



TOOL

Assess your Collaborations: Explore, Commit, Continue or Exit

What it is

Collaborating with other organizations, groups and networks is a critical strategy for addressing the heavy demands placed on nonprofit organizations. It can help leverage resources, strengthen programs, and deepen mission impact. But many organizations rush into, or stay with a collaboration, without fully assessing how it advances the mission, and sometimes underestimate what's required to collaborate well.

This tool can be used by staff leadership to **assess whether the organization is effectively exploring collaboration opportunities, selecting the right ones, for the right reasons, with the right partners or exiting them well.** It can be used to:

- Understand what success looks like at the different stages
- Identify information to be collected from your collaborations
- Make good strategic choices of collaborations, removing guess work and personal biases.

Click on any one of the topics in this tool to:

- **Explore potential collaborations**, including building authentic relationships, finding common cause and scoping potential collaborations

Assessing your collaboration: A Story

In this small community, the organization is a key actor and often invited to participate in collaborations. The staff and Board felt pressure to engage and be an effective partner. During a governance workshop, they reviewed all their collaborations and identified those which clearly advanced the organization's mission, had trusted relationships and partners who were deeply committed to its success even when resources were scarce. This careful assessment affirmed that they were using their time wisely and selecting the right collaborations for the right reasons.

- **Commit to a simpler, more informal collaboration** (e.g. low risk and minimal resource requirements)
- **Commit to a more complicated or complex collaboration** (e.g. longer-term; higher risk; major resource implications)
- **Continue to participate in a collaboration**
- **Exit your collaboration well**

Learn more

- [*Foster Your Organization's Culture of Collaboration*](#)
- [*Lead the Organization to Successful Collaborations*](#)
- [*Map Your Organization's Collaboration Ecosystem*](#)
- [*Mitigate the Risks of Collaboration*](#)
- [*Provide Oversight of Your Collaboration's Evaluation*](#)
- [*Create or Assess a Memorandum of Understanding*](#)
- [*Checklist to Exit a Collaboration Well*](#)



This resource was developed by Ignite NPS in partnership with the Tamarack Institute. Organizations are free to use this tool; however, proper credit must be given to the original creators in any use or distribution.

Explore Potential Collaborations

Introduction

This checklist is useful to determine whether the organization is taking the right steps to explore potential collaborations. It focuses on building authentic relationships, finding common goals with other organizations, networks and groups and properly scoping potential collaborations.

Checklist	
Build and nurture networks and authentic relationships with other organizations, groups and networks.	<input type="checkbox"/> Our organization sees itself as part of a larger system that goes beyond our own people and programs/services. We have a clear picture (e.g. mapping) of all those who are impacted by or can impact our mission (e.g. people, organizations, groups, networks) and have considered how they are interconnected. [See: <i>Map Your Organization's Collaboration Ecosystem</i>]
	<input type="checkbox"/> Our organization is continuously scanning for opportunities to work with other organizations, groups and networks, even those we think of as unusual partners.
	<input type="checkbox"/> The board and staff leadership approach relationship building with deep intentionality because they believe that positive, authentic relationships with those who are impacted or can impact our work is key to the organization's success.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other organizations, networks and groups say that our board, staff and volunteers are good network weavers and collaborators (e.g. they pay attention to external relationships; connect diverse people and facilitate connections).
Identify opportunities that could help to advance our purpose (mission, outcomes/impacts) by working together.	<input type="checkbox"/> The board and staff leadership believe it's important to collaborate with other organizations, networks and groups. We're aware of the full range of collaboration opportunities and appreciate the unique nature of working collaboratively (e.g. there's comfort with shared decision-making and accountability). [See: <i>Foster Your Organization's Culture of Collaboration</i>]

Checklist | Explore Potential Collaborations

	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Key people in our community (e.g. other organizational and community leaders; funders) say that our organization’s mission and intended outcomes are clear, compelling and based on strong evidence of need.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> We participate in or convene conversations with a wide diversity of other organizations, networks and groups to explore common interests as well as differences in approaches and keep our organization and potential collaborations informed.</p> <p>We’ve considered which of our organization’s opportunities, issues or challenges are best addressed by working collaboratively, recognizing more can be done together than as a single organization (e.g. reach different stakeholders; develop unique capacities; enhance programs; achieve greater impact, find efficiencies; create system change).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> There is energy among other organizations/communities, even a sense of urgency, to address these opportunities, issues or challenges together.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> There are potential partners who are available and interested in rallying around the opportunities, issues, or challenges we’ve identified.</p>
<p>Begin to engage in potential collaborations.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> We’ve engaged potential partners in conversations about a collaboration idea, exploring hopes, possibilities, and shared and diverse interests, while also beginning to build trust between us.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> We’ve considered the full spectrum of organizations, groups and people who are touched by the issues and opportunities we’d address in the collaboration and have sought them out as potential partners, welcoming a diversity of perspectives and experiences.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> We have identified potential partners who would be good collaborators (e.g. positive organizational reputation; shared aspirations or philosophies of change; aligned values).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Our staff leadership recognizes that the potential collaboration fits with our organization’s purpose, strategies and priorities, and believe it’s worth exploring.</p>

Checklist | Explore Potential Collaborations

	<p>We believe that our organization can add real value to the potential collaboration by contributing hard assets (e.g. staff and/or volunteer resources; technology; access to stakeholders; financial support) and soft assets (e.g. connections; knowledge), recognizing that our contribution might vary at different stages of the collaboration.</p>
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Commit to a simpler, more informal collaboration

Introduction

Whether the organization is involved at the beginning of a collaboration's development or joining a mature one, it's important to be intentional about whether to participate in it. Not all collaborations are the right ones. The staff leadership can use this checklist to determine if the organization should commit to a simpler, more informal collaboration opportunity (e.g. doesn't require a significant commitment of time and resources and/or present major risk to the organization).

[Learn more: [Collaboration: The Case, The Context and The Impact](#)]

Suggested approach

- If **all** the boxes are checked with confidence, then the organization will proceed.
- If **many** of the boxes are checked with confidence but there are some concerns, determine if they can be feasibly addressed. If so, then proceed. If not, then it's a judgement call as to whether to commit.
- If **only a few** of the boxes are checked with confidence, then the organization should not proceed with the opportunity.

Checklist	
<p>There's strategic alignment.</p>	<p>There is a shared understanding among the partners about the collaboration's aspirations and desired outcomes and goals.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The staff leadership believe that the people we serve would meaningfully and measurably benefit from the collaboration, and it clearly advances our mission, goals and priorities.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The aspirations and intended goals can be better achieved through a collaboration than just doing it ourselves.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Our organization can make a valuable contribution to the collaboration (e.g. provide access to programs, resources and knowledge).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> We feel confident that the diversity of interests and needs of our partners (e.g. their motivations for participating; expected outcomes; philosophies of change) can all be reasonably accommodated.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> We don't have concerns about the reputations, ethics, practices or cultural differences of collaboration partners. If there are concerns, they aren't significant enough to stop us from moving forward and/or we're confident they can be effectively addressed.</p> <p><i>[Learn more: Foster Your Organization's Culture of Collaboration; Mitigate the Risks of Collaboration]</i></p>
<p>It's a good investment</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> We're clear about our intended role in the collaboration, recognizing it may shift as the collaboration evolves. We also appreciate the capacities required to fulfil our role (e.g. skills, knowledge, experience, infrastructure) and are confident we can do it properly.</p> <p><i>[Learn more: Build Organizational Capacity for Effective Collaboration]</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> We appreciate that collaborations evolve, shifting strategies and recalibrating the required resources. However, at this juncture we have a clear sense of the investment of time and resources required by our organization (e.g. the staff or volunteer time; infrastructure</p>

	<p>contributions, funds) and believe they are a worthwhile investment given the potential returns.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> At this juncture in the collaboration, we believe that there are enough resources available (e.g. people, funds, infrastructure) to measurably advance its aspirations and goals. If this isn't the case, we're confident they can be accessed, or the collaboration's aspirations and goals can be reasonably modified.</p> <p>Along with the potential risks noted above, we have considered any other significant risks to our organization and feel that they can be effectively mitigated at this time.</p> <p><i>[Learn more: Mitigate the Risks of Collaboration]</i></p>
<p>There's confidence the collaboration can be/or is effectively implemented.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> There is a high level of trust among partners. This is driven by principles and processes that determine how they behave with each other; clarity about who makes decisions and how; and the ways that those impacted by the work are engaged.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> We're clear about what success looks like for the collaboration, even though it may not yet be clear how it will be achieved. At this juncture, we believe that achieving success is feasible.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The collaboration's partners have developed, and agreed to, a road map for achieving its aspirations, goals and outcomes. This includes the assumptions being made and the challenges that may be faced.</p> <p><i>Note: A newer collaboration may only have a rough road map.</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The collaboration has thought about and/or put in place processes to measure progress toward its goals and outcomes that appear sound (e.g. robust, feasible).</p> <p><i>Note: Collaborations are different from organizations and may require unique ways to evaluate their progress and success (e.g. as a continuous cycle of feedback, learning and adjustments, acknowledging the need for diverse and flexible measurement systems that meet the needs of all the partners).</i></p> <p><i>[Learn more: Provide Oversight of Your Collaboration's Evaluation]</i></p>

Checklist | Commit to a Simpler, More Informal Collaboration



The collaboration has thought about and/or clearly outlined how it will communicate between partners and their organizations (e.g. timing, transparency, scope) which, at this stage, seems sound. Our staff or board participating in the collaboration are committed to its success and our organization fully supports them (e.g. provides the appropriate time and resources; incorporates responsibilities in their job description and performance review; empowers them to make decisions with collaborative partners without checking back).

*[Learn more: **Build Organizational Capacity for Effective Collaboration**]*

Commit to a more complicated, or complex collaboration

Introduction

It's important for your organization to make an intentional choice about whether to participate in a collaboration. Not all collaborations are the right ones. Staff leadership can use this checklist to determine if the organization should commit to a collaboration. This decision might be triggered by the need for leadership approval, the need to sign a Memorandum of Understanding and/or the need to allocate resources.

This checklist is focused on more complicated or complex collaboration (e.g. those that require a significant commitment of time and resources; have substantial implications for the organization, such as a shift in program or resource allocation; or present major risk to the organization)

[Learn more: [Collaboration: The Case, The Context and The Impact](#)]

Suggested approach

- If **all the boxes** are checked with confidence, then the organization will proceed.
- If **many of the boxes** are checked with confidence but there are some concerns, determine if they can be feasibly addressed. If so, then proceed. If not, then it's a judgement call as to whether to commit.
- If **only a few** of the boxes are checked with confidence, then the organization should not proceed with the opportunity.

Checklist

**There's
strategic
alignment.**

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There is a shared understanding among the partners about the collaboration's aspirations and desired outcomes and goals.

Describe them:

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The board and staff leadership believe that the people we serve would meaningfully and measurably benefit from the collaboration, and it clearly advances our mission, goals and priorities. Those who actively participate in our organization would agree (e.g. staff; those who benefit from our programs; funders).

Describe how the organization benefits:

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The aspirations and intended goals can be better achieved through a collaboration than just doing it ourselves. Explain why:

	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div> <p>The broader environment (e.g. political/social; legislation) and our own organization’s circumstances (e.g. stage in our life cycle; organizational health; funding) are conducive to participating in the collaboration.</p> <p>Describe why it’s conducive:</p>
	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div> <p>Our organization has significant assets to contribute to the collaboration (e.g. hard assets such as programs, resources, technology; soft assets such as skills, knowledge).</p> <p>Describe the assets we bring:</p>

	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div> <p>We believe that having a diversity of participants in the collaboration is important. We're also confident that any significant differences in brands, cultures and values can be bridged (e.g. aligned enough to work; all grounded in shared aspirations).</p> <p>Describe how they can be bridged:</p>
	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div> <p>We feel confident that the diversity of interests and needs of the partners (e.g. their motivations for participating; expected organizational outcomes; philosophies; values) can be reasonably accommodated.</p> <p>Describe how all these interests can be accommodated:</p>

	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div> <p>If the collaboration requires significant changes to our organization’s structure, policies, and/or practices and/or strategic or operational plans, it’s worth the disruption because of the benefits received.</p> <p>Describe what the disruptions might be and why they are worth it:</p>
	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div> <p>We don’t have concerns about the reputation, ethics or practices of the collaboration partners. If there are concerns, they aren’t significant enough to stop us from moving forward and/or we’re confident they can be addressed.</p> <p>Describe any concerns and how they can be addressed:</p>

It's a good investment

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We're clear about what the collaboration's success looks like, even though partners may not yet know exactly how it will be achieved.
Describe what success looks like:

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We're clear about our role in the collaboration (e.g. lead or contributor; backbone), even though it may shift. We appreciate the capacities required to fulfil it (e.g. skills, knowledge, experience, infrastructure) and are confident we can do it well. If it's a more intensive role, the partners all agree that we are well-equipped to fulfil it effectively.
Describe the expected role and required capacities:

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We appreciate that collaborations evolve, shifting strategies and recalibrating the required resources. However, at this juncture we have a clear sense of the investment of time and resources required by our

	<p>organization (e.g. the staff or volunteer time; infrastructure; funds) and believe they are a worthwhile investment given the potential returns.</p> <p>Describe the commitments:</p>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> If the collaboration requires our organization to integrate our people, infrastructure or operations with other partner organizations (e.g. impacting collective agreements, human resource policies, IT systems and/or funding), we feel it can work (e.g. there's enough compatibility/alignment). If not, we're confident it is feasible to address the concerns.</p> <p>Describe incompatibilities and how they will be addressed:</p>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> At this juncture in the collaboration, we have a clear understanding about the resources (e.g. people, infrastructure, funds) our partners are providing. There's good alignment between all the varied</p>

	<p>contributions. We're confident the partners can fulfil their commitments and, if not, strategies to mitigate this are in place.</p> <p>Describe their contributions and how they align with ours. If they are available, describe strategies for addressing shortfalls:</p>
	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div> <p>At this juncture in the collaboration, we believe that there are enough resources (e.g. people, funds, infrastructure) available to measurably advance its aspirations and goals. If this isn't the case, we're confident they can be accessed, or the collaboration's aspirations and goals can be reasonably modified.</p> <p>Describe what gives us confidence:</p>

	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div> <div>Along with the potential risks noted above, we have considered other significant risks to our organization and believe, at this time, that they can be mitigated.</div> <div><i>[Learn more: Mitigate the Risks of Collaboration]</i></div> <div>Describe the potential significant risks and potential mitigating strategies:</div>
<div>There's confidence the collaboration is/or can be effectively implemented.</div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div> <div>There's a sense of urgency to achieve the aspirations and goals of the collaboration in the broader system as well as among the partner organizations (e.g. because they are pressing issues that need resolution and critical outcomes).</div> <div>Describe what's driving the urgency:</div>

Checklist | Commit to a More Complicated, or Complex Collaboration

	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The collaboration's partners have developed and agreed to a road map for achieving its aspirations, goals and outcomes and are open about the potential challenges they face.</p> <p><i>Note: A newer collaboration may only have a rough road map.</i></p> <p>Attach the roadmap</p>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Our organization's culture (e.g. values, mindsets) supports the dynamic, sometimes complex nature of collaborations. For example, we are comfortable relinquishing a measure of control over the collaboration, understanding that decisions are made collectively, toward a shared goal. We're also comfortable sharing risks, rewards, accountabilities, information, and knowledge with our partners.</p> <p><u>[Learn more: Foster Your Organization's Culture of Collaboration; and Lead the Organization to Successful Collaborations].</u></p> <p>Describe how our culture supports collaboration:</p>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The collaboration is building and nurturing trust among the partners, by the principles and processes that drive how partners behave with each other; who makes decisions and how; and the ways that key participants are engaged (e.g. transparency and respect; protocols for conflict management; opportunities for authentic dialogue; safe spaces for failure and unintended outcomes).</p> <p>Describe how trust will be or is built and nurtured:</p>

	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div> <p>The collaboration has thought about and/or established a governance system (e.g. how it will organize itself) to mobilize and coordinate resources and actions; hold partners accountable; and make good collective decisions. At this stage, it seems sound.</p> <p><i>Note: Depending upon the complexity of the collaboration, the governance system may be more formal or more open and fluid.</i></p> <p>Describe the governance system:</p>
	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div> <p>The collaboration has thought about and/or established processes to measure and evaluate progress toward its goals and outcomes that, at this stage, seem sound (e.g. robust, feasible).</p> <p><i>Note: Collaborations are different from organizations and may require a unique way to evaluate its progress and success (e.g. as a continuous</i></p>

	<p><i>cycle of feedback, learning and adjustments, acknowledging the need for diverse and flexible measurement systems that meet the needs of all the partners).</i></p> <p><i>[Learn more: <u>Provide oversight of Your Collaboration's Evaluation</u>]</i></p> <p>Describe the key features:</p>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The collaboration has thought about and/or clearly outlined how it will communicate between partners and their organizations (e.g. timing, transparency, scope) that, at this stage, seems sound.</p> <p>Describe the key features:</p>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Our staff and/or volunteers responsible for making the collaboration work are committed to its success.</p> <p>Describe how you know this to be true:</p>

	<div><input type="checkbox"/> We support the staff who are participating in the collaboration (e.g. provide the appropriate amount of time and resources; alter workloads; incorporate the responsibilities in their job description and performance review). We're comfortable empowering them with the authority to make decisions and work toward collective goals at the collaboration table. <i>[Learn more: <u>Build Organizational Capacity for Effective Collaboration; Foster Your Organization's Culture of Collaboration</u>]</i> Describe the supports in place and how staff are empowered:</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> If a formal agreement between collaborative partners is required, it clearly outlines expectations (e.g. roles, responsibilities, obligations, risks and accountability mechanisms, exit strategies). The board and staff leadership are all comfortable with the content of the Agreement. <i>[Learn more: <u>Create or Assess a Memorandum of Understanding</u>]</i> Attach agreement.</div>
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Continue to participate in a collaboration

Introduction

Organizations should remain in collaborations for the right reasons. The decision of whether to continue participation is usually triggered by circumstances, such as:

- Concerns about the effectiveness of the collaboration
- The departure of, or low engagement by key collaboration partners
- The collaboration entering a phase of renewal
- A significant shift in the direction of the collaboration (e.g. reaching an important milestone)
- A major shift within your organization (e.g. change in priorities, directions, access to resources).

This checklist helps the staff leadership determine if your organization should continue in the collaboration or exit it.

Suggested approach

- If **all the boxes** are checked with confidence, then the organization will continue.
- If **many of the boxes** are checked with confidence but there are some concerns, determine if they can be feasibility addressed. If so, then continue. If not, then it's a judgement call as to whether to continue.
- If **only a few** of the boxes are checked with confidence, then the organization should not continue with the collaboration.

Checklist	
<p>There's continued strategic alignment.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Our organization's external environment (e.g. political/social; legislation) and our own organization's circumstances (e.g. stage in our life cycle or organizational health) remain conducive to our participation.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The collaboration continues to benefit our core partners and meaningfully and measurably advances our mission, outcomes, goals and priorities.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> We collaborative partners continue to believe and agree that our organization has important assets to contribute (e.g. hard assets such as programs, resources, technology; soft assets such as skills and knowledge).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The differences in brands, cultures, and values as well as the interests of the collaborative partners are being addressed effectively.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The reputations, ethics or practices of partners have not been an issue for the collaboration. If there is an issue, we believe it will be addressed effectively.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any significant changes to our organization's structure, policies, practices (e.g. performance or financial management systems) and/or strategic or operational plans, continue to be worth the disruption because of the benefits received.</p>
<p>It remains a good investment</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration partners have a clear and shared understanding about what success looks like and know the collaboration's aspirations and intended outcomes.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The collaboration has made significant progress on achieving its aspirations and intended outcomes. The evaluation mechanisms and progress reports give us this confidence.</p> <p><i>[Learn more: Provide Oversight of Your Collaboration's Evaluation]</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Our staff leadership, and the board (in the case of more complex and higher risk collaborations) remain committed to it.</p>

Checklist | Continue to Participate in a Collaboration

	<p><input type="checkbox"/> In the case of collaborations which require significant commitments, we've demonstrated to those who participate in our organization (e.g. donors, funders, the people we serve or impact) that it's a worthwhile endeavor.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Most of the collaboration partners and champions (e.g. funders; key influencers) remain committed and engaged. If this isn't the case, then new partners have joined who bring passion and the right kind of competencies and resources to enable continued momentum.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> If the collaboration requires significant commitments from our organization, we are confident that we can continue to fulfil our role effectively (e.g. lead or contributor; backbone), bringing the right kind of capacities to it.</p> <p><i><u>[Learn more: Build Organizational Capacity for Effective Collaboration]</u></i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The required investment of time and resources by our organization (e.g. the staff or volunteer time; infrastructure; funds) remains worthwhile given the potential returns</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any integration of our people, infrastructure, or operations (e.g. collective agreements; human resource policies; IT systems, funding) with those of our partners has been done effectively. If not, we have strategies we are confident will improve it.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The partners in the collaboration are fulfilling their respective roles, resources commitments, accountabilities, and other obligations. If this isn't the case, there are reasonable strategies to address the shortfalls.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> There are enough resources (e.g. people, funds, infrastructure) available for the collaboration to meaningfully and measurably advance its aspirations and goals.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Along with the potential risks noted above, any other risks to our organization have been mitigated or have strategies in place to address them.</p> <p><i><u>[Learn more: Mitigate the Risks of Collaboration]</u></i></p>
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<p>It is being effectively implemented</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> There is a clear and feasible road map for achieving the collaboration's aspirations, goals, and outcomes, which all partners support. Any course corrections in the road map are reasonable and have increased impact.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The collaboration has built and nurtured trust among all its partners. If not, there are clear and feasible strategies to accomplish it (e.g. refine the principles driving behavior, decision-making and engagement; ensure partners are abiding by them).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> In the case of more formal, complex collaborations, the collaboration has an effective shared governance system (e.g. how it will organize itself) to mobilize and coordinate resources and actions, hold the collaboration accountable, and make good collective decisions.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The collaboration has robust evaluation mechanisms in place to gather learnings, demonstrate progress toward its goals and capture both intended and unintended outcomes. The evaluation mechanisms are generating information that all partners believe to be valuable, timely, honest, and comprehensive.</p> <p><i>[Learn more: <u>Provide Oversight of Your Collaboration's Evaluation</u>]</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> There are clear mechanisms to review and revise the collaboration's processes, protocols and structures as it evolves so they remain relevant, feasible and effective in advancing the purpose of the collaboration.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The collaboration has communicated effectively with those directly participating in the collaboration, their respective organizations and those who are impacted.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The staff or volunteers from our organization who are directly participating in the collaboration remain committed to its success</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Our staff or volunteers participating in the collaboration say they are being effectively supported by staff leadership (e.g. providing the appropriate time and resources; altering workflow; grounding the collaborative work in their job description and performance review; empowering them to make decisions at the collaborative table)</p>
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Checklist | Continue to Participate in a Collaboration

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Any formal agreements between collaborative partners have been revised, if necessary, to adapt to changed circumstances as the collaboration has evolved.

*[Learn more: [**Create or Assess a Memorandum of Understanding**](#)]*

Exit Your Collaboration Well

Introduction

Organizations exit collaborations for many reasons, including:

- A shift in their circumstances and priorities
- Inability to fulfil commitments
- Concerns about the effectiveness of the collaboration (e.g. lack of resources; disengaged partners and supporters; tensions between partners; shift in goals)
- The collaboration has served its purpose and achieved its goals

It is important to exit a collaboration well so that relationships with partners remain positive and your exit is not disruptive to the shared work. In the case of collaborations that require more significant organizational commitments, it's particularly important to consider how to exit as respectfully, feasibly, and positively as possible.

Checklist	
<p>Staff leadership can use this checklist to create the exit strategy and assess how well it's done</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> We have a clear, written rationale for exiting the collaboration based on a thoughtful evaluation of our organization's contributions and current circumstances. <input type="checkbox"/> The learnings from the collaboration experience have been captured for reference when participating in other collaborations. <p>The staff leadership (and if appropriate the board) agree that the organization should exit the collaboration. If other staff have been engaged in the collaboration, they also agree. If this isn't the case, then an appropriate consensus has been reached.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> We have a plan to communicate the rationale for exiting the collaboration to our partners in a positive and productive way. <input type="checkbox"/> If the collaboration is more formal and/or complex, we will take the time to engage in conversations with all the key partners, so that positive relationships are maintained. <input type="checkbox"/> If tension between partners makes it hard to have positive conversations (e.g. distrust, disappointment, frustration), there is a plan to rebuild key relationships over time. <input type="checkbox"/> We have laid out a timelines and process for our organization's exit from the collaboration, which our partners agree are reasonable and transparent. <p><i>Note: Ideally the collaboration has outlined how partner's exit a collaboration and documented it in a Memorandum of Understanding.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> If human, financial or other assets have been shared, there is a clear understanding with the collaborative partners about how they – including funding arrangements – will be handled. <input type="checkbox"/> If there has been an allocation of staff dedicated to the collaboration, our organization and partners have worked out how the transition can be handled as seamlessly as possible.

Checklist | Exit Your Collaboration Well

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> If there was shared infrastructure, data, systems and other capacities, there is an agreement for how they will be unbundled and reallocated in a way that is least disruptive to the collaboration.<input type="checkbox"/> If it makes sense, we will continue to indirectly support the collaboration effort (e.g. championing it; sharing updates internally).
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