

## Assessing your collaboration

*“There is a fine balance to be struck between gaining the benefits of collaborating and making the situation worse.” Huxham and Macdonald (1992)*

### The big idea

Inter-organisational or collaborative working has become increasingly important and working within such a group can be both rewarding and challenging. Understanding how well the collaboration is working is a key part of ensuring you achieve more collectively than you could have individually.

### Purpose

This tool is designed to support existing and forming collaborations to explore key aspects of a successful collaboration. Identifying the collective’s key strengths and weaknesses can help you decide the best course of action to achieve your goals.

### The tool

Consider the following statements:

1	Goals	The goals of the collaboration are clearly stated. They are shared by all
2	Communication	The collaboration has open and clear communication
3	Leadership	The leadership facilitates and supports the development of the group. And builds on the strengths of the participants
4	Trust	All members’ issues and interests are equally heard and acknowledged
5	Structure	The collaboration has an appropriate structure
6	Information infrastructure	The collective has put in place an appropriate infrastructure for the generation and exchange of information

7	Expertise	The collective has the appropriate expertise to undertake the project – or access to the necessary expertise
8	Climate	The history and environment around power and decision making are transparent and positive
9	Connectedness	Members of the collaboration are connected. They have formal and informal networks at all levels
10	History	The members of the group have a history of co-operative working and joint problem solving

## Take the next step

Think of a previous collaboration you have been involved with. How would you score it using the above criteria? What differences are there between that experience and your current collaboration? How would you account for those differences?

## Top tips

- Try to ensure the group pays attention to its development as a collective as well as the tasks in hand
- Ask all members of the group to provide their scores and notice areas of consensus and areas of difference
- Try to review the stages of the collaboration's development by using the assessment tool at different stages in the programme, such as beginning, middle and end

## References

Huxham, C., & Macdonald, D. (1992). Introducing Collaborative Advantage: Achieving Inter-organisational Effectiveness through Meta-strategy. *Management Decision*, 30, 50-56.