

Understanding and Surviving Intergovernmental Collaboration

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Objectives

1. Gain an understanding of collaboration
2. Understand its place the taxonomy of cooperative behaviors
3. Understand the fundamental aspects of collaboration
 - Voluntary v. mandatory processes
 - Collaborative pluralism
 - Team member roles
 - Conflict resolution

Who has done it?

- INTER-agency collaboration
 - INTRA-agency collaboration
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- How was the experience?
 - Was it good or bad or neutral?
 - Why do you think it worked or did not work?

What is Collaboration?

How do you define collaboration?

TIP #1:

Operationalize what collaboration means in the context of the work you are doing and operationalize what the key terms mean that you are dealing with.

Everyone must have the same understanding of what collaboration is and what you are attempting to do. And you have to go through the process to confirm or develop what that understanding is.

Cooperative Behaviors

1. **Awareness** – Being cognizant of others’ interests and actions
1. **Communication** – Talking about goals and activities
1. **Coordination** – Actions of one party are carried out in a manner that supports (or does not conflict with) those of another
1. **Collaboration** – Active partnerships with resources being shared or work being done by multiple partners.

Cooperate

“To **work or act together** toward a common end or purpose,” and “To **acquiesce** willingly; be **compliant**,” or “To **form an association** for the common . . . benefit.”

Collaborate

“To **work together**, especially in a joint intellectual effort,” and “To **cooperate treasonably**, as with an **enemy . . .**”

Coordinate

“to work together harmoniously.”

COORDINATE!



Even organizations working together harmoniously and toward a common goal may still act at cross purposes.

- out of ignorance
- poor communication
- organizational rigidity

So what is Collaboration?

1. The pooling of appreciations and/or tangible resources, (e.g., information, money, labor, etc.),
2. By two or more stakeholders,
3. To solve a set of problems which neither can solve individually.

“Collaboration implies a joint decision-making approach to problem resolution where power is shared, and stakeholders take collective responsibility for their actions and subsequent outcomes from those actions.”

**Collaboration should not be seen as the goal -
- only an important process or tool in more
effective management.**

Collaboration becomes necessary because the issues being addressed do not correspond to traditional political, territorial or jurisdictional boundaries. When demands for a particular sort of action are made, collaboration results because in many situations that cross jurisdictional or geographic boundaries make **collaboration the only reasonably process to be used to come to a joint solution.**

**An un-natural act
committed by
non-consenting adults.**



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Is it Voluntary or Mandatory

Interagency collaboration is defined as any joint activity by two or more agencies that is intended to increase public value through the act of working together rather than separately (Bardach 1998).

In government, whether it is voluntary or not, or even if it is resisted or not, - it is not relevant. **It is the outcome of collaboration that is important.**

Who else is doing it? Collaborative Pluralism

One question to ask when determining if you should create or be involved in a new collaborative group is whether you should be doing your own thing or can it become part of another existing effort?

What is the existing collaborative landscape, who is involved and to what purpose?

What is your roles and that of those around the table?

Participants may find themselves in a collaboration, but unsure of the role they play or how they should act and interact with the other parties at the table. **Is their role that of leader, partner or stakeholder in the process?**

The most successful agency representatives within a collaboration are those that blend all three roles, but did not act as a facilitator of the joint decision-making process.

Conflict Resolution

Our adversarial culture with fragmented decision-making authorities and interest groups creates an open system for dissenting voices which creates challenges for collaboration.

This is also what makes collaboration an “alternative” means of decision making. Collaboration is often used because a conflict between parties requires them to come together for joint problem-solving, which gives them some level of control in the outcome.

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