



Elements of Successful Collaborations

1. **Mutual self-interest:** Each party must feel confident that they will be better able to accomplish something important to their goals through working together than they could be working alone.
2. **Capacity to contribute:** Each party must be capable of providing something the other parties need and value. What structure do I want . . . and . . . in what structure can I contribute?
3. **Clarity of expectations:** All parties share a vision of desired outcomes of the collaboration and come to agreements on the shared vision. Clarity of expectations includes roles and responsibilities of the parties involved and the types and amount of resources each party is expected to bring.
4. **Structural Agreements:** Practical ways in which the shared expectations will be carried into action require a set of clear structural agreements including:
 - **Agreement about information sharing**
 - What types of information can be shared
 - How and with whom information will be shared.
 - **Decision making structure**
 - How are decision agreed upon? Voting, consensus, etc.
 - Are the right people in the room? Can those present actually speak for their organizations?
 - **Accountability structure**
 - Reporting and accounting (specific to shared money/funds)
 - Supervision and support for tasks (including volunteers)
 - Timely assessment
 - Clear lines of authority
5. **Commitment to direct communication:** Developing practices and expectations that we can communicate with one another in open, respectful and direct ways about all elements of structures, agreements and conflict/problems.
6. **Joint evaluation:** Planful and timed assessment, focusing on what is working well, challenges, expected and unexpected outcomes, and adjustments made along the way. This information is critical to assess our expectations, adjust agreements, and adequately support the collaboration to achieve the original mission.