


STAGES OF COLLABORATION

Another way to view collaborations is along the stages of evolution from the early exploration of potential partners to the formative stage in which partners develop explicit rules of their engagement together, through to the sustaining stage which focuses on achievement of outcomes and, then finally, transformation or dissolution of the collaboration. The characteristics of each of the stages are described in the following table. Also, keep in mind that the stages are not always linear; there is a continuous process of reflection, evaluation and revision that may return you to earlier stages.

Continuous process of building trust; addressing issues; redefining the relationships and adapting direction

STAGES	CHARACTERIZED BY	
Identify and stimulate potential partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek out more effective ways to achieve an organization’s mission or goals • Build relationships with others who might share common goals or concerns • Explore the potential to work together and identify shared interests, opportunities and challenges • Begin to determine the scope of work, who else should be involved, potential resources and indicators of success 	
Develop and formalize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to negotiate a shared vision, purpose and values • Give more shape to outcomes, indicators and scope of work • Find common language • Clarify the individual and collective benefits of participation • Determine what needs to be evaluated and how it will be used; undertake evaluation and critical reflection • Formalize the relationship through an agreement (may be formal or informal; simple/complex) which clearly articulates roles, responsibilities, accountabilities, resource allocation, etc. • Begin to show impacts • Build for sustainability 	
Sustain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate that partners are invested by living the agreement and by being able to demonstrate the value to their own stakeholders • Use agreed to processes for communication, decision-making and conflict/issues resolution • Continue to integrate different perspectives and modes of practice into common directions • Review evaluation and reflection findings and renew or make course corrections to the collaboration itself and/or to the description of outcomes/impacts, strategies and actions • Demonstrate sustainability and impacts 	
Institutionalize, scale up or find new and meaningful directions		Wind down or terminate the collaboration