

ASSESSING COLLABORATION INVESTMENTS— MAPPING AND LEARNING FROM OUR EXPERIENCE

PURPOSE

The following process can be used to assess where your organization is investing its energy in collaborations, to reflect on lessons learned, and to determine where and how future collaborative efforts should be targeted.

HOW TO USE THE TOOL

- Start by considering which projects/initiatives you're involved in with other organizations that you would define as collaborations.
- Follow the process below to create an inventory of your investments in collaboration.
- Gather information you've collected from evaluations and/or use the survey questions to get feedback from internal and external stakeholders about their perceptions of the collaboration and your role as a collaboration partner.
- Step back and reflect on the recommended questions to inform your strategic thinking about collaboration moving forward.

PROCESS TO MAP AND REFLECT ON INVESTMENTS IN COLLABORATION



1. GATHER: TEMPLATE TO MAP COLLABORATION INVESTMENTS

Collaborations you are committed to and invested in.	Minimal Investment, Brand Impact & Risk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff participate in the collaboration, but no additional resources are contributed. • The work of the collaboration is unlikely to have a significant impact on the organization’s brand or profile (e.g. community-based initiative; contributing information and expertise) • The potential risk(s) to the organization are minimal (e.g. contribution does not involve taking a position on high-profile issues/problems) 	Significant Investment, Brand Impact & Risk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organization contributes considerable resources over time to the collaboration. • The work of the collaboration is likely to have a significant impact on the organization’s brand or profile (e.g. community-wide scope; social change initiatives) • The potential risk(s) to the organization are significant (e.g. contribution involves taking a position on high-profile issues/problems)
Collaboration “ABC”	Fill in responses to the questions below for each collaboration you are invested in.	
Collaboration “XYZ”		

For each collaboration, answer the following questions in the space provided above:

- What is the purpose/intent of the collaboration?
- What resources have been committed or invested?
- What have been the key lessons learned from the evaluation of the collaboration (key benefits and challenges)?
- How does the collaboration align with the mission, vision, values and priorities of our organization?

2. CONSULT: SURVEY OF LESSONS LEARNED

Review information available from evaluative data related to past or present collaborations. Also ask staff to reflect on what worked and what got in the way of the collaborations they’ve participated in. Consider consulting with external partners on their perceptions of the collaboration and your role as a collaborative partner. You can work from the suggested questions below to design your surveys or interview questions.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERNAL STAFF:

1. Identify the three most significant barriers, within our organization, that get in the way of our ability to be a good collaborative partner.
2. Identify the top five conditions that you believe would help facilitate the most productive and meaningful collaborations on behalf of our organization.
3. Is there anything else that is important for us to know/consider as we reflect on what we’ve learned from our work in collaboration?

QUESTIONS FOR EXTERNAL PARTNERS

1. Describe the nature of your collaborative relationship with our organization (past and present).
2. Identify the three most significant challenges you've experienced in your collaborative work with our organization.
3. Identify the top five conditions that you believe would help facilitate the most productive and meaningful collaborations with our organization.
4. Overall, how would you rate your collaborative relationship(s) with our organization?
 - a. Not very good
 - b. Satisfactor
 - c. Very good
5. Please explain why you selected the above rating.

3. DISCUSS: REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Once you've completed the inventory and gathered information about lessons learned from available evaluations and internal and external stakeholders surveys or interviews, facilitate discussion internally with your Leadership Team on the following questions:

- Where is our organization focusing its collaborative efforts currently?
- What have we gained through our collaborations?
- What are the consistent challenges we have encountered?
- Based on what we know/have learned from our collaborative efforts to date, what will we do differently moving forward?
- Do we have the right mix of collaborations to accomplish our priorities and goals?
- Where should our future efforts be focused?



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