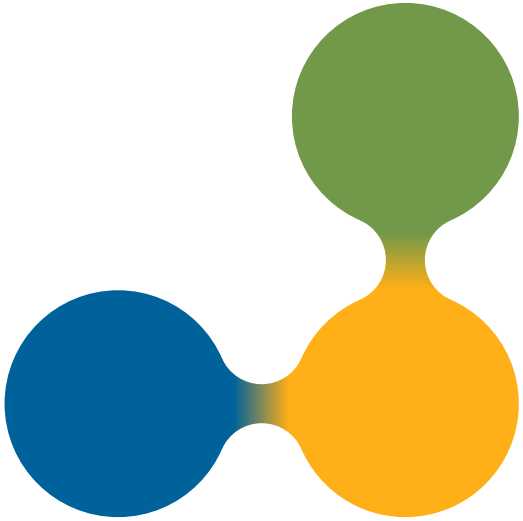
The imperative to collaborate

Society continues to face a plethora of grand challenges formed from intractable social and environmental problems, ranging from inequality to climate change, where collaboration is perhaps the only way forward.[1]

Collaborating with other organisations is hard. When those organisations are in different sectors– public, private, or non-profit – it is even harder. Why do it? Fundamentally, there is only one reason: **your organisation seeks to achieve a goal that it could not achieve without calling on the resources, power, and knowledge of organisations in another sector**. The complementary assets from another sector are too valuable to neglect.

The challenges facing our societies and economies today are so large and complex that, in many cases, cross-sector collaboration is not a choice, but an imperative. The aftermath of a deadly global pandemic. The causes and consequences of man-made climate change. Human mass migration, whether economic or humanitarian in cause. Geographic, ethnic, and social inequalities. Everyone has an interest in mitigating these crises and no single sector can offer solutions.

Yet collaboration remains elusive for many, often being put into the 'too hard' category. We hope this playbook can offer ideas on how to seize collaboration opportunities successfully and rise to the challenges.



What is the playbook?

Like many 'playbooks', this document outlines advice for achieving an objective – in this case, transformative cross-sector collaboration – by using tactics that suit different conditions. The playbook draws on academic literature, thought leadership and real-world examples of cross-sector collaborations that each aim to positively impact four complex, global, intractable problems: climate change; economic inequality; social marginalisation; and mental well-being.

We are conscious not to fall into the common trap of assuming that there is a single universal best way to conduct collaboration.[2] Our research surfaced a range of practices that can be applied by practitioners. Rather than focus on the technicalities of contracts, logistics etc., which organisations may already have in hand, we focus on the less tangible aspects: leadership, trust, culture, power, and learning – areas where collaborations are often at their weakest. The plays are not presented in a linear style but are grouped under five themes representing the 'positive chemistry' needed for cross-sector collaboration.[3]

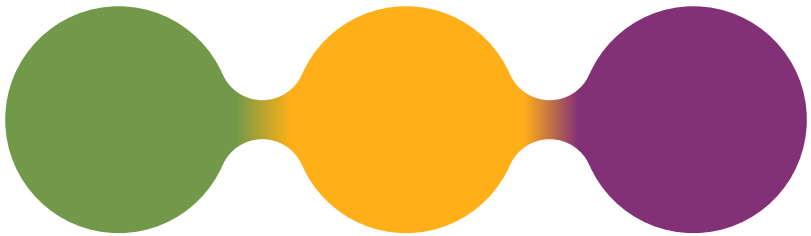
> "...we focus on the less tangible aspects: leadership, trust, culture, power, and learning – areas where collaborations are often at their weakest."

This playbook cannot ensure collaborative success. Collaborations occur in a variety of circumstances to achieve innumerable outcomes.[4] Therefore collaboration leaders should always treat the recommendations in guides such as this one in a reflexive manner, asking themselves and their partners questions based on the recommendations to establish the strength of their collective endeavour.

Who is this playbook for?

This guide is aimed at those in leadership positions Though senior leaders often have the most straightforward routes to influence collaboration, those in the middle of organisations interested in collaboration will also find much to draw on. For those not yet engaged in a collaboration, some of the themes discussed will help clarify whether and when doing so will be a good idea.

The focus of this playbook is on cross-sector collaborations dealing with complex challenges. The scale and unique role of government means special attention has been paid to collaborations with the government as a partner. Those most interested are likely to be senior and mid-level leaders in central and local government and those partners in businesses, charities and social enterprises who can and do work with the government.



Collaboration plays

The playbook contains six sections and four case studies that relate to different plays.

It opens with a foundational discussion on cross-sector collaboration, examining the 'why' of collaboration, the 'why not', and a discussion of how collaboration is defined.

The subsequent five sections relate to five fundamental aspects of collaboration: leadership, trust, culture, power, and learning.

Each of the five sections contains a set of recommendations and tools for planning and navigating collaborative endeavours.

These 18 'plays' are summarised in the list on the following page for leaders to review and identify areas of interest and concern at a glance.

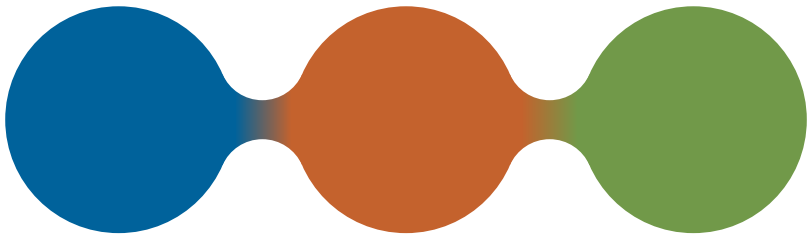
Leadership	**Collaborative vs siloed leadership**	Play: Shift perspectives, behaviours, and engagement
	Wise leadership	Play: Embody collaboration and let it ripple out
	Adaptive leadership	Play: Solve complex problems by accepting risk
	Choosing a leader	Play: Value social capital in leaders
	Aim analysis	Play: Lead a collaboration with clearly mapped aims
Trust	**Small wins**	Play: Build trust and ambition through small wins
	Informal communication	Play: Facilitate informal communication with technology
	Sharing information	Play: Take the plunge with comprehensive information sharing
Culture	**Accountability**	Play: Manage conflicting accountability ties in the collaboration
	Values	Play: Deal with clashing values
	Boundary spanning	Play: Mitigate culture shocks with cross-sector experience
Power	**Monitor power**	Play: Gauge the power distribution and monitor how it evolves
	Inclusivity	Play: Balance inclusivity with stability
	Governance and structure	Play: Structure your collaboration to suit the circumstances
	Comprehensive communication	Play: Do not prematurely close dialogue
Learning	**Outcomes focus**	Play: Be resilient and ready to adapt
	Summative performance	Play: Capture collective performance
	Formative evaluation	Play: Examine collaborative integration

Major case studies

Table 1: A summary of the collaboration case studies featured in this playbook

Case study name	Galvanising issue	Dates active	Scope	Actors	Sectors	Goals	Key insights
1: NHS Five Year Forward View for Mental Health	Mental well-being	2014-2016	NHS England formed a group with an interest in mental health provision (and outcomes) in England	NHS bodies in England (NHS England, DHSC etc), non-profit organisations, experts by experience	Public Civil society	Outline a national plan for mental health provision	Diverse perspectives and leadership
2: Kirklees Better Outcomes Partnership	Social marginali-sation	2019-2024	Local government, delivery partners and social investors providing a local housing support service	Kirklees Council, eight delivery partners (charities and housing associations) and investment fund managers (capital and project management on behalf of social investors)	Public Private Civil society	To innovatively provide accommodation, employment, stability and well-being outcomes for vulnerable adults	Boundary spanning and high social capital leadership
3: Scottish Net Zero Roadmap	Climate change	2021-2023	Self-organised group with a shared interest in net zero in Scotland	Innovate UK, two universities, businesses, membership bodies, Scottish and UK governments	Public Private	To enable the Scottish government/ UK government and industry stakeholders to project how to reach net zero	Decision-making and power-sharing

Case study name	Galvanising issue	Dates active	Scope	Actors	Sectors	Goals	Key insights
4: Wisbech Regeneration Partnership	Economic inequality	2013-2023	Local government, businesses and charities with an interest in Wisbech	District, County and Town Council, the regional Local Enterprise Partnership, a school, Anglian Water, an MP, The Mayoral Combined Authority	Public Private Civil society	To devise and enact a multi-stakeholder action plan to improve social outcomes in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire	Trust-building and adaptable outcomes



Why collaborate (and why not?)

When to collaborate

The most important decision in a collaboration is whether it should be attempted in the first place. Collaborating has costs and many efforts have failed to achieve their ambitions,[5] with the necessary resources better spent elsewhere. The competitive nature of the private sector results in business sometimes seeing collaboration as a last resort in response to existential threats or market opportunities. So when should organisations collaborate?

Perhaps the most common justification for collaboration, cited by practitioners and repeatedly in the literature, is that participants collaborate in order to achieve something that could not be achieved by one organisation alone.[6] This sentiment has been echoed by the CEO of the British Red Cross, Mike Adamson:

"In so much of the work of the Red Cross, we recognise that we are working on complex challenges which have no simple solutions and where no single organisation can achieve the outcomes it is seeking on its own. In these circumstances, we need to lean into collaborative leadership in an ambiguous space to form common cause with others, being willing to share resources and risk losing some profile to achieve a higher shared ambition that will make a difference to the nation and the people we serve."[7]

The incentive for cross-sector collaboration emerges when individuals or organisations from across sectors recognise that they are interdependent. Complex problems *demand* sustained collaboration from diverse organisations that operate in different fields. Climate change, economic inequality, social marginalisation, and declining mental well-being are all examples of so-called 'wicked problems' or 'grand challenges'. There are many others. Collaborations are well suited to tackling these sorts of problems because they are 'soft-wired' when compared to more hierarchical and structured organisations, which have incentives to maintain the status quo.[8]

The below table gives four drivers of collaboration, along with moderating points that can challenge the decision to join a collaboration.[9]

Table 2: The drivers of collaboration

Driver	Advantage	Moderator
Representation	Representing and respecting the full plurality of stakeholders impacted by an activity. Especially relevant for public policy. Collaboration can be a way of reducing power imbalances in society.	Access to collaboration itself may be restricted. Inclusion may be impractical, requires expertise and carries costs. Redefining the criteria for an expert may be necessary.
Knowledge generation	Learning and engaging with others to improve outcomes. With complex problems for which the solution or path to a solution is unknown by any one entity, knowledge generation can be essential.	Generating knowledge is always advantageous but consider costs. The cost-benefit balance will be better in circumstances where communication and learning are known problems.
Economies of scope	Allows a complex problem to be approached from its multiple angles. Collaboration between organisations operating in the same area but delivering different outputs may need each other to have a long-term or meaningful impact. It can be essential where professional or jurisdictional boundaries prevent a holistic solution.	Where there are complementaries between the activities of multiple organisations, economies of scope can be useful. However, sometimes it may cost more than a single organisation delivering all outputs alone.
Economies of scale	To increase efficiency through a reduction of cost by adding the contribution of another organisation to a joint endeavour.	Many activities can realise economies of scale, but it is more relevant for some activities than others.

Risks of collaboration

Collaborating entails an element of risk that cannot be avoided if seeking the advantages offered by collaboration.[10] Fundamentally, to reap the benefits of working together, collaborating partners should be prepared to accept some level of vulnerability and forgive some level of opportunistic behaviour. Some of the logic of accepting these risks is evidenced in game theory experiments, where the high scores needed to win were impossible when a player insisted on vigilantly guarding against being taken advantage of.

How game theory experiments show that you need to be vulnerable to win

In 1980, experts were invited to design computer programmes that could compete in a tournament based on the prisoner's dilemma. This is a hypothetical scenario whereby two criminals are arrested by the police. If they collaborate and keep their mouths shut, both will receive only a short prison sentence. But the police offer each of them a plea bargain: to be let off completely if they testify against their partner, who will then receive a long sentence based on the additional evidence given. So, betrayal holds greater possible individual reward than collaboration. But if both betray each other, both get long sentences.

If the game is played repeatedly, as in the 1980 experiment, betrayal is risky – even if you get lucky, your partner will seek revenge next time round. Programmes that tended to collaborate and were not the first to betray were known as nice. Nice programmes performed better than vigilant or exploitative ones in the first round.[11] Yet, in the second round of the tournament, nice programmes that could not be provoked into punishing betrayal by the other side were exploited.[12] The correct balance was found to be a programme that was nice but also able to react proportionately to betrayal to prevent exploitation. Where programmes sought to vigilantly protect themselves against even occasional exploitation, they scored too low to be in with a chance of winning.

The implications of the game theory experiment for collaboration practice are clear.[13] Taking advantage leads to collapse. The behaviour that optimised

results was a presumption of cooperation, a willingness to be forgiving, but a proportionate response to attempts at exploitation. If we want to achieve big results to tackle big societal challenges, it is not sufficient to protect ourselves from exploitation – we must be willing to take risks to realise the gains that can come from cooperating.

Defining collaboration

There are many ways that organisations across sectors can interact: buying, selling, regulating, lobbying, and funding. Collaboration is a distinct phenomenon that can fundamentally be defined as:

"...the linking or sharing of information, resources, activities, and capabilities by organisations in two or more sectors to achieve jointly an outcome that could not be achieved by organisations in one sector separately."[14]

Collaboration is identified with an ambitious goal where the route to achieving it is not fully known, or controllable, by any one single actor. The lack of simplicity means that full control by one organisation is not feasible and decision-making needs to be shared. The four major case studies examined in the playbook are excellent examples of such complex problems requiring adaptive solutions.

Collaboration sits on a spectrum of integration, with a very loose association at one end, and separate entities merged into a unified entity at the other.[15] Intuitively it may be easy to appreciate the difference between the extremes of the spectrum, but more difficult to discern the nuance between the middle ground. For example, what differentiates cooperation from collaboration? The Strategic Alliance Formation Assessment Rubric (SAFAR), discussed in the formative evaluation section, (page 61) offers some detailed distinctions.

Collaboration as defined in this playbook falls towards the higher end of the SAFAR spectrum (specifically categories three and four, partnering and merging). This means that collaborations:

- share resources to address common issues
- have autonomous partners who support something new to reach mutual goals
- have a moderate to high degree of interpersonal conflict

- develop shared strategies and distribute tasks
- have common communication systems/channels
- have visible shared leadership
- have decision-making processes and share decision-making powers to some degree.

By contrast, looser cooperation involves low-stake decisions, minimal interpersonal conflict, coincidental needs but no shared identity, and minimal structure with links being only advisory.

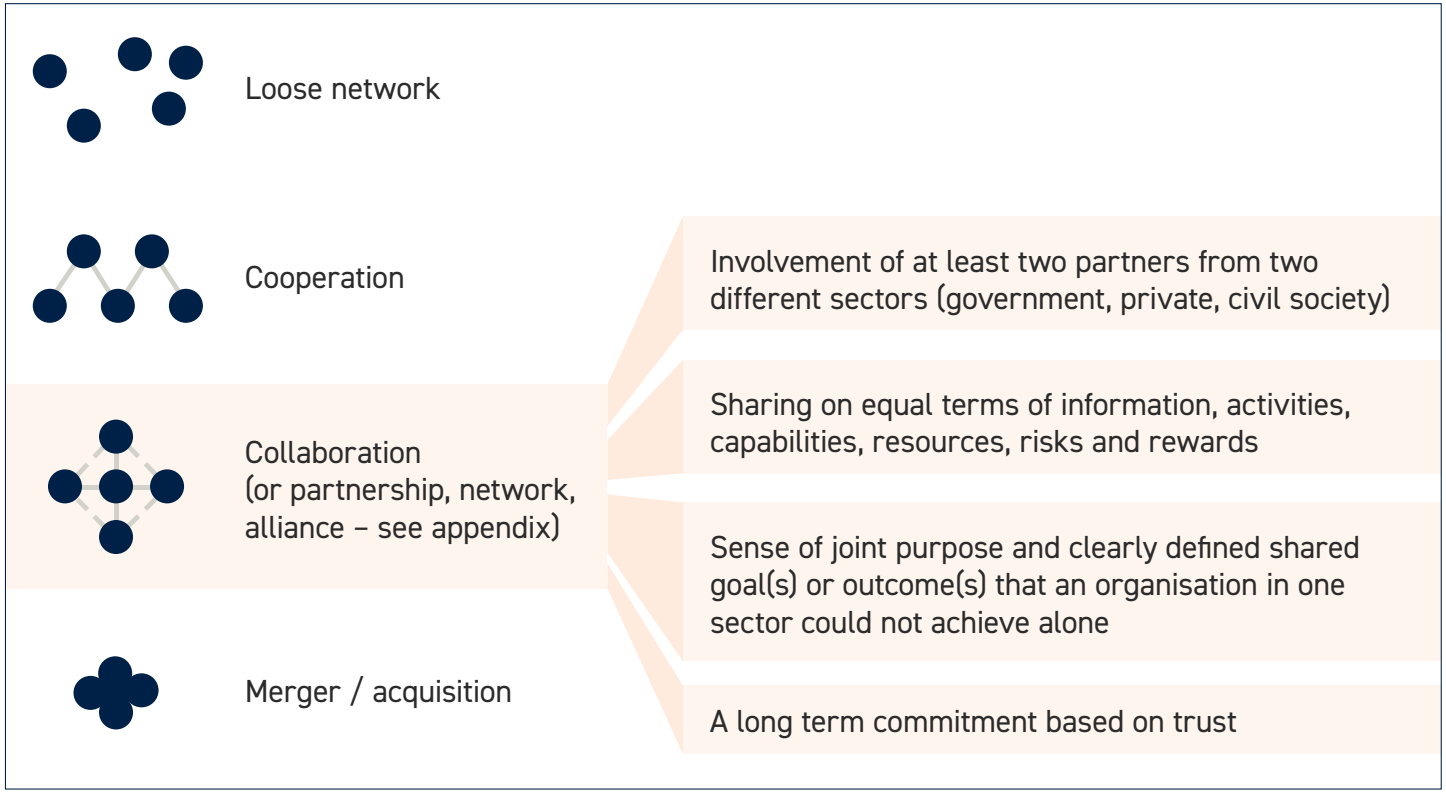


Figure 1: Depth of joint cross-sector working

Leadership

Leadership is crucial in collaborations, but it is different from single-organisation leadership. Leaders must oversee functions like building trust, maintaining the collaboration rules, enabling discussions, and exploring areas of mutual benefit.[16]

Collaborative leadership is in many ways a better fit with the information-rich environment that contemporary leaders operate in. Previous eras were characterised by information scarcity. Today, attempting to master all the information available can be overwhelming for a leader. Computational tools that use statistics and machine learning to analyse information have been utilised by governments and researchers around the world,[17] but more data does not necessarily equal a better understanding. To move beyond data and to achieve knowledge, a plurality of perspectives, opinions and expertise are needed.[18]

Collaborative leadership offers a way to marshal disparate sources of information and opinion to obtain a better understanding and implement better solutions. It facilitates bringing otherwise marginalised voices to the table as illustrated in the Five Year Forward View for Mental Health case study below, enabling the inclusivity that is an important variable for successful collaboration. But managing the diverse perspectives this brings can be difficult. 'Leadership is crucial for setting and maintaining clear ground rules, building trust, facilitating dialogue, and exploring mutual gains'.[19]

Collaborative vs siloed leadership · Play: Shift perspectives, behaviours, and engagement

Attempting to change outcomes in a multi-organisation system requires a different approach from that required to manage a single organisation. Seven shifts in perspective and behaviour that leaders can adopt to have an impact on a system have been proposed by the social consultancy Collaborate CIC:[20]

1. focusing on outcomes rather than organisational outputs
2. seeking to influence rather than rely on authority
3. losing ego and approaching change as a team sport
4. recognising that the answers to problems may not yet be certain and seeking to learn

5 mobilising new and previously unheard perspectives to reach solutions
6 taking the initiative to break out of the old ways of doing things
7 being personally invested in the change rather than acting as a detached technocrat.

Though the final shift may seem uncomfortable, it reflects the high likelihood of conflict in a genuine collaboration that may require emotionally engaged discussion. This will require openness of a leader and an ability to question their views, working with those they do not always agree with.

Wise leadership · Play: Embody collaboration and let it ripple out

Collaboration is as much a way of thinking as a form of organisation. To enact collaboration, both within a team and between organisations, requires creating the conditions for what scholars and practitioners have called 'Wisdom'.[21] Wisdom challenges the concept of the heroic leader shaping the organisation to their will. Wise collaborative leaders balance a sense of competition and cooperation to build a collegial organisation through inquiry, respectfulness, trust, and empathy. This enables them to cultivate wisdom through the emancipation of the wisdom of others.[22]

The concept of wisdom is based on integrity and an ethical approach. After all, it is possible, and undesirable, to collaborate towards an unethical goal.

A wise leader should embody the characteristics of collaboration to enable the effect to ripple out across the individual's organisation and the organisation's partners. Listening and asking questions of those around you in an environment of mutual respect will create relationships and wisdom that can replace an otherwise artificial sense of control.

Engaging in dialogue and being reflective requires space and time. Though this may seem luxurious in a situation where short-term outcomes and pace are prioritised, it is essential.[23] However, the imperative for a wise collaboration will depend upon the complexity of the problem. Well-understood tangible activities, like transport infrastructure, contrast with those involving more human factors, like social services or economics.[24]

Adaptive leadership · Play: Solve complex problems by accepting risk

Sometimes a supposedly simple solution fails to achieve its desired result because it represents an 'adaptive challenge', that requires a mindset shift:

"While technical problems may be very complex and critically important (like replacing a faulty heart valve during cardiac surgery) they have known solutions that can be implemented by current know-how. [...] Adaptive challenges can only be addressed through changes in people's priorities, beliefs, habits, and loyalties. Making progress requires going beyond any authoritative expertise to mobilize discovery, shedding certain entrenched ways, tolerating losses and generating the new capacity to thrive anew."[25]

Individuals, especially leaders, are given authority to execute tasks that are often well understood. To tackle adaptive challenges, a leader must be prepared to cross the boundary of their authority. Doing so creates the danger of punishment from authorisers.[26] The risk of moving beyond this line can be mitigated by building partners internally and externally who are persuaded of the need for radical new thinking. 'Adaptive leadership is not about meeting or exceeding your authorisers' expectations; it is about challenging some of those expectations, finding a way to disappoint people without pushing them completely over the edge'.[27]

An important role for a leader is recognising the difference between a technical and an adaptive problem, and creating the space to act accordingly. Treating complex 'adaptive' problems like they were simple 'technical' problems because it is safe may ultimately result in a poor long-term outcome. Realise that you as a leader may need to prepare for an uncomfortable working situation, and support your team in the challenges they may face working adaptively.

Collaborations between organisations are more flexible than a single organisation, which has stronger incentives to maintain the status quo.[28] The variety of organisational perspectives and resources makes collaboration a more effective tool to tackle adaptive challenges.

Choosing a leader · Play: Value social capital in leaders

High social capital is an essential feature of a leader intending to create and champion a collaboration. This means selecting a leader who has 'a rich set of social connections that provide access to information, resources, support, and so on'.[29] High social capital is frequently associated with

high interpersonal skills (though an individual may also command credibility because of their status, such as health professionals).[30] If organisations lack a leader with sufficient social capital, they should consider beginning with looser or less formal ways of working together.[31]

The value of social capital in collaborative efforts

Bill Gibson had worked at the Southwestern North Carolina Planning and Economic Development Commission for 30 years. He had worked his way up to become the Executive Director and initiated three cross-sector collaborations to tackle complex adaptive challenges: sewer provision to a rural community, broadband for rural schools and colleges, and a major environmental preservation effort.[32] The scholar Ricardo S. Morse, who studied these collaborations, identified the social capital of Bill Gibson as essential to getting the projects off the ground, as he was able to command the trust of an already established network.

However, Morse warns, "It would be a mistake to say that the leadership process in these three collaborative efforts begins and ends with Gibson and his relationships with a lot of people...we see that there are many leaders involved at different points in time."[33]

Aim analysis · Play: Lead a collaboration with clearly mapped aims

A particular problem faced by leaders in collaborative contexts can be 'the potential diversity of actors assembled, each with different interpretations and influences, creating the prospect of tension and conflict'.[34] There can be a paradox for collaborations, where the stronger a collaboration is through diversity, the less likely it is to have aligned goals.[35]

Cross-sector partnerships have inherent differences, but even when partners are from the same sector, tensions can develop due to differing aims. In collaborations with public-public partners, there can be tension in aims related to jurisdiction and the nuances of how benefit and cost are balanced. In private-private collaborations, there can be competitive pressure that leads to misaligned goal consensus.[36]

A method to manage misalignment, which has been used by some cross-sector collaborations for over 20 years, is to consider aims over the six dimensions shown in Table 3. Once aims have been determined and analysed, the leadership can manage their implications with common ground and differences identified. For example, is an individual seeking unnecessary activity for personal aggrandisement? The more trust there is in the collaboration, the less resource intensive the aim analysis will be, and speculation on hidden aims or pseudo aims is reduced.

To make progress it is important to have sympathy for the aims of the other parties, and to consider whether any differences are irreconcilable. Importantly, severely misaligned aims will offer a gateway for a decision not to progress with the collaboration.

Table 3: Six dimensions of aims in a collaboration[37]

Aim dimension	Description	Alternatives		
Level	Whose aim is it?	*Inter-organisational aims* exist at the level of the collaboration	*Organisational aims* belong to a particular organisation within the collaboration	*Individual aims* originate from an individual working within the collaboration, which may be tangential to it
Origin	Did the aim come from a member of the collaboration or from an external stakeholder, such as the government or a funder?	*Internal aims* originate from among the collaboration partners	*External aims* originate from beyond the collaboration's members (which might include parts of a large organisation that are not engaged in the collaboration)	
Authenticity	Is the aim genuine or not?	*Genuine aims* are true reflections of stakeholders' interest	*Pseudo-aims* exist to satisfy a stakeholder(s) of the collaboration and so are masks for a real aim	

Aim dimension	Description	Alternatives		
Relevance	Which aims out of those that have been identified should or do relate to the collaborative agenda?	*Collaboration-dependent aims* can only be achieved by the collaboration		*Independent aims* belong in a different collaboration or can be achieved without the collaboration
Content	Is the aim an ultimate end goal, or is it about the process of achieving the end goal?	*Substance aims* relate to the ultimate end goals of a collaboration		*Process aims* relate to how a collaboration will go about achieving its ultimate aims
Overtness	Are aims open, or are they concealed, whether deliberately or inadvertently?	*Explicit aims* are stated in the open	*Unstated aims* may not be deliberately concealed, but they have not (yet) been discussed in an open forum	*Hidden aims* are deliberately concealed. Hidden agendas are endemic in collaborations[38]

Case Study 1: Five Year Forward View for Mental Health

Physical health is easy to perceive but, less visible and often stigmatised, mental health is complex and interrelated to a wide range of factors. Yet 13 million people, one in four of us, will have a diagnosable mental disorder in any given year.[39] Issues like inequalities, availability of treatment and the interplay of physical and mental conditions needed tackling. Determined to reach satisfactory mental health service provision, a range of stakeholders in the UK collaborated following the active empowerment of diverse partners by a government agency.

The Five Year Forward View for Mental Health (FYFV), was a landmark strategy from NHS England in 2015 that set out an innovative change of course for the health service, confronting challenges and offering solutions.[40] The FYFV for Mental Health was part of the larger Five Year Forward View which covered various aspects of health care. The development of the FYFV for Mental Health was collaboratively developed by England's Mental Health Taskforce, including representatives from NHS England together with Public Health England, Health Education England, the Care Quality Commission, the Department of Health and NHS Improvement alongside the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) and expert-by-experience participants of the FYFV.[41] As the Taskforce engagement report stated:

"...the evidence-base is clear that so much of what good mental health is about, individually and across society, depends on a wide range of socio-economic and environmental factors and it needs, therefore, concerted action from a very wide range of leaders across public life. While the NHS has a fundamental role, the NHS alone cannot transform mental health outcomes across England."[42]

The collaboration's engagement involved a wide canvassing of views and opinions with over 20,000 survey responses, 250 people with lived experience and carers who participated in intensive engagement events hosted by Mind and Rethink Mental Illness, 60 assisted written responses from individuals detained in secure mental health services and submissions from 26 organisations.[43] This information built a comprehensive understanding that was carried forwards into a collaborative policy design process with the NHS and responsible government entities.

The collaboration's work was called a vital contribution at a critical juncture.[44] Professor Adrian James, President of the Royal College of Psychiatry, has described the strategy as a 'major step forward' that has realised results through hard work and collaboration.[45] It successfully highlighted the challenges posed by past mental health provisions, including the consequential cost to the economy, and successfully secured an additional £1 billion of funding to deliver services to an extra one million people that needed them.[46]

Wise leadership

The FYFV collaboration was remarkable for bringing in non-government partners on an equal footing with the government to shape the strategy. This enabled a more complete understanding of the challenges and solutions in mental health care, which would not have been seen without the involvement of a broad spectrum of stakeholders in positions of mutual respect with the NHS and government.

An example of a challenge tackled by the collaboration is what has been called 'inequalities within inequalities', describing the combination of separate characteristics along both mental health grounds and racial/ethnic grounds that compounded inequality in the subset of an already disadvantaged group. The subtle nested inequalities identified would have been difficult to detect without the diversity of representatives involved and the different perspectives they brought to the data. The bringing in of representatives of a minority ethnic group affected by the policy being developed increased the diversity of participants at the table.

The FYFV was initiated by the then, Chief Executive of NHS England Sir Simon Stevens, and a critical move was appointing Dr Jacqui Dyer as the Vice-Chair of the Mental Health Taskforce. Jacqui was an independent health and social care

consultant and Director of Black Thrive Global, who also had lived experience. Diversity and inclusion in collaborations are widely acknowledged as being valuable to give voice to multiple perspectives and to develop more thoughtful decisions.[47]

Adaptive leadership

By relinquishing some level of control and sharing power with a range of partners, the government and arms-length entities in the English NHS minimised power inequalities and leveraged the strategic value of difference.[48] Since the FYFV proactively sought and promoted diverse participation of stakeholders, it required bold leaders who understood that addressing the problem meant appreciating it was not a simple technical issue to be handled by a hierarchical approach.[49]

The Chair of the Taskforce, Paul Farmer (then Chief Executive of charity Mind), and the Vice-Chair Jacqui Dyer took on personal risk by assuming joint ownership of the resultant strategy. The leadership shown by both the Chief Executive of NHS England and the civil society leaders is an example of visionary collaborative leadership.

Accountability

FYFV transformed the usual adversarial management method of advocacy, where stakeholders lobby the responsible government or public agency to act, into a collaborative endeavour. Those advocates were brought into the process and given ownership of the problem and solution.[50] A new form of accountability was created, bringing in experts by experience, which supplemented the existing accountability of NHS England. The combined accountability is valuable as democratic accountability alone has been observed to be complicated when dealing with areas such as race and class.[51]

By collaborating the NHS was able to benefit, meeting its duty to serve the population equally, and the civil society partners were able to shape strategy in a manner that helped their organisations achieve their aims. As a genuine collaboration, the process was not without conflict, yet it reached a better outcome than one that would have avoided conflict. Without the government stakeholders ceding some of their power in this process, the successful outcome would not have been achieved.

Trust

Trust has long been seen as a prerequisite for a successful collaboration.[52] However, some collaborations begin with a lack of trust and thus it must be built up.[53] Trust is difficult to manage though as it involves strong emotional, intuitive factors. Consultants have broken down trustworthiness into an equation with four elements: the sum of credibility, reliability and intimacy divided by self-orientation. In other words, if you show me you are credible, reliable, intimate (i.e. kind and friendly), and not selfish, I will trust you a lot. If you are dubious, unreliable, distant, and self-centred, I won't.[54]

In this model intimacy and self-orientation have a strong emotional impact but are hard to measure and change. Building intimacy is important and may take time. The plays below offer methods for collaborations to enhance the trust between partners.

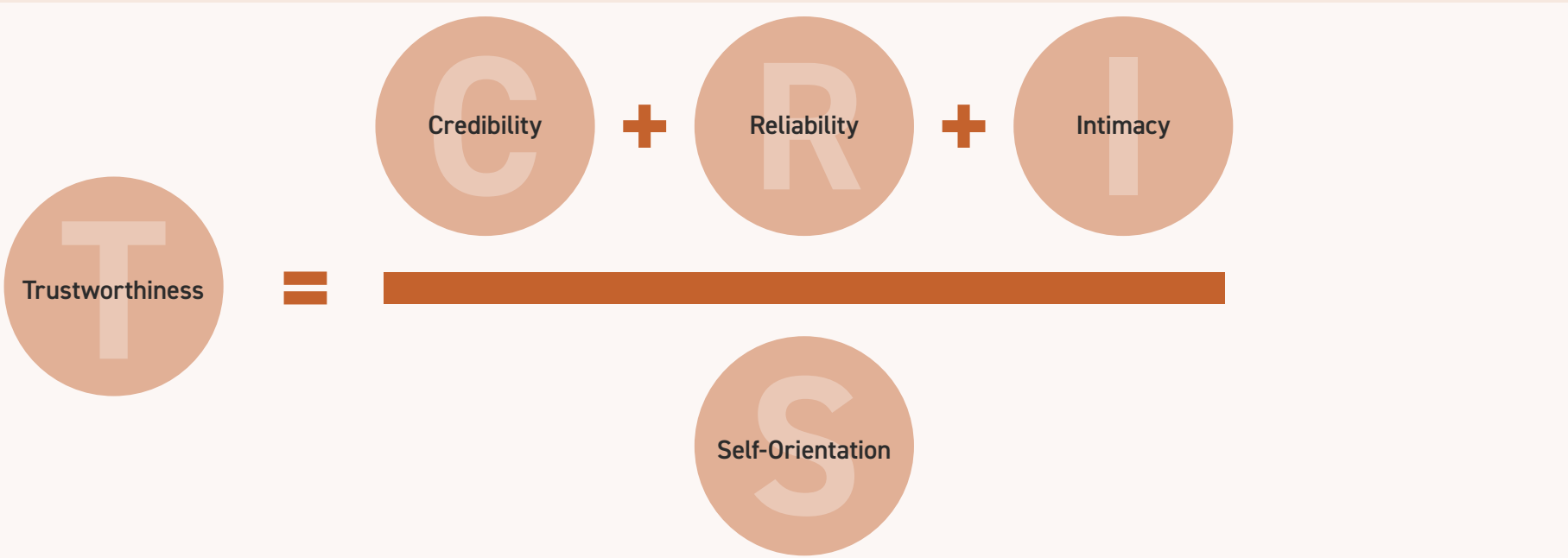


Figure 2: The trust equation[55]

A way of having rapid access to trust is by building it among collaborative partners in advance. Practitioners have described this as; 'making friends before you need them'. Business networks may create pseudo-reasons to work together on a project, with the real intention of bringing partners together so they have a good working relationship when a substantive opportunity for collaboration presents itself.[56] Although such preparation may seem onerous, trust is essential even if the governance of a collaboration is formalised. Formal governance arrangements are not a substitute for the presence of trust between partners.[57]

Partners can build trust in a collaboration through a process of continued interaction, successfully reaching minor achievements and gradually increasing ambition. With this cyclical model of reinforcing trust-building (see Figure 3), the basis of trust determines the level of aims that can be pursued. If the collaboration stakeholders do not have a history of working together and/or trust is lacking, then this basis will be minimal, and the ambitions will be modest.

'Small wins',[58] as in the Wisbech case study (see page 54), is a process where trust is built as a by-product of the act of collaborating. The outputs of small wins can be derided as things like 'painting fences', but even achieving something basic and very minor is a starting point, it shows goodwill and realises a tangible output. If a very modest achievement is only the first step in a more ambitious effort, then it should not be derided, especially if the initial level of trust is low.

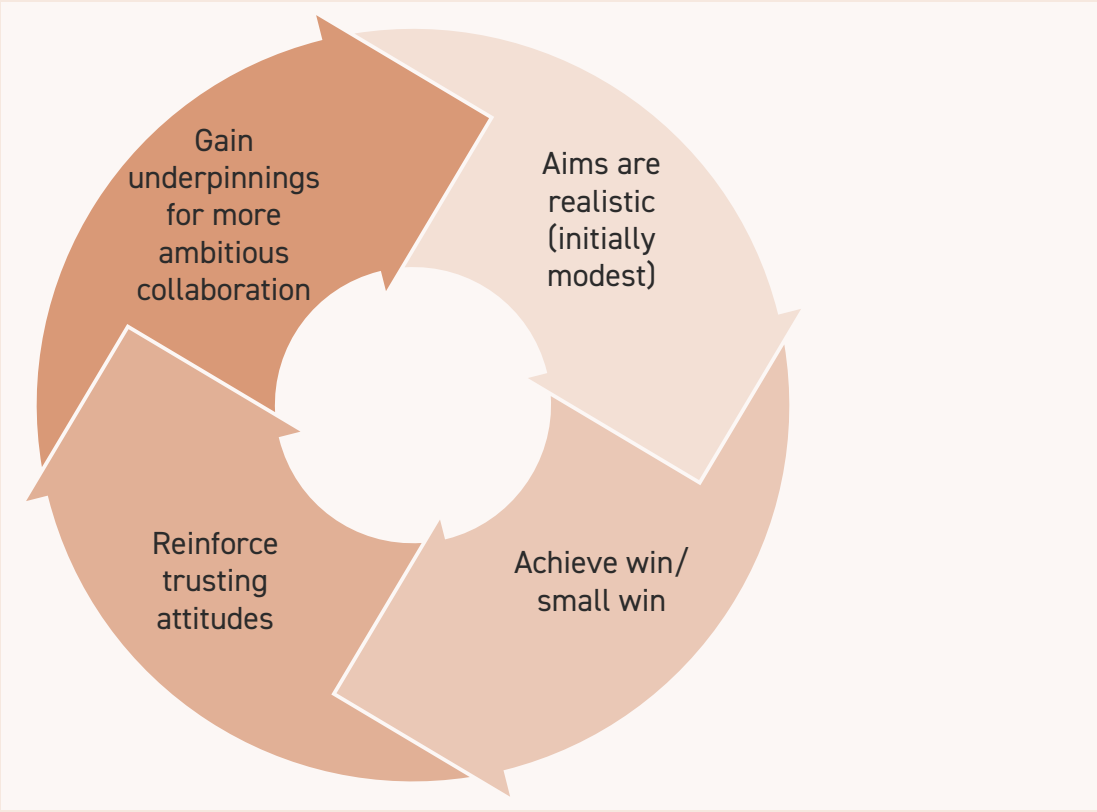


Figure 3: Small wins process[59]

Small wins in the early stages allow partners to limit their resource commitment, reducing their risk until they have more confidence in the collaborative endeavour. However, in some cases, the need to achieve major social change rapidly may not allow for a gradual approach through the cycles.[60] The following two methods of building trust can be implemented more rapidly than the small wins cycle.

Informal communication · Play: Facilitate informal communication with technology

Recent technology can facilitate collaboration between partners, building trust by enabling remote collegial behaviour. Over previous decades, collaborations have neglected the use of developing technology.[61] Public service and public policy collaborations often experience technology as a barrier, and it has even been suggested that the underutilisation of technology in collaboration may be partly due to a focus on social performance rather than on effectiveness.[62]

A 2005 study of medical technology and how it impacted trust in collaborative work, points to an opportunity for improvement.[63] The mid-2000s era Grid-enabled e-Health system was innovative, allowing the sharing of patients' medical files between collaborating personnel in different offices. However, it had the disadvantage of trust reduction at a distance since collaborating partners could not communicate in the informal ways that build trust. In the words of the study:

"Of course, in theory, a reader could call another and ask the question, but in practice, the transformation of a very informal, non-threatening and ad hoc type of interaction into the specific reason for a telephone call may risk adding too much weight to it, and even if it does happen, how in such a situation are actions like pointing and selecting areas for attention accomplished?"[64]

The barriers of technology in the mid-2000s illustrate the opportunity that we have with the functionality of collaboration software today. Utilising the chat functions of software in multimedia communications is highlighted by Professor Sir Geoff Mulgan in his recommendations for a wiser society.[65] Modern communications technology can be utilised to replace co-located informal discussions. In some instances, email has been used for formal communications, those where a visible 'audit trail' is desirable for recording communication, and an online software chat function has been used for communication that was described as equivalent to 'a tap on the shoulder' or 'a knock on the office door'.

Interorganisational collegial working could be introduced rapidly. In 2014, a study for the IBM Centre for the Business of Government on interorganisational networks predicted that

collaborations will 'evolve as a result of the impact of new technologies, social media, and changes in the nature of work and the workplace'.[66] The developments in working during the COVID-19 pandemic indicates how quickly things can evolve, with implications for collaborations. Increasing use of internet-based communications during the pandemic underscores the need to be intentional about different interactions and to build new norms and expectations around communication.[67]

Experience of collaborations shows that introducing interorganisational communications platforms requires careful thought. Policies and procedures are needed for the use of informal communications within and between organisations. Collaborations that set up a shared digital space should be aware of the need to maintain effective management of informal communications. In nurturing trust through informal communications, transparency and accountability must be maintained. The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) dispute in 2016-17 involving the UK Cabinet Office and its use of the Slack collaboration tool is informative, since online chat messages were deemed be covered by the Act. An audit of thousands of messages was needed.[68]

Although virtually all organisations internally utilise both formal forms of communication, such as email and meetings, and less formal forms, such as a chat software,[69] investing in new norms can harness the available technology to build greater trust in a collaboration.

Sharing information · Play: Take the plunge with comprehensive information sharing

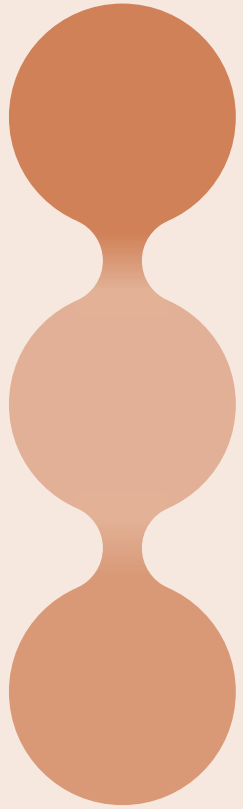
Information sharing is what brings separate organisations together into a functioning network. It can include mechanisms such as meetings, newsletters, and online data sharing platforms.[70] As is discussed in the Learning section of this playbook (page 57), information sharing is essential in order to have an outcomes focus and coordinate the contributions of multiple partners to achieve collective impact.[71] The sharing of information may limit the influence of an organisation in a collaboration if it exposes limitations of their contribution, but it has benefits to the collaboration as a whole.[72]

Information sharing builds trust.[73] By committing to share information, partners show that they are genuine about collaborating, whereas being guarded and protective about an organisation's information can create distrust. Sharing information helps build shared motivation because participants engage collectively in defining a problem and discovering how it could be solved collectively.[74] Therefore, the formative act of sharing information to start addressing the problem has an immediate outcome of developing trust between the collaborating partners.

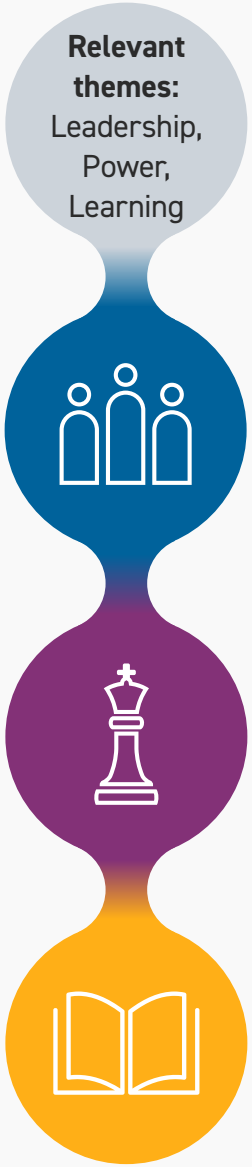
How information sharing cut homelessness in San Francisco[75]

The Intersector Project in the USA identified a case study of when information sharing magnified effectiveness. In 2003, San Francisco's Mayor Gavin Newsom identified that homelessness was not being addressed adequately by two departments within the city tasked to address it, despite these departments having a combined budget of $1.5 billion. Information sharing emerged as a key lever for change.[76] To tackle this, a joint coordination team was created, including banks, the chamber of commerce, housing developers, universities and health providers, as well as third sector organisations such as the San Francisco Food Bank, faith-based organisations, veterans organisations and Planned Parenthood. Known as Project Homeless Connect (PHC), government data was shared with the staff of the PHC to enable the cross-sector collaboration to serve 70,000 people in the first 10 years.

By trusting the collaboration partners enough to share information, the effort to fight homelessness in San Francisco went from two separate departments under-performing despite a huge budget, to become a model of delivering services that was adopted by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness and delivered in cities around the USA and abroad. Homelessness is a classic complex problem and other examples have shown why the sharing of information is important to solve such challenges.[77]



Case Study 2: Kirklees Better Outcomes Partnership



Kirklees, in the North of England, is traditionally believed to be the burial place of Robin Hood. Today, like any part of the country, it is a place where parts of the adult population face a range of complex disadvantages such as homelessness, substance misuse, mental ill health, or a history of offending. Kirklees Council set up a support service for these people in 2003 thanks to a grant from the government of the time, but this grant was cut during austerity in the 2010s and the budget fell considerably. By 2019, nine service providers – mostly charities – were providing the support service under 15 separate contracts to the council.

This arrangement was not working. The council had no idea who was receiving support from whom or had done so in the past. Service providers ended up competing with each other to work with people in order to meet their contractual obligation to achieve high service utilisation. Faced with such a confusing offer, service users disengaged, they didn't get the help they needed, and their lives did not get back on track.

In 2019, the Kirklees Better Outcomes Partnership (KBOP) was launched, with the express intent of improving collaboration, both between providers and with the council. A new entity was created between the council and providers to co-ordinate the delivery of the service. This entity ensures referrals to the service are managed centrally, ensures data is shared on who is receiving what help and when, manages performance of the providers, and ensures ongoing dialogue between all partners to learn and adapt.

Success factors at play in KBOP include an outcomes focus (page 33), an inclusive governance structure (page 34), and boundary spanning leadership with high social capital (page 34).

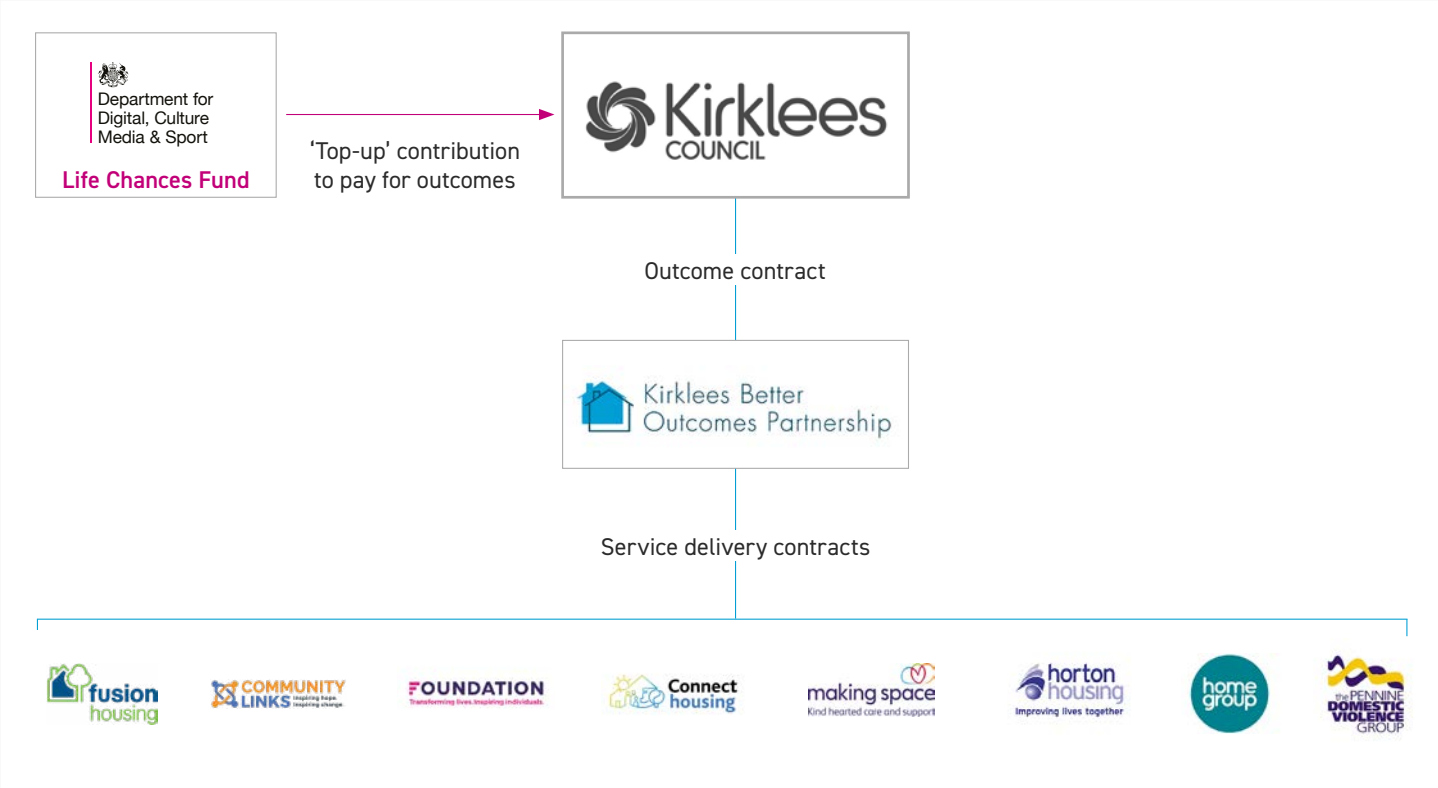


Figure 4: The governance of the Kirklees Better Outcomes Partnership Social Impact Bonds (SIB)

Outcomes focus

An outcomes focus is maintained by using an overarching outcomes framework, where desired outcomes for service users and associated metrics are pre-defined. The council verifies the evidence that an outcome has been achieved and pays for the service on that basis. Outcomes facilitate goal alignment and create a sense of collective accountability across the providers. They also enable flexibility in delivery, meaning providers are able to take a strengths-based, person-centred approach to service provision. This approach is articulated in a guiding set of values that all providers could relate to. All are aware that success depends on their individual contributions to the partnership success.

Inclusive governance

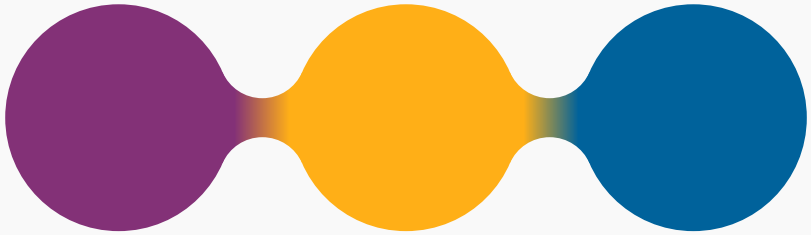
Stakeholders describe the KBOP decision-making process as collaborative. The inclusive operational governance structure is characterised by a variety of regular meeting forums with broad representation. This has created a sense of shared ownership and a venue for collaborative problem-solving. The structure also stimulated co-working that featured the sharing of resources, best practices and a network of experts across providers. The strategic decision-making for service delivery is made collectively by the KBOP board, who represent all the partners. The council contract managers on the board bring a deep knowledge of the local service context. Financial decisions are also collaborative but the formal financial decision-making is reserved for the social investment fund managers who manage the independent investment that enabled KBOP to be set up, and who have specific expertise in the financial modelling of services. A collaborative approach to decisions is maintained to draw on the partners' knowledge and perspectives, which has devolved some financial decision-making power to the frontline of the partnership.

Leadership

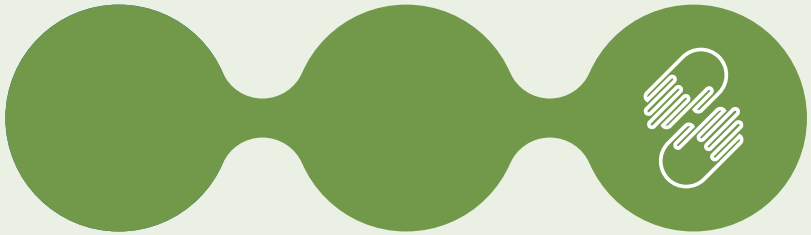
The KBOP Programme Director, Sarah Cooke, and the core KBOP operational team coordinate the collaboration and have responsibility for the operational management of the service providers. Although the providers remain independent organisations, as KBOP Programme Director, Sarah controls performance monitoring requirements, staffing models and resourcing. To balance this tension and ensure the continuous commitment of the providers, Sarah actively fosters a collaborative leadership approach. She utilises diverse knowledge, such as enabling frontline staff to use their judgement to fund tailored support activities and items, and she supports service managers to make a business case to the KBOP board for funding of expanded services or new staff roles.

"We tried to make sure that we created a shared vision in terms of what we were doing, why we were doing it and how we were doing it after identifying that there was a real disparity across different teams in their understanding of outcomes contracts and their impact." - Sarah Cooke, KBOP Programme Director

The social capital of the KBOP Programme Director was significant, with interpersonal skills and a range of contacts cultivated through working in the policy area. Sarah has 22 years of professional experience working in both the VSCE and public sectors, and her boundary-spanning knowledge (page 41) was central to unlocking legitimacy from the partners. Likewise, being accessible and listening to providers' concerns supported trust-building between the collaboration partners.



Culture



Cross-sector collaborations can both benefit from and be hampered by culturally diverse partners. Different sectors have been understood to represent different 'institutional logics': market logic, of competition and efficiency; bureaucratic logic, of regulation and rules; and democratic logic, of majority control and citizen participation. Logics can compete because 'actions, processes, norms, and structures that are seen as legitimate from the vantage point of one institutional logic may be seen as less legitimate or even illegitimate from the perspective of another logic'.[78] The consequences of this are the potential for cultural clashes. But cultural differences can be harnessed positively if understood and managed.

Accountability · Play: Manage conflicting accountability ties in the collaboration

Accountability can be defined as the relationship between an actor and a forum, in which the actor has an obligation to explain and justify their conduct before a forum that makes a judgement, with the actor potentially facing consequences for their performance.[79] In a collaboration, accountability can impact performance. Two aspects should be considered: the existing accountability type of the different organisations within the collaboration, and the accountability of the collaboration as a whole.

An appreciation of the accountability types of partners offers insight into the pressures and priorities that can dictate an organisation's behaviour. The public, private and social sectors can be mapped against eight different accountability types, as shown in Table 4. Clearly, multiple accountability types operate in organisations at the same time. Still, each accountability type offers a simplified way to understand the strengths and weaknesses of partner organisations.

Table 4: Accountability framework[80]

Type	Accountable to	Levers	Benefits	Drawbacks
Democratic representation	Elected representatives	Law-making and regulating	Protects majority public interest	Distant from citizen preferences; 'democratic deficit'
Democratic participation	Citizens	Citizen assemblies, direct voting, deliberative forums	Responsive to citizen preferences	Labour intensive, not always representative
Legal	Courts	Enforcement of rules and contracts	Reliable, predictable	Rigid, costly to administer
Private	Shareholders	Hiring and firing bosses	Profit motive	Negative externalities e.g. pollution
Market	Consumers	Competition with peers	Efficiency	Not available to all
Bureaucratic	Managers	Procedures, targets and monitoring	Goal driven	Relies on deference to positional authority
Professional	Experts	Qualifications, licences, codes of practice	Prizes competence	Siloed thinking; hubris
Network	Peers	Trust, relationships and reputation	Flexibility and co-design	No minimum/ objective standard

For example, the private sector is influenced by regulation, obligations to lenders, the preferences of consumers, and shareholder influence. This all creates an environment of pressure from competitors which drives performance. Partly because of this pressure to perform, private sector leaders have a less rigid approach to process, resulting in managerial flexibility that offers a comparative advantage in areas such as change, responsiveness and innovation.[81] As a consequence, private sector leaders often have a level of flexibility, pace and authorisation that is not available to public sector leaders.

Another example is universities. Academic organisations fall under a 'professional' frame, with accountability ties between fellow academic professionals. The explicit standards of academic organisations are therefore codes of ethics and performance standards, with a focus on implicit norms of competence and expertise. Such accountability indicates that universities are likely to be ill-suited to taking initiative or being fast paced but will be invaluable as sources of evidence for a collaboration. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of collaborating partners will help to manage negative aspects of culture clashes, such as feelings of superiority.

The accountability of individual partners informs how a collaboration can hold its members to account in the pursuit of its objective. Collaborative accountability can involve the combination of different partners' competing accountability types.[82] Early information sharing can help identify how the organisation-level accountability processes can align with what is needed at the collaborative level.

If an accountability deficit is identified, action should be taken to mitigate it. Success may depend upon a collaboration's willingness to monitor, sanction and reward its members, since an unwillingness to do so will result in a loss of credibility.[83] However, too strong an approach can risk damaging the relationships between the collaborators in ways which might be hard to repair.[84] If stronger collective accountability means that partners do not want to contribute to the collaboration, then they can exit, or can be moved to the periphery under a core-periphery model (see page 48).

How accountability weakened the emergency response to Hurricane Katrina[85]

After Hurricane Katrina struck the US State of Louisiana in 2005, the role of private companies in providing the delivery of key emergency goods and services was central to the relief plan. However, market accountabilities did not incentivise the companies to ensure these resources could be provided when they were needed. The weak democratic accountability frame of the government

was not enough to compensate. Unlike in nearby Florida, the public sector lacked predetermined contractual arrangements with providers to ensure stocks of emergency goods. This gap might have been identified and covered had the accountability types of the partners in the collaborative response been considered in advance.[86]

Values · Play: Deal with clashing values

Different sectors, organisations within a single sector, or even individuals within a single organisation can have diverging values. The anthropologist Mary Douglas has proved very influential in understanding different value systems. She suggested cultures can be understood based on how much they value following rules, and how much they value social cohesion. Cultures that value neither are individualist – it's every person for themselves. Cultures that value both are hierarchical. Cultures that value social cohesion but not rules are seen as egalitarian, and those that value rules but not social cohesion as fatalistic.

Authors have attempted to map the sectors onto these types, as shown in Table 5. The private sector can be seen as individualist, emphasising competition over cohesion and seeking to avoid being rule-bound. The public sector can be seen as hierarchical, relying on social cohesion for its legitimacy, and using rules to govern behaviour. And the social sector can be seen as egalitarian, valuing social cohesion without relying on rules.[87] By building on such lenses, awareness of difference is positive. However, you should beware of the pitfalls of stereotyping, as building cultural awareness involves making generalisations that can lead to misrepresentation of the collaboration partner.[88]

Table 5: Cultural types and the sectors

Following rules	Social cohesion: LOW	Social cohesion: HIGH
LOW	**Individualist** (private sector) 'Market' approach stressing competition Susceptible to gaming and 'winner-takes-all'	**Egalitarian** (social sector) Mutually supportive, focus on negotiated consensus Susceptible to unresolved disagreement, lack of internal challenge, free-riders
HIGH	**Fatalist** Low-trust, rule-based approach Susceptible to passivity, demoralisation	**Hierarchical** (public sector) Socially cohesive approach based on rigid rules Susceptible to inflexible, siloed systems and services

Although limited, comparative research suggest the public and private sectors hold broadly similar values, diverging on only a few issues.[89] Collaboration leaders should be prepared for when clashes occur. Below are six methods for managing value conflicts in cross-sector collaborations:[90]

1 **Avoidance:** Not addressing a value conflict
2 **Cycling:** Alternately emphasising different values at different points in time
3 **Hybridisation:** Sustaining distinct policies/ practices that align with competing values by creating structural separation or administrative "firewalls" between them, or splitting manageable issues off from intractable ones
4 **Incrementalism:** Softening or ameliorating value conflicts through a series of small adjustments to policy or practice, often enabled by compromise
5 **Integration:** Reframing an issue such that otherwise conflicting values are seen to support or complement one another
6 **Trade-offs:** Safeguarding one value (or combination of values) at the expense of another, sometimes reflecting bias toward one set of values over another.

Of the above six, incrementalism and integration may be the preferred methods as they are able to incorporate multiple values simultaneously. Hybridisation is good for identifying areas of possible agreement by splitting out the obstinate issues.

Value conflicts originating externally to the collaboration, in the institutional environment, will likely frame the objective of the collaboration. Value conflicts originating internally are more likely to be about the collaboration process, affecting aspects like who is included in the collaboration, who is a beneficiary, how decisions are made, and accountability to external stakeholders. As external value conflicts are likely to occur earlier and be harder to influence, they require the initial focus before changing focus to internal, process related, value conflicts.[91]

Boundary spanning · Play: Mitigate culture shocks with cross-sector experience

Boundary spanning is the ability to act as an honest broker in a situation with contested power, due to a personal understanding of both sides. Individuals who play this role are sometimes called 'boundary spanners' as they 'span the boundary' between sectors, just as a bridge may span a natural boundary like a river. These people are likely to have worked in multiple policy or sector environments and will bring this experience to bear, alongside their interpersonal skills, to manage relationships.[92] Such a role can bridge cultural differences in a collaboration where there can be disparate technical and professional knowledge.[93] The role can even be fulfilled by a strategically placed organisation, as in the Wisbech case study (page 54), where a business helped to bring unusual consensus to various levels of local government for an initiative.

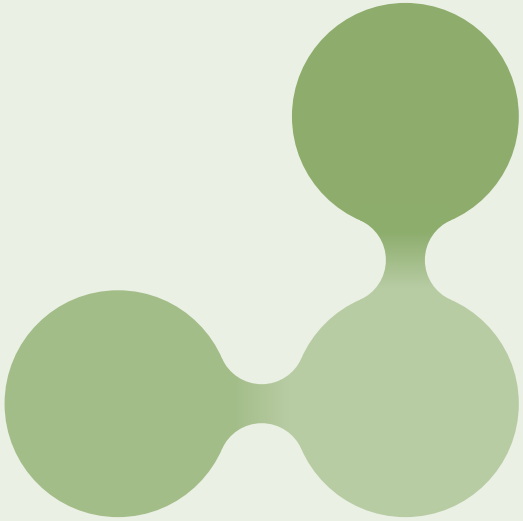
Problems of cultural incompatibility have an impact. In an empirical study of collaborations, Tom Entwistle and Rhys Andrews discovered that single-sector collaborations in the public sector performed positively, compared to negative performance or neutral performance in cross-sector collaborations.[94] This effect was considered to have been caused by the 'positive chemistry' of like-minded organisations working together. Collaborations may seek to control cultural incompatibility through limiting the variety of sectors actively engaged in the collaboration. However, this has an opportunity cost associated with the loss of diverse expertise and experience.[95] After all, a cross-sector collaboration should only be attempted when the goal cannot be achieved by one sector alone.

Boundary spanning capacity is an asset for leaders, where they need to manage the interdependency of the partners. Accumulated on-the-job experience is the main source of insight for boundary spanning, giving them the interdisciplinary knowledge and awareness of the partners' viewpoints, working practices and constraints. It has been suggested that being a 'jack of all trades' who does not possess the conventional professional background can

make the boundary spanner seem less threatening to those with deep professional status rooted in their particular area.[96]

Secondments have been seen as a valuable way of introducing boundary spanning and mitigating potential cultural misunderstandings. The mental health charity campaign, Time to Change, benefitted in achieving its high impact by incorporating secondees from the Department of Health and Social Care into its central management team. In another collaboration, this one between local government and civil society, the partners arranged job swaps, outreach visits and peer mentoring between senior staff. This helped them to overcome '...a general lack of understanding about the respective roles... often made worse by there being no common understanding or language; stereotypes, negative assumptions, and prejudice about "the other"; and a lack of trust between respective parties'.[97]

Boundary spanning is just as important at the leadership level as at lower levels. Selecting leaders with boundary spanning experience, as in the KBOP case study (page 32), should go alongside developing boundary spanning capacity at other levels.



Case Study 3: Scottish Net Zero Roadmap

At nearly 40% of global energy use, industrial emissions have risen by more than 70% since the year 2000.[98] Navigation to industrial net zero is particularly complex due to the interconnectedness of the system and the fast pace of change in the technology space. The industry-by-industry approach being taken in many places is not leading to sufficiently rapid change. Unlike traditional siloed attempts, the UK has successfully developed a world-leading cross-sector collaborative approach to this problem.

The UK government is targeting industry net zero with £170m of funding to establish the world's first net zero carbon industrial cluster by 2040.[99] Part of this ambitious mission involves supporting some of the UK's largest industrial areas to decarbonise at scale through the Industrial Decarbonisation Challenge, led by Innovate UK. The Challenge involves nine regionally-focused emissions reduction technology collaborations and cluster plans around six locations.

Scottish industrial CO_2 emissions alone stand at 11 million tonnes per year. Yet Scotland, with its Scottish Net Zero Roadmap collaboration (SNZR), is on course to reach net zero five years earlier than the rest of the UK.[100] SNZR represents the success of a collaborative, as opposed to siloed, approach and the willingness of partners to share power.

Collaborative vs siloed approach

Similar attempts to achieve net zero have been sector-based, involving the competitive award of funding to a single organisation, yet the current initiatives are collaborative in design. A sector-based initiative allows for more control and focus, but such efforts often withered on the vine as they were isolated from the wider system. It was perceived that the interdependencies between industry, infrastructure owners and the public sector/regulators made collaboration essential. Therefore, a place-based approach of clusters was adopted for the

Industrial Decarbonisation Challenge. To qualify, bidders were required to form collaborative groups containing multiple industry and organisational types.

As collaborations, the projects were not conceived as a series of tasks that required a contractual relationship focused on compliance. Steering groups were formed to oversee the collaborations, with Innovate UK involved. All partners took joint ownership of the project. A lead partner was identified but all collaboration partners jointly signed the grant acceptance letter. Further enhancing the collaborative nature of the different cluster projects, industry match funding was provided, and private sector contributors sat on the steering groups.

"The agreements are beyond commercial agreements, they are genuinely collaborative efforts with informal knowledge sharing that could not be achieved the way things have been done as business as usual" - Bryony Livesey, Challenge Director for Industrial Decarbonisation - Innovate UK

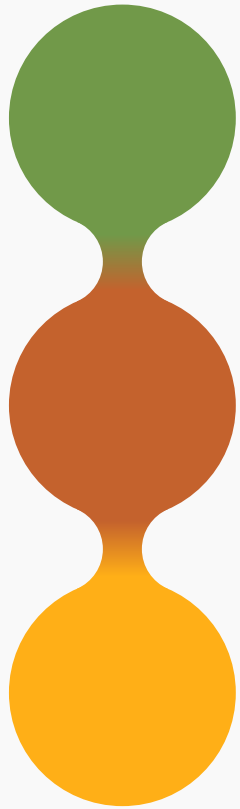
Shared power

SNZR is the two-year Cluster Plan collaboration focused on industry along Scotland's east coast, the source of 80% of the nation's industrial emissions. SNZR involved modelling, scenario planning, and technology deployment options to map out reaching net zero in the Scottish cluster by 2040. It received match funding from multiple companies, including Petroineos and Shell, and has 12 partners of various types working on delivering the roadmap. The University of Strathclyde, with its Centre for Energy Policy, works on SNZR as an academic partner alongside the University of Edinburgh. The lead organisation is the NECCUS Alliance, itself an alliance of 53 partners, with Optimat, a consultancy, providing the project management. The project needed flexibility, since complexity of outcome meant that were several unknowns at the proposal stage. The overall project plan, and any changes, are decided upon in a consensual way. The project management team present proposals, and all partners offer input into decisions. This model of collaboration is consistent with that of feedback loops for decisions found in collaboration models.[101]

Importantly for the functioning of the partnerships, power and trust were approached in a very collaborative manner. Official lead organisations in the clusters have been noted for their ability to defer leadership of elements of the project to other members of the collaboration. In the South Wales Industrial Cluster project, which is a £20m effort to deliver regional hydrogen, the project lead organisation has trusted another organisation to take responsibility for major parts of the work package. Similarly, in the SNZR project, the lead organisation NECCUS allows Optimat to act in a leadership role, managing the project and presenting reports to the steering group. This governance form, on the continuum discussed in governance and structure (page 50), balances out power disparities while ensuring access to the necessary competencies.[102]

The complexity of the task in attempting to achieve industrial net zero creates a level playing field for the work, where no single partner feels they have enough information to be able to accomplish the task alone or by directly managing other members on pre-defined tasks. In requiring collaborations to engage in the task, the Challenge Fund brought together participants with various skills and experiences that fostered innovation and learning.[103]

The cluster model of collaboration for achieving net zero is a place-based initiative, benefiting from proximity, that has proven to be an effective antecedent condition for emergent collaborations.[104] In the UK, the potential for geographically focused hydrogen and carbon capture and storage influenced the cluster approach, possibly to the detriment of wider electrification infrastructure.[105] However, the UK's system-wide, place-based, collaborative approach to achieving net zero has been held up to other countries as exemplary. Even the richest country in the world, the USA, has been advised to emulate the industrial net zero cluster model of the UK.[106]



Power

Power imbalances are a common problem in collaborative governance,[107] and in practice power is almost always distributed unevenly across a collaboration.[108] Power balances are also likely to change in collaborations over time.[109] Marked power disparities in collaborations can be problematic because they prevent full participation and thus undermine the realisation of collaborative benefits. Some partners in a collaboration may lack resources, organisation, or status compared to others, and therefore conscious actions may need to be taken by a collaboration's leaders to mitigate the imbalance.

Monitor power · Play: Gauge the power distribution and monitor how it evolves

True collaboration cannot occur when one partner dominates others. Those involved in a collaboration should monitor the state of power difference between partners. Some power disparity, such as a casting vote or a leading role may not be problematic, but the decision-making and information sharing processes of a collaboration should be designed in a way that a wise decision can be reached through a consideration of all perspectives.

Power differences and goal alignment for a collaboration can be mapped against the four fields and processes suggested by Gray et al., (see Figure 5).[110] If partners' goals are highly aligned and power differences minimal then the field (where a collaboration might take place) will be *uncontested.* If goals are aligned despite power differences it suggests low-power partners are subjugated in a *quiescent* field. If partners are not aligned and have very different levels of power, conflict is likely, leading to a *volatile* field. If partners have similar power but different goals the field will be *fragmented*.

A successful collaboration can turn a fragmented field into an uncontested one as consensus is reached and goals are aligned. Since collaboration can only occur when there is relatively balanced power, processes of consciousness raising and contention are needed. This will require powerful organisations to give away some of the agenda-setting and decision-making power to weaker groups. Over time an uncontested field can become a quiescent field when power starts to become unbalanced once again and the less powerful continue to perpetuate earlier-agreed norms even when they no longer serve their true interests, in a process of compliance.

There are four proposed 'early-warning' indicators that might suggest a collaboration's power dynamics have become unfavourable:[112]

1 Are the views of stakeholders/critics excluded from collaborative deliberations?
2 Are powerful stakeholders/partners exempted from compliance with any agreements reached?
3 Are the discussion forums of the collaboration restricting the participation of low-power stakeholders (especially if this reinforces inequalities)?
4 Are low-power stakeholders disproportionately bearing the costs of implementing whatever agreements are reached by the collaboration?

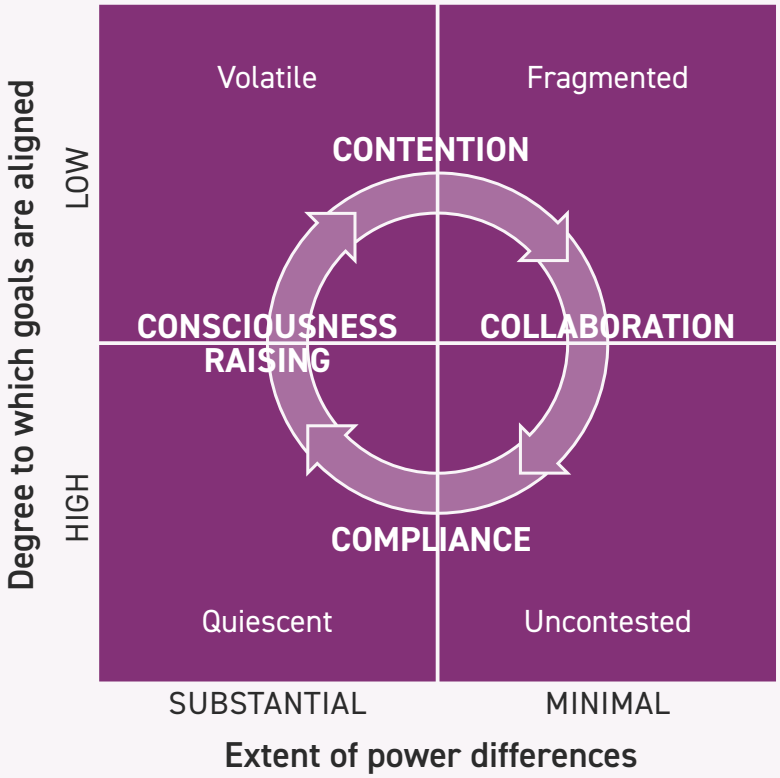


Figure 5: Fields and processes of partnerships[111]

Monitoring these indicators and acting on inappropriate conditions can help to maximise the benefit of the collaboration by preventing a volatile situation or one in which knowledge is being lost through an imposed silence.

Power itself is a resource which can be distributed across a collaboration to empower weaker participants.[113] Since a lack of inclusivity is a key reason for collaborative failure, it is not sufficient to simply tolerate inclusivity to be effective.[114] Collaborations should actively seek engagement of broad stakeholders. Being inclusive means consciously promoting collective learning and consensus-building.[115] Even the qualification to participate should be carefully considered, as requiring a certain level of expertise or capabilities for a collaborator to have a 'seat at the table' may limit the diversity of perspectives. Lived experience is an important way of obtaining diverse perspectives (See FYFV for Mental Health case study page 24) – individuals who derive their knowledge from overcoming the challenges of daily life rather than through professional qualifications or expertise are known as 'experts by experience'.

Although diversity of participation is a strength, so is stability. Having a wide network of partners, with varying perspectives, approaches and capabilities to call on is an asset and allows for flexibility. Yet including many participants may make it costly to maintain internal legitimacy or keep the collaboration stable.[116] To balance flexibility with stability, collaborations can be organised as a core and a periphery. The core constitutes partners who are engaged in the decision making, and who act on behalf of a periphery of members who pay a much lower cost for participation but are coordinated to achieve maximum flexibility.[117] The burden of management is carried by a core of partners willing to accept the costs of additional effort in return for greater influence over the collaboration. As the core has more power than the periphery, consideration should be paid to inclusivity and diversity in the core. Building an inclusive collaboration may involve thought of how to incentivise or empower weaker partners to be able to participate in a meaningful way.[118]

A core-periphery model for emergency response

The Voluntary & Community Sector Emergencies Partnership (VCSEP) has been seen as a valuable collaboration by the UK Government.[119] It is made up of over 250 organisations who would have a critical role to play in the event of a public emergency. A core collaboration of 21 cross-sector partners form a central steering group, contributing resources and shaping strategy. Four organisations within this core make up a programme board that acts as an executive decision-

making body for the VCSEP and oversees a secretariat of full-time staff. The core group build internal and external legitimacy for the VCSEP by communicating the value of the partnership to their home organisations (see Figure 6).

The wider partnership is formed by the 250 partners committing to the three common focus areas of shared insight, capability and trusted relationships. Trust and capability are built with all the participants through having access to informal communication channels and through participation in events, meetings, workshops and regional tabletop exercises. Clearly the flexibility of having hundreds of emergency response organisations in a network is valuable. However, the periphery partners are not required to incur high costs to participate.

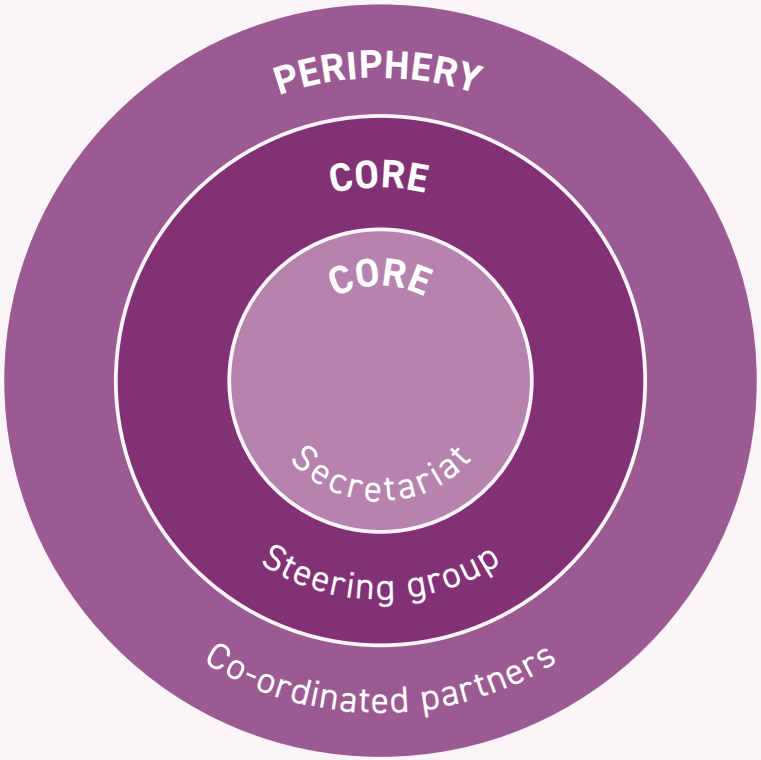


Figure 6: The VCSEP, a core-periphery collaboration example

Governance and structure provide ways to manage power distribution in a collaboration. The structure of a collaboration can bestow power, such as agenda setting power, upon some partners. This may be desirable if it balances the power with partners who have more money, information or social capital.

Choosing the correct governance arrangement also reduces coordination fatigue, reducing the negative consequences of time and focus needed to reach decisions.[120]

It is not always appropriate to design the governance of a collaboration up-front as this can imply control in an initiative that might need to be devoid of hierarchical power structures.[121] However, it should be clear by the context which collaborations are more sensitive to inappropriate control and which are not. All collaborations that come together inevitably make some decisions as to the rules of decision-making, information sharing, membership, etc.,[122] and it may be useful to be aware of different forms for different circumstances.

Keith Provan and Patrick Kenis have presented a spectrum of networks marked by three structure types:[123]

- **Self-governed** refers to collaborations where all participants equally share in the running of the collaboration, with little to no power distinction between partner organisations.
- **Lead organisation** refers to situations when a single organisation within the collaboration takes a leading role. Decisions may be jointly reached between partners but the lead organisation has convening and agenda setting power.
- **Network administrative organisation (NAO)** is when an individual is named, or a new organisation is established, to administer the operational aspects of the collaboration, enhancing legitimacy.

The three structure forms laid out below are on a continuum. Other forms are possible that fall between these modes.[124] The Scottish Net Zero Roadmap case study (see page 43) uses a governance form based on shared leadership that sits between two forms. It can thus achieve the more equal power balance, characteristic of a self-governed form, whilst benefiting from some specific co-ordination functions of a lead organisation form.

Collaborations can also develop from one form to another as conditions change. If, for instance, the number of participants increases, or the burden of central co-ordination increases, then a lead organisation collaboration may wish to change to be a NAO.[125] Moving in the other direction, back to being self-governing, may be more difficult as they are more stable and less flexible to change.

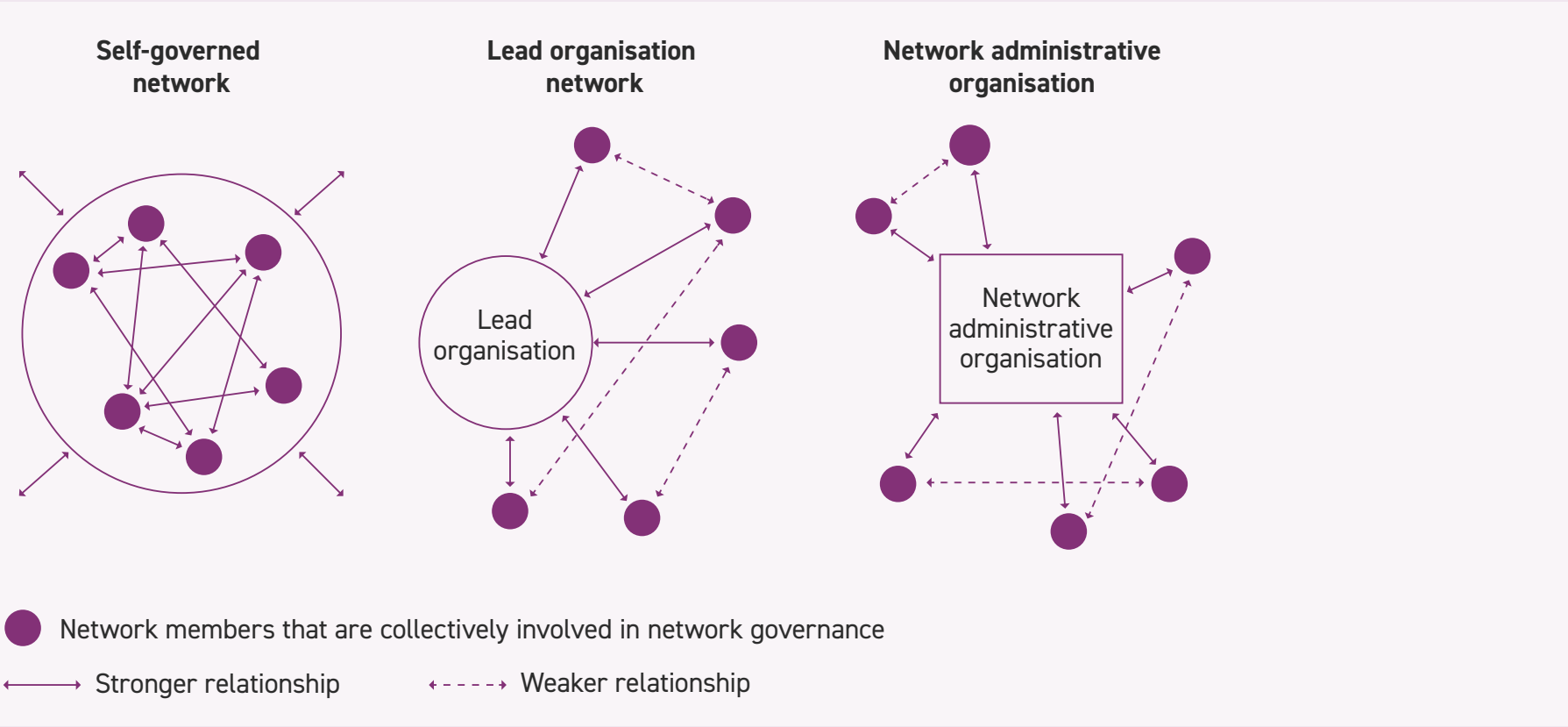


Figure 7: Three possible structures

Leaders can consider the suitability of each structure to match their collaboration's trust levels, number of participants, goal consensus or need for certain competencies (see Figure 8). Not all possible combinations of conditions can be accommodated in one form, so judgement is needed on which is more important.

Structure choice	Trust levels	Number of participants	Goal alignment	Need for collaboration-level competencies
Self-governed	High	Low	High	Low
Lead organisation	Low	Moderate	Low	Moderate
Network administrative organisation	Moderate	High	Moderate	High

Figure 8: Conditions and structure choice[126]

Comprehensive communication · Play: Do not prematurely close dialogue

Counterintuitive as it may feel, not enough talking is likely to be more of a problem than too much. Communication is a fundamental way that collaborators work together. It is through communication that partners frame a problem, create a vision of what can be achieved and discuss how they will jointly realise the desired outcome. Power dynamics can come into play with communication, possibly forging a false consensus and resulting in a mistaken illusion of compliance which sows the seeds for later conflict. Whether cynical, self-interested, or even well-meaning, a premature resolution should not be forced. The extensive discussions we call 'comprehensive communication' should be utilised to prevent it.

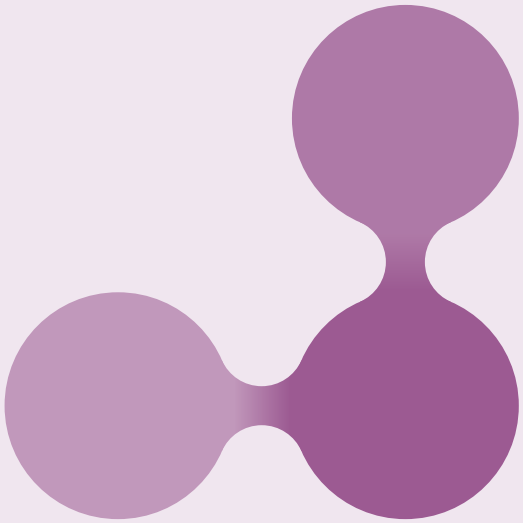
Comprehensive communication pushes against the desire to move on a conversation by the collaboration partners. Prematurely closing a conversation may seem to reduce conflict in the short term, but it stores up problems for later, making it a false economy. As with the myth of the heroic leader who knows best, forcing a consensus detracts from the valuable diverse perspectives

of collaboration. Communications theory offers the advice for practitioners that the widespread practice of suppressing disagreement to build false consensus can reduce the long-term effectiveness of a collaboration.[127] Obviously, leadership needs to be prudent with this tactic – endless conversation will reduce in value beyond a certain point.

"Although we recognise that endless conversation will eventually lead to diminishing returns - such as when closure is needed to make progress or when consensus already exists - communication theory suggests that the bigger danger in cross-sector partnerships is too little conversation."[128]

Conversations may go on a long time. One collaboration in northern California saw eight years of sometimes painful conversations, where 'Surfacing conflicting needs, interests, goals and activities is, paradoxically, essential to the long-term goal of a common vision and a shared agenda'.[129]

Collaborations formed in too short a time span can cause problems.[130] Moving the conversations on to get to the action seems to be the practical way forward. But with cross-sector collaborations, taking time to genuinely form relationships before moving on to performance pays off in the long run.[131]



Case Study 4: Wisbech Regeneration Partnership

In 2012, the Cambridgeshire town of Wisbech was grappling with worrying deprivation levels. The town had low community trust and 35% of the population lacked any qualifications.[132] Having lost its railway connections in the Beeching Axe in the sixties, the town was now characterised by geographic isolation and an itinerant working migrant population. The MP, Steve Barclay, understood the need to redevelop the town and so, together with the leadership of the District Council, County Council and Regional Combined Authority, supported by the University of Cambridge, convened a summit to explore the need for action in Wisbech.

The summit led to the formation of a voluntary cross-sector collaboration working to combat local disadvantage. Partners included Business in the Community (BITC – a national charity focused on responsible business), local charity The Ferry Project, and local school The Thomas Clarkson Academy. Also party to the collaboration was the business Anglian Water and their strategic suppliers, who were already part of a separate partnership known as the @One Alliance. Initially called the Wisbech Vision 2020 partnership, the collaborative effort to regenerate the town has adapted its approach into a wider strategic effort, known as Future Fens.

Collaboration manager

Anglian Water and the six other members of the @One Alliance brought meaningful resources to facilitate the collaboration effort. They funded the full-time secondment of an energetic and experienced senior manager, Russell Beal, from the Anglian Water team. This was a significant investment, especially at a time of austerity in the 2010s, and it meant that the partnership had someone with the knowledge and capabilities to act as a collaboration coordinator. BITC provided support and training for the role, such as how to assist with the creation of a shared vision and identifying opportunities for collaboration.

Performing similar functions to a NAO (page 50) for the collaboration, the business connector was embedded inside a team at the Fenland District Council (FDC), working alongside the FDC Corporate Director, Gary Garford. The presence of a private sector professional, working within local government, helped to mitigate cultural differences, bringing the benefit of 'boundary spanning' between the cross-sector partners (page 41). Presence of the private sector in the collaboration helped to bridge differences between the various levels of government over a complex bid for Garden Town Funding, meaning it ultimately secured the endorsement of all five levels of local government, including parish councils.

Small wins

Trust was also recognised as an essential element in the collaboration, which sought to serve a community that had become cynical towards well-meaning interventions.[133] The collaboration nurtured trust with a 'small wins' practice (page 28). The cycle commenced by utilising 180 employee volunteers drawn from across the @One Alliance to renovate a local community centre, which transformed service availability. Service providers operating out of the building increased from just four in 2013 to 76 by 2017, and visitor numbers increased from 2,000 to 48,000 over the same time period.[134] Private sector partners enabled the collaboration to reach a higher level of engagement with the community, through instruments like surveys, to inform decision-making and further build trust. Increasing trust led to increasing ambition and achievement for the collaboration over time. The trust building work of the collaboration has been appreciated by community leaders such as the Keith Smith, Director of the Ferry Project.

Outcomes focus

"...[The] fundamental issue for Wisbech was actually the infrastructure and the inward investment issues there linked to the social and geographical isolation." - Andy Brown, Sustainability Manager, Anglian Water

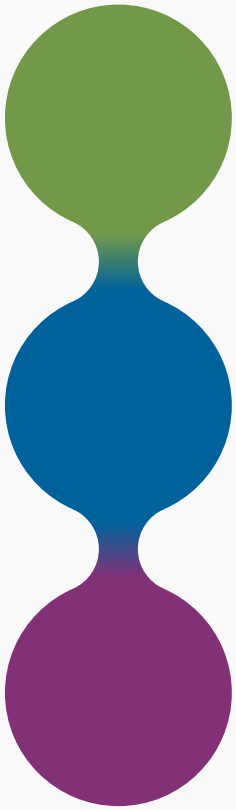
In 2015, the partnership drew up a 21-point action plan across five policy themes in which the local government was the lead partner in delivery, supported by the

private sector around skills and employment aims.[135] The collaboration achieved impact, but some outcome indicators were hard to move. Strategic thinking to address outcomes was required.

The collaboration mapped the interconnection of issues. Flood risk and water shortages were identified as root causes of low productivity and under-investment in the area, which in turn contributed to wider issues. The cross-sector collaboration was able to take a broad view and connect with stakeholders such as the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. They even connected with flood specialists in the Netherlands and the Dutch Government, securing flood prevention technology.[136]

The long-term perspective of businesses working on infrastructure enabled the Wisbech partnership to go beyond a medium-term focus to a 25-year outcome horizon. Adaptation was necessary to have the desired impact, so a taskforce was put together. In accordance with the recommendations to develop an evidence backbone, the adaptation was informed by analysis of data compiled by the FDC and from consultation provided by businesses.

To take forward this wider vision, the Future Fens initiative was formed as a multiagency collaboration between the Environment Agency, Anglian Water, Water Resources East, the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority, relevant local authorities and around 40 other groups from farming, environmental and business organisations.



Learning

Learning and evaluation are essential throughout all stages of collaboration. Collaborations are well-suited to tackling major challenges that also lend themselves to a focus on long-term outcomes. In striving for this ambition, two types of evaluation are recommended for collaborations: formative and summative.[137] Formative refers to the functioning of the collaboration. Summative refers to its performance in achieving the activities, outputs and outcomes that address the problem the collaboration was formed to solve.[138]

Outcomes focus • Play: Be resilient and ready to adapt

Evaluating impact should be a high priority for collaborations, as a failure to achieve collective impact, or to show returns for the investment, will undermine the partners' justification for continued involvement.[139] However, evaluation of collaborations has long been recognised as a challenging area due to the complexity of their operation and the often-ambitious objectives.[140] Collaborators need to be prepared for seeking to reach outcomes that take a long time to achieve.[141] This can be an uncomfortable and unnerving experience.

Outcomes are subject to external influences beyond the immediate control of even a well-resourced and powerful collaboration.[142] Having an outcomes focus is a little bit like a boat heading towards a speck of land on the horizon in a storm. The movement of the sea and the changing winds will require changes to the sail and the tacking of the boat, but the spot on the horizon stays the same. The 'crew' of the boat may also change during the journey, so it is important that the institution is clear about its approach in achieving outcomes. Tools such as logic models and theories of change are valuable for this.

The long term and cumulative impacts of a collaboration upon outcomes will be difficult to evaluate and measure.[143] Resilience and the ability to reframe the logic model for how to address the problem is essential, rather than falling back on an output focus.[144] Milestones for the long-term collaboration objectives, as used in project plans, will be useful points to identify issues, correct course or abandon a failing path.

Adaption is a strength of collaborations, building on the capacity to respond to environmental changes. A strategy that can be changed, both at the individual partner level and the level of the collaboration, is a great asset.[145] Changes in the environment of the problem being jointly tackled should be analysed and incorporated into the joint decision-making.[146] Judgement is needed to manage the change, and here drawing on experience in the collaboration is valuable.

"The very challenges associated with collaboration such as negotiating diversity and interdependence, the possibilities for creativity, and the inevitability of conflict stretch individuals and require them to make use of skills such as judgement that cannot be read off a performance chart but instead need to be honed through experience."[147]

Knowing that change is always possible for complex systems, even the evaluation method itself will likely need to be adjusted to accommodate collaboration adaptation.[148] 'Triple loop' thinking, recommended by Professor Geoff Mulgan, is a systematic approach to learning and adaptation at three different levels (see Figure 9).[149] Evaluation data is an input where on the first loop a conventional approach is taken to the challenge and solutions. The second loop considers additional factors, placing the problem and solutions in a wider context to consider interconnected challenges and associated solutions.

Leaders may be provoked into thinking about this more contextual frame when the initial frame does not provide satisfactory solutions or when new information about the interconnectedness of problems is revealed. Radical rethinking is the focus of the third loop, with entirely new ways of conceptualising the task and outcome being considered. Mulgan calls this third loop 'rethinking how we think'.[150] It will be the stage of reflection that will likely require the most creativity and diverse sources of information.

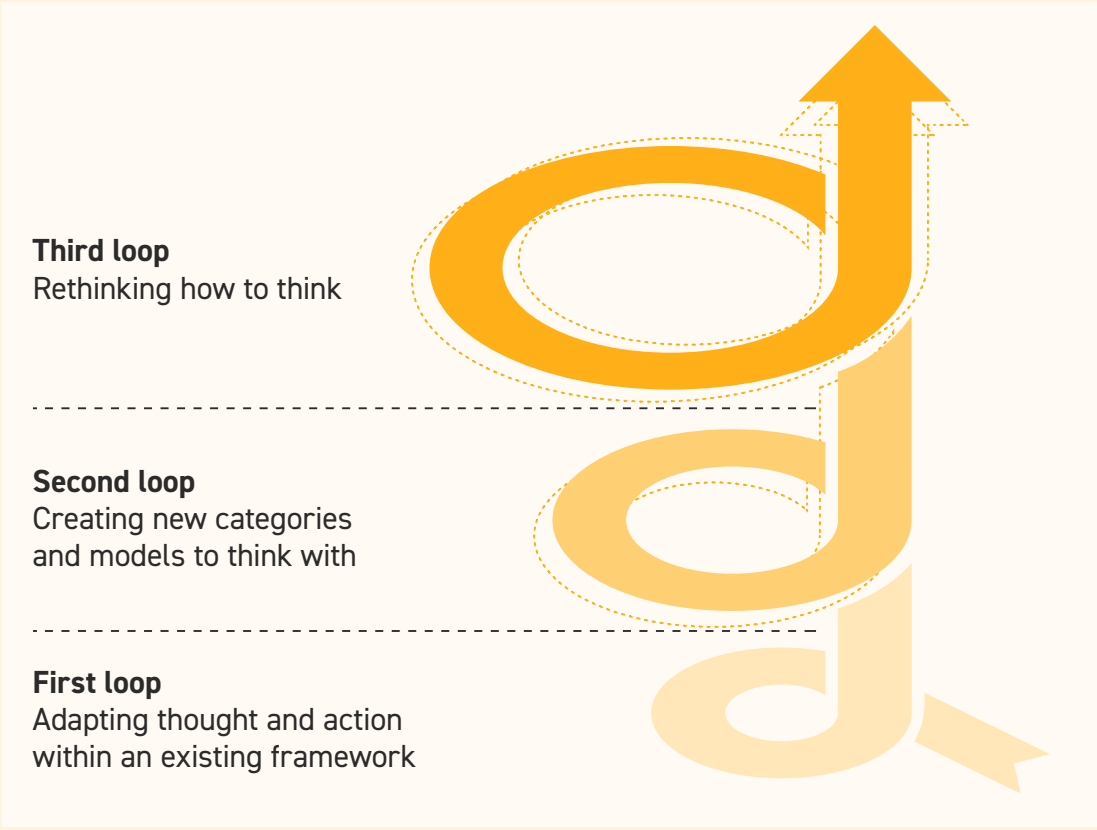


Figure 9: Triple loop model[151]

The summative performance of a collaboration describes gains relative to what would have been achieved if the collaboration had not been formed.[152] The summative performance will likely take place in an ecosystem of actors, which the collaboration will need a strategy to influence. An ecosystem strategy is a prominent model for seeking systems change. Collaborations can implement this by collectively identifying three key elements:[153]

- the ecosystem of all the interdependent organisations that influences the stated outcome
- the relationships that they have to one another
- the core 'backbone groups' that served the key functions of policy advocacy (policy backbone), community service delivery (community backbone) and evidence analysis and measurement (evidence backbone).

To influence the ecosystem and achieve the desired outcomes the collaboration will want to adopt some or all of the backbone functions and manage change through a series of achievements.

Actions taken to achieve outcomes will come in many different forms, all of which need to be explicitly stated in, and assessed in relation to, a theory of change or change model that spells out the rationale for how the activities will achieve the outcomes.[154] A focus only on the contribution of each individual organisation creates incentives for a partner to seek credit and funding in a zero-sum manner,[155] so achievements should be seen as collective impact with organisations understanding what they are *not* doing, as well as what they are doing.[156]

The theory of change or logic model should reflect each organisation's role in a collaborative effort, along with the actions necessary to achieve the desired outcome. An organisation in a collaboration should distinguish between elements that are within its control and the elements that are beyond the organisation's sole control. The former can be referred to simply as outputs and the latter interdependent outputs, dependent upon the contribution of collaboration partners. Collaboration partners can map on a change model (see Figure 10) the outputs that they can control and the way that these feed into the interdependent outputs, which are separated by a dotted line in the model below.[157]

All partners should understand how the necessary outcomes are achieved by the collaboration. Thus, each can hold themselves accountable to their controllable outputs, and hold each other accountable for the collective performance. Some of the activities and outputs necessary for the realisation of outcomes may be those of actors not in the collaboration. In this case, advocacy and influence to motivate those actors will be needed and captured in the change model.

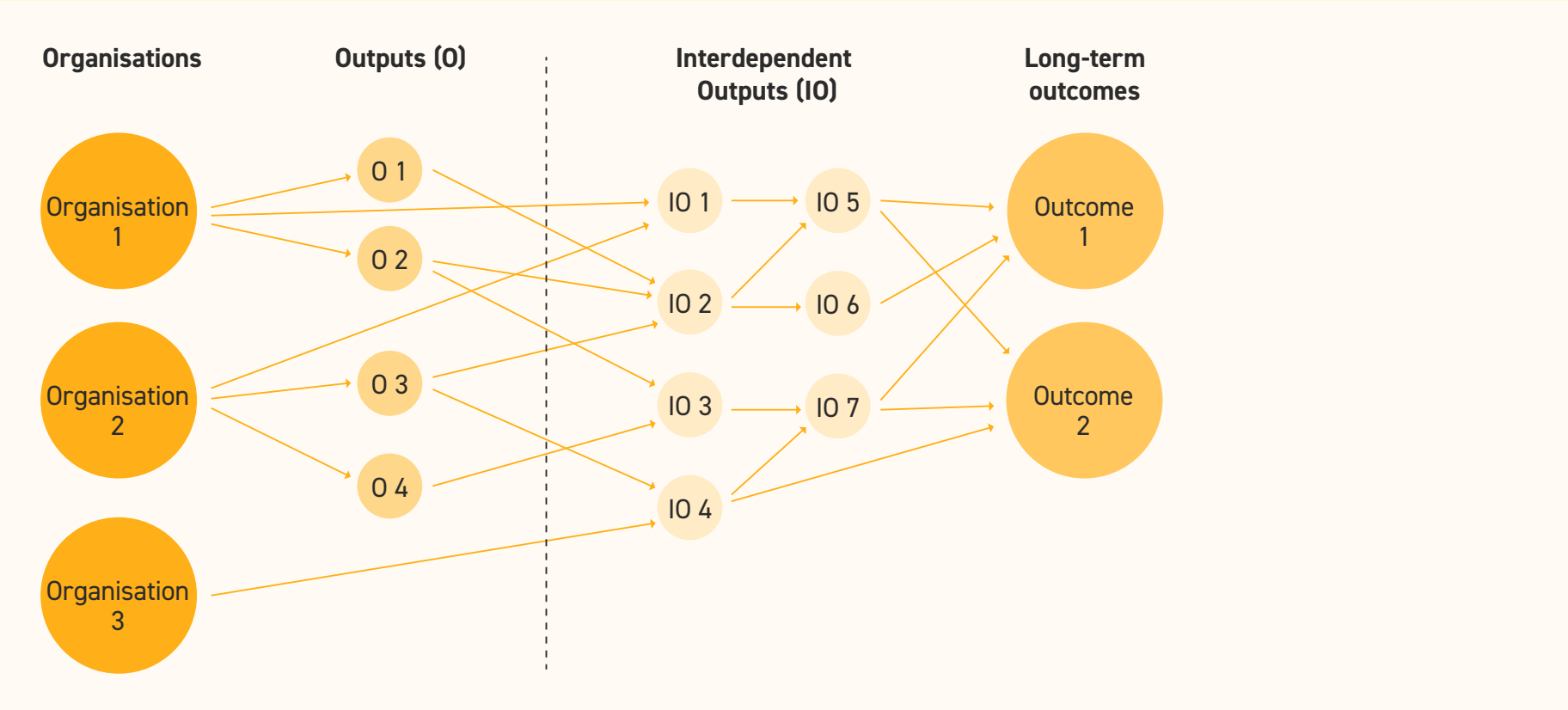


Figure 10: Change model[158]

Summative performance is the reason for the collaboration to exist. However, caution should be taken as a focus on summative performance during the initial stages may come at the expense of efforts to cohere as a collaboration, leading to problems in forming relationships and maintaining legitimacy.[159]

Success can be partly measured through the progress in developing the functioning of the collaboration itself – what has been called the 'process of collaboration'.[160] The formative performance criteria can be internal to an organisation, referring to how it manages its engagement in the collaboration, or at the level of interorganisational integration, referring to how the partners function with each other in the collaboration on aspects such as shared decision-making.[161] A balance is needed between formative and summative performance assessment because collaborating is usually a means to an end rather than an end in itself.[162]

Some of the various aspects of collaboration discussed in this text could be incorporated into an assessment of a particular collaboration's formative performance, such as the introduction of informal communications technology. Specific tools are useful, and the Strategic Alliance Formative Assessment Rubric (SAFAR) is one such tool.

SAFAR is a framework for the interaction of organisations that has been used to evaluate the progress of the forming of collaborations.[163] The rubric describes five increasing levels of integration, with each stage having associated characteristics of:

- the purposes of the integration activity
- the strategies and tasks that the collaboration engages in
- the leadership and decision-making characteristics of the collaboration
- the interpersonal and communication requirements of the collaboration.

As discussed in the definitions used in this playbook, the phenomenon of collaboration exists on a spectrum of interaction from loose networking to unification. Collaboration here is defined as existing towards the more formalised level of interaction. On the SAFAR rubric this is in stage 3 and stage 4, above cooperating and below unifying.

Level of integration	Purpose	Strategies and tasks	Leadership and decision-making	Interpersonal and communication
Networking 1	Create a web of communication	Loose or no structure	Non-hierarchical	Very little interpersonal conflict
	Identify and create a base of support	Flexible, roles not-defined	Flexible	Communication among all members infrequent or absent
	Explore interests	Few, if any defined tasks	Minimal or no group decision making	
Cooperating 2	Work together to ensure tasks are done	Member links are advisory	Non-hierarchical, decisions tend to be low stakes	Some degree of personal commitment and investment
	Leverage or raise money	Minimal structure	Facilitative leaders, usually voluntary	Minimal interpersonal conflict
	Identify mutual needs, but maintain separate identities	Some strategies and tasks identified	Several people form "go-to" hub	Communication among members clear, but may be informal
Partnering 3	Share resources to address common issues	Strategies and tasks are developed and maintained	Autonomous leadership	Some interpersonal conflict
	Organisations remain autonomous but support something new	Central body of people	Alliance members share equally in the decision making	Communication system and formal information channels developed
	To reach mutual goals together	Central body of people have specific tasks	Decision making mechanism is in place	Evidence of problem solving and productivity
Merging 4	Merge resources to create or support something new	Formal structure to support strategies and tasks is apparent	Strong, visible leadership	High degree of commitment and investment
	Extract money from existing systems/members	Specific and complex strategies and tasks identified	Sharing and delegation of roles and responsibilities	Possibility of interpersonal conflict high
	Commitment for a long period of time to achieve short and long-term outcomes	Committees and sub-committees formed	Leadership capitalises upon diversity and organisational strengths	Communication is clear, frequent and prioritised
				High degree of problem solving and productivity
Unifying 5	Unification or acquisition to form a single structure	Highly formal, legally complex	Central, typically hierarchical leadership	Possibility of interpersonal conflict very high
	Relinquishment of autonomy to support surviving organisation	Permanent re-organisation of strategies and tasks	Leadership capitalises upon diversity and organisational strengths	Communication is clear, frequent, prioritised, formal and informal

Figure 11: SAFAR Framework[164]

Evaluators attribute an integration score ranging from 1 to 5 for the collaboration against the SAFAR framework over the period of integration.[165] When reviewing a SAFAR evaluation, the collaboration leaders should be prompted to answer the three questions below:[166]

1 What will it look like if you have reached the ideal level of integration?
2 What actions need to be taken to bring about or maintain your ideal level of integration?
3 What evidence would indicate that you have reached the ideal level of integration?

Plans can then be drawn up by the collaborators on how the desired level of integration is to be achieved or maintained, with ongoing monitoring of progress from current to target levels.

Formative evaluation in a US$5.8m health and education collaboration in Colorado

SAFAR evaluation was used in a Safe Schools/Healthy Student initiative in Colorado in a four-stage process of discussion and reflection with the members of the collaboration.[167] In the first stage, leaders from the prospective collaborating organisations came together to discuss what they wanted to achieve and the appropriate level of integration necessary. This led some organisations to decide that they should remove themselves from the project, as they deemed integration was not suitable for them. Stage 2 involved creating a baseline report with quantitative and qualitative data compiled by 35 representatives of seven collaborating agencies. The quantitative data was mapped against the current and desired levels of interaction of each organisation. Mapping of the relationships of each organisation to every other organisation gave a picture of the different layers of integration within the collaboration (see core-periphery on page 48). The project evaluator stated of the SAFAR evaluation in this project: 'Participants have shared an enormous sense of satisfaction at being given the opportunity to engage in meaningful and focused discussion with alliance members about the purpose, leadership, and inter-personnel characteristics of their collaborative efforts'.[168]

SAFAR should be used as a guide to help interpret and test the collaboration and its suitability for the task at hand. As a formative evaluation process, discussions around SAFAR can help to build internal legitimacy for a collaboration. The below hypothetical example illustrates four organisations, A, B, C and D, that are interested in forming a collaboration. A and B are functioning with each other at integration level 4 in the SAFAR framework, indicating they are collaborating, but C and D have some progress to make. C has a high level of integration with B (4) but much less so with D, which has a low level of integration with all partners. The collaboration would and need to decide as to whether C and D are brought into the collaboration level of integration fully, by bringing the integration of D up with all partners and C improving its integration with D and A. Alternatively, C and D could remain as periphery members of the partnership, rather than closely integrated collaborators.

	Organisation A	Organisation B	Organisation C	Organisation D
Organisation A				
Organisation B	4			
Organisation C	1	4		
Organisation D	2	1	2	

Figure 12: Example SAFAR evaluation

Afterword

Afterword from the Blavatnik School of Government

Collaboration is essential for addressing the challenges faced by societies across the globe. Yet it is difficult to achieve. And it is not always necessary. This playbook sets out some clear ideas about when to collaborate and how to do it better.

At the Blavatnik School of Government our mission is to inspire and support better government and public policy around the world. Collaboration is core to what we study and teach. Our academics, such as Sir Paul Collier, Clare Leaver, Tom Hale, Mara Airoldi, Thomas Elston, and Eleanor Carter offer decision-makers clarity on what can be learnt from good and bad collaborative practice across different countries. Our training of public leaders, both senior and junior, teaches them collaborative habits and practices.

In jointly conceiving of this Collaboration Playbook with the WIG we sought to continue this mission. The playbook distils decades of academic literature and various case studies into a guide that covers the essential, largely intangible, elements of cross-sector collaboration into digestible sections.

The playbook opens with a discussion of the first decision to be made, whether to collaborate or not. Subsequently it unrolls 18 discrete recommendations, called 'plays', that leaders should consider when engaged in collaboration. These cover five key themes of leadership, power, trust, culture and learning. The guidance offered covers the selection of people for collaborations, considerations of organisational structures, the building of trust, an approach to evaluation, monitoring power imbalances, and analysing cultural misunderstandings.

Ian and Nigel have produced a thought provoking and practical playbook that is an opportunity for leaders to consider how they work more collaboratively for longer, stable, collaborations.

Professor Ngaire Woods Founding Dean, Blavatnik School of Government

Afterword from WIG

When The Whitehall & Industry Group (WIG) was established by the Cabinet Office in 1984 to build understanding and share learning between the public, private and not-for-profit sectors, it had collaboration at its core. 40 years later we are operating arguably in a faster-changing, more volatile and more uncertain environment in which the challenges we face are increasingly complex and interconnected. And that is why we continue our mission to champion the power of collaboration, convening leaders in cross-sector strategic dialogue and development programmes, to help catalyse problem-solving for the common good.

We conceived this playbook to help refresh our mission in the context of the 2021 Declaration on Government Reform, which included the need to 'bolster dialogue between leaders from all sectors to make sure we are spotting and tackling problems together and exploring new forms of collaboration in service delivery.' The playbook creates an ambitious agenda with a clear focus on the importance of leadership to achieve the best collaboration across the sectors to make a tangible difference on better policy-making and decision-making, leading to a better societal impact.

WIG, as a membership organisation with a high calibre membership of over 240 organisations from across business, government and the not-for-profit sector, will continue to act as a catalyst in delivering this ambitious agenda. Along with interventions to equip leaders with the skill set and mindset to be the most effective collaborative leaders, the playbook delivers a framework to be used by leaders in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors alike to support, develop and deepen collaboration to drive lasting, impactful change.

No one sector has a monopoly on wisdom when it comes to tackling the social, economic, technological and environmental challenges we face. And regardless of political direction, it is impossible to imagine a government which will not need to lean on the leadership expertise and resources from across other sectors to deliver change. That's why WIG's mission to champion cross-sector collaboration is as relevant as ever as the engine of change for the common good.

Dr Neil Bentley-Gockmann OBE Chief Executive Officer, The Whitehall & Industry Group

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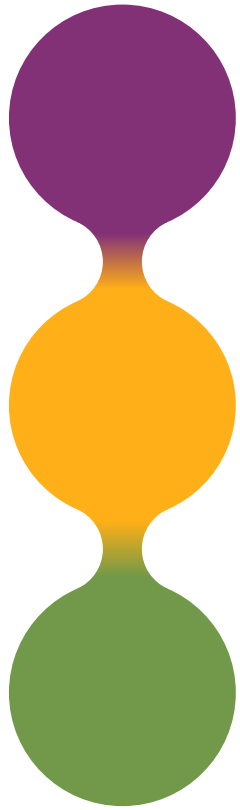

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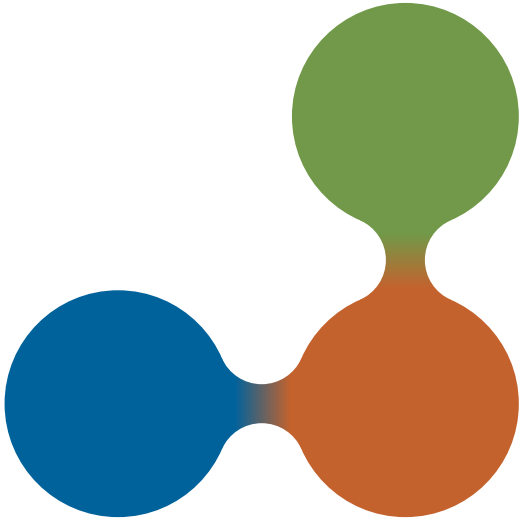

Further information

The Whitehall & Industry Group (WIG) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation with the charitable purpose of encouraging cross-sector collaboration for the greater good. Through strategic dialogue and leadership development, we convene the leaders of today and tomorrow in a trusted space to find better solutions to the significant and complex challenges we face as a country.

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WIG Cross-sector collaboration at work

Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford, Government Outcomes Lab

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