



Collaboration Toolbox >>

Managing by Network-2012
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Quick Review

An open and inclusive process, a vehicle designed to engage a broad array of diverse citizens/organizations to come together to make decisions

Collaboration allows different groups the opportunity to meet and communicate on equal footing



Collaboration

Collaboration is not necessarily used to only achieve consensus

By fostering open communication among diverse groups, often in conflict, collaboration builds trust among participants and encourages transparency in the decision making process

The following is adapted from *Working Across Boundaries: Making Collaboration Work In Government and Nonprofit Organizations*, by Russell Linden

Framework for Collaboration

- ▶ Basics are in place
- ▶ Participants have open, trusting relationships with each other
- ▶ The stakes are high
- ▶ Participants include a constituency for collaboration
- ▶ Leadership follows collaborative principles



Framework Basics

- ▶ Participants have shared purpose/goal they care about but can't achieve on their own
- ▶ Right people are at the table
- ▶ Parties have an open, credible process
- ▶ Initiative has a champion, someone with clout and authority, makes this a high priority



Framework Basics

- ▶ Open, trusting relationships
- ▶ Need for high stakes
- ▶ Collaboration needs a constituency
- ▶ Collaborative leadership





Navigating the
Collaboration Process

Guiding Principles

- ▶ Process is open, inclusive, transparent, accessible, and tailored to local needs
- ▶ Meetings are civil and safe – no bullies allowed
- ▶ Deliberations are thoughtful, frank, and never rushed
- ▶ Establish an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust to form and expand lasting relationships

Guiding Principles

- ▶ There is an agreed upon way to make decisions
- ▶ Commitments that are made are honored. Trust is built on that confidence.
- ▶ Participants need to be assured that no one will be railroaded into a decision
- ▶ Any participant's legitimate concerns will be addressed before the group moves beyond discussion to action
- ▶ View differences of opinion as an opportunity. Respect the knowledge and experience of all. Be open-minded and accessible.

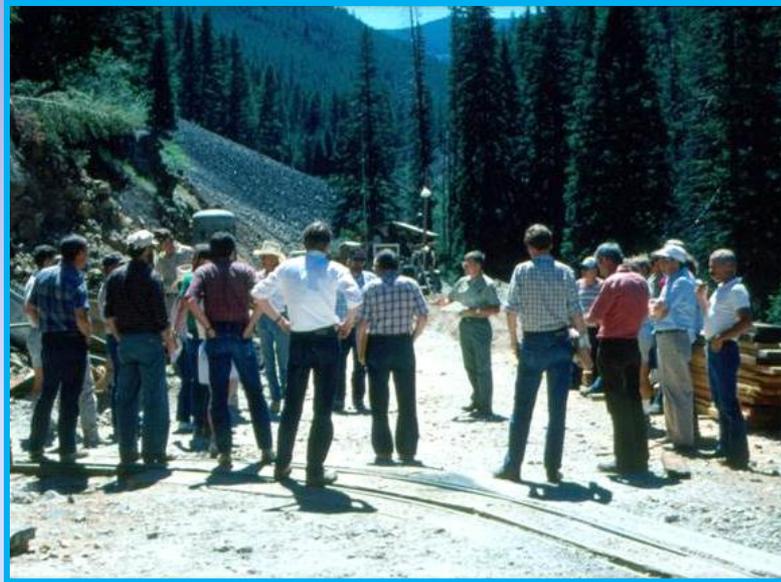


Teamwork overcomes
white water

Guiding Principles

- ▶ Some collaborative groups require full consensus, take no action unless all members of the group fully support the decision
- ▶ Most, however, find general consensus (or informed consent) works best
- ▶ Under informed consent, participants are not ready to endorse an action without reservations
- ▶ But they have enough confidence in the judgment and good faith of the rest of the participants to be willing to let the action be taken

Collaboration Works Best



- ▶ Problem beyond the ability of a single individual or group to handle
- ▶ The issues are appropriate
- ▶ The time is right
- ▶ Key people/organizations are willing to come to the table
- ▶ Process must be given high priority to justify time and resources

Collaboration is Less Effective

- ▶ When parties have little motive to collaborate if they believe they have better ways to achieve their interests
- ▶ When there is lack of support from the lead agency
- ▶ When there is strong internal resistance within the lead agency using the approach



Collaboration is Less Effective

- ▶ When lead agencies sometimes fear relinquishing control over their statutory responsibilities
- ▶ Parties have conflicting views on the meaning and significance of data
- ▶ When a high level of distrusts exists



What is the Agency's Role?

- ▶ Participate as an equal partner, helping keep process open and inclusive so everyone feels empowered
- ▶ Process should start with people of the community rather than originate or be driven by the agency
- ▶ Avoid temptation to control the collaborative process



Collaboration

