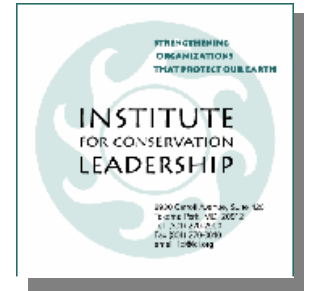


# Benchmarks for Networks, Coalitions and other Collaborative Efforts



For each benchmark, circle a number from 1 (not at all or never true) to 5 (always or absolutely true) to describe how well the benchmark describes your organization.

Then decide how important this particular benchmark is to your collaborative right now ... a “1” might mean it’s insignificant, and a “5” might mean that your survival depends upon it. If you think a benchmark is important, make a note or two to yourself about the goals you’d set to improve for the next year.



*Does this describe  
your collaborative?*

*Does this matter  
right now?*

*Why We Ask*

	<i>Does this describe your collaborative?</i>	<i>Does this matter right now?</i>	<i>Why We Ask</i>
<p><b>Shared Goals</b></p> <p>1. The collaborative has a written statement of the goals for which it is working, which is shared by all the members.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><i>not true</i>      <i>very true</i></p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><i>not at all</i>      <i>very much</i></p>	<p>The greater the task, the more important it is to define it. For some information networks, the goal is simply understood. For advocacy groups, it becomes important to nail it down long before the negotiating begins.</p>
<p><b>A Clear Workplan</b></p> <p>2. The collaborative has a clear and realistic written workplan with measurable goals, roles and responsibilities, and deadlines. You monitor it regularly to make sure it’s followed.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><i>not true</i>      <i>very true</i></p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><i>not at all</i>      <i>very much</i></p>	<p>The greater the goal, the more important a written workplan. It should include not only the issues work, but also the ways in which the work will strengthen the member groups. It should clearly specify roles and responsibilities.</p>

*Does this describe  
your collaborative?*

*Does this matter  
right now?*

*Why We Ask*

<p><b>The Right Members</b></p> <p>3. The collaborative has an adequately broad and diverse membership. There is a clear process for evaluating existing members and inviting new ones.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><i>not true</i>                      <i>very true</i></p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><i>not at all</i>                      <i>very much</i></p>	<p>Collaboratives often form around homogenous groups with shared cultures and goals. Expanding them to “other-thinking” groups can provoke tensions. A clear process for evaluating and inviting members helps, especially as the collaborative grows and formalizes.</p>
<p><b>Clear Rights &amp; Responsibilities</b></p> <p>4. Members clearly understand their roles and responsibilities, and the consequences of not meeting them.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><i>not true</i>                      <i>very true</i></p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><i>not at all</i>                      <i>very much</i></p>	<p>Collaboratives usually rely on members for financial or political support. The more they demand, the clearer they need to be about what they provide in return. Some members may want to limit their participation, with reduced responsibilities (and rights).</p>
<p><b>Tolerance for Diversity</b></p> <p>5. The collaborative doesn’t attempt to impose unity unnecessarily. It allows members to act independently, and encourages their creativity.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><i>not true</i>                      <i>very true</i></p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><i>not at all</i>                      <i>very much</i></p>	<p>Micromanagement and excessive control kills collaboratives fast. Where unanimity isn’t obviously necessary, trying to impose it will trigger power struggles. It’s usually better to err and learn than to sow distrust.</p>
<p><b>Contribution</b></p> <p>6. Members contribute the time, money, political influence, and other resources needed.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>	
<p><b>Mutual Benefits</b></p> <p>7. The collaborative effort makes its members stronger, rather than stretching them thinner.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><i>not true</i>                      <i>very true</i></p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><i>not at all</i>                      <i>very much</i></p>	<p>In order to sustain a long-term effort, members must grow stronger internally – in terms of membership, fundraising, political clout, public credit, or other important measures.</p>

*Does this describe  
your collaborative?*

*Does this matter  
right now?*

*Why We Ask*

	<i>Does this describe your collaborative?</i>	<i>Does this matter right now?</i>	<i>Why We Ask</i>
<p><b>Disclosure</b></p> <p><b>8.</b> Member organizations actually disclose what they need from the collaborative effort, and agree upon what they can expect from it.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><i>not true</i>                      <i>very true</i></p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><i>not at all</i>                      <i>very much</i></p>	<p>Member groups must trust each other and know that it's OK to state their organizational needs. Hiding these only leads to tensions later on, as groups battle over the credit or the connections to donors.</p>
<p><b>Efficient Decisions</b></p> <p><b>9.</b> The decision-making process is rapid enough for leaders to act expeditiously when necessary.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><i>not true</i>                      <i>very true</i></p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><i>not at all</i>                      <i>very much</i></p>	<p>As the collaborative's work grows, the decision-making process should be formalized. Toward the end of a campaign, the collaborative's leaders are often in negotiations, and need to make decisions very quickly.</p>
<p><b>Broad-Based Decisions</b></p> <p><b>10.</b> The decision-making process is based upon and truly respects the guidance of the members and the needs they have.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><i>not true</i>                      <i>very true</i></p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><i>not at all</i>                      <i>very much</i></p>	<p>When a collaborative's leaders take executive measures that don't reflect the members' needs or positions, they sow distrust and ultimately slow the work.</p>
<p><b>Coordination</b></p> <p><b>11.</b> Volunteers or staff have sufficient time to actually coordinate the work. Key tasks don't fall upon people without time or resources to do them.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><i>not true</i>                      <i>very true</i></p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><i>not at all</i>                      <i>very much</i></p>	<p>Chairing committees, making reminder calls, and arranging events takes a lot of time. Long-term collaboratives recognize this and dedicate resources to it. Foundations are increasingly willing to fund it.</p>

*Does this describe  
your collaborative?*

*Does this matter  
right now?*

*Why We Ask*

	<i>Does this describe your collaborative?</i>	<i>Does this matter right now?</i>	<i>Why We Ask</i>
<p><b>Regular Communication</b></p> <p><b>12.</b> The collaborative communicates regularly to inform member groups and maintain their level of support, and to keep campaign leaders abreast of critical developments.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><i>not true</i>                      <i>very true</i></p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><i>not at all</i>                      <i>very much</i></p>	<p>Regular communication is essential to maintaining the collaborative effort over the long haul. Enthusiasm wanes quickly. Misinformation can make campaign leaders look foolish, and reduces the support within member groups.</p>
<p><b>Trust</b></p> <p><b>13.</b> Members trust one another enough to disclose their organizational needs, to resolve differences in good faith, and to empower the collaborative's leaders.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><i>not true</i>                      <i>very true</i></p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><i>not at all</i>                      <i>very much</i></p>	<p>When collaboratives are new, or distrust reigns, needs go unspoken and often surface later in disguise, causing problems (i.e. battles over who takes credit.) Members then slow decision-making and exert more control.</p>
<p><b>Personal Relationships</b></p> <p><b>14.</b> Leaders and key players have personal relationships which transcend the work and facilitate problem-solving.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><i>not true</i>                      <i>very true</i></p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><i>not at all</i>                      <i>very much</i></p>	<p>Some important environmental coalition efforts have weathered long and difficult storms thanks to the personal friendships between leading players. Collaboratives should dedicate time and activities to building these.</p>
<p><b>Continuity of Leadership</b></p> <p><b>15.</b> The key leaders will stay with the effort throughout its critical periods.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>Collaboratives usually rely on a few key leaders to hold them together and keep them on track. Turnover in leadership sets everything back.</p>
<p><b>Evaluation and Learning</b></p> <p><b>16.</b> The collaborative monitors its plan and progress, assesses honestly, and makes changes in order to be more effective.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><i>not true</i>                      <i>very true</i></p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p><i>not at all</i>                      <i>very much</i></p>	<p>Collaboratives which don't invite constructive criticism won't learn as much and may not succeed. Members and leaders must trust one another enough to be honest.</p>

*Does this describe  
your collaborative?*

*Does this matter  
right now?*

*Why We Ask*

---

*Are there more specific benchmarks you'd like to set for your collaborative? Write your own goals here!*

	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	