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Swedish Agency for
Youth and Civil Society

Collaboration Model

for public actors and civil society

1.0

This is a revised version of the Swedish Collaboration Model developed by the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society. It has been adjusted for European users.

Why should we collaborate?

Collaboration between public actors and civil society* can have a positive and sustainable impact on society. Successful collaboration is borne out of complementary efforts from the different parties and a shared recognition that everyone has something to gain from collaboration.

The strength of civil society is that it often identifies needs and mobilizes at an early stage when society is facing significant challenges. Civil society organisations can adapt their activities quickly and adjust to the situation.

However, civil society's values can often be challenging to translate into economic terms. For example, among certain groups of citizens, civil society may have earned greater trust and gained more acceptance than public actors. Civil society also has other ways of reaching groups in society whose confidence in the public sector is waning. Hence, civil society can be an essential bridge builder in several ways.

Collaboration with civil society has great socioeconomic value, and we hope you can see the benefits of collaboration!

*For the purposes of this Collaboration Model, developed by the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society, civil society refers to organisations operating outside the governmental and for-profit sectors. For example, voluntary groups, non-profit organisations, associations, foundations, charities, and geographic or interest-based community and advocacy groups.

“Collaboration between the public sector and civil society requires will, courage, and a belief that together we can create a better tomorrow.”

– public actor

“Our weaknesses were strengths of the County and vice versa. We have complemented each other beyond all expectations.”

– civil society actor

“Collaboration with civil society adds value, results in innovative and cost-effective solutions, and enables a more democratic and inclusive society.”

– public actor

“Every step we take in partnership with civil society strengthens our mission and delivers more sustainable results.”

– public actor

User guide

Who should use the Collaboration Model?

This guide describes a collaboration process. The guide is primarily aimed at the public sector but can also be used by civil society actors. Above all, the intent is that public actors use the Collaboration Model together with civil society. The model can be used at local, regional, national, and international levels and adapted to different areas of activities.

How should the Collaboration Model be used?

- This guide provides readers with information and inspiration for collaboration. Individual pages are hyperlinked, enabling readers to easily navigate to the desired sections they want to learn more about.
- The guide is designed to help you collaborate with civil society. Use the collaboration model diagram (see page 6), and answer the questions posed in each phase and step when developing the collaboration process with your partners.

Content of the Collaboration Model

The guide describes the collaboration process. The guide is divided into:

- **the collaboration model diagram**
- **four phases:** Prerequisites; Identify and involve, Plan and adjust, and Implement and refine. In each phase, you will find information and discussion questions to help guide your work.

Each phase is divided into:

- **three steps** where you will find information and discussion questions.

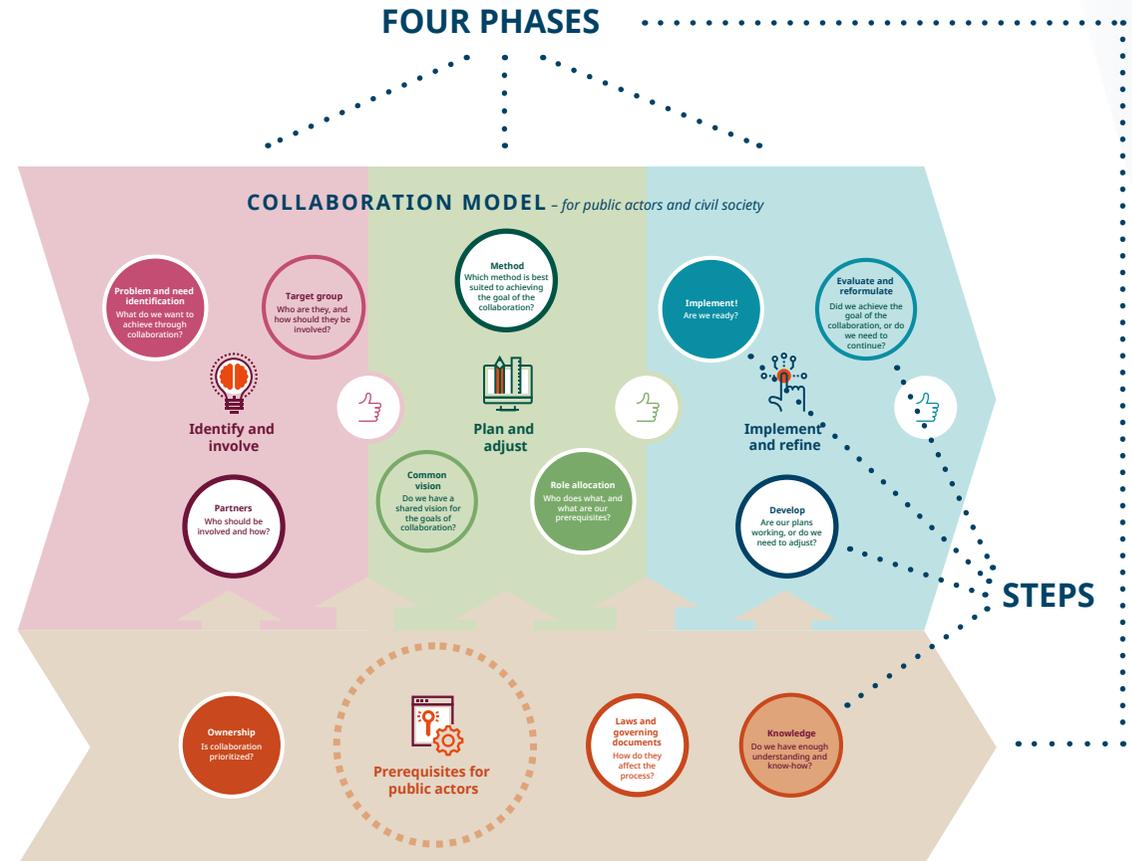




Three ways to navigate the PDF document



- **Click on the collaboration model.**
The diagram on page 6 is interactive, allowing you to easily navigate to the desired phase or step. If you want to skip ahead to a phase or step, click on the circle with the relevant heading.
- **Use the navigation list at the bottom**
A navigation list at the bottom of each page indicates where you are in each phase. You can also click on the title to return to the start page of the phase. The icon on the far left takes you back to the interactive collaboration model diagram.
- **Bookmarks in Acrobat**
You can also navigate between the phases and steps by using 'Bookmarks,' found on the left-hand side of the Adobe Acrobat software. Click on the 'Bookmarks' tab in the application window to open them, and then click on the various headings.



How to read the collaboration model diagram

- **The phases** can be read from left to right; you can also move back and forth between the phases as needed in the collaboration process. Pay particular attention to the Prerequisites phase, as it is the foundation of the collaboration process. It is suggested that you work on this phase before starting collaboration or in parallel with working on the other phases during the collaboration process.
- **The steps** in the phases do not have to be executed in a specific order but can be adapted to best suit the collaboration process.

COLLABORATION MODEL – for public actors and civil society





Laws and governing documents

Ownership

Knowledge

Prerequisites for public actors



Prerequisites for public actors

Prerequisites will influence the collaboration process in different ways.

Ideally, there are financial resources, knowledge, a constructive attitude, and a clear mandate to work on collaboration. But this often needs continuous attention before and during the collaboration process.

It is, therefore, useful to raise awareness of the prerequisites that exist so as not to let any shortcomings create

obstacles. This means exploring what opportunities are available and adapting the collaboration process to the circumstances. The more work done to create a high degree of ownership and knowledge internally, the more successful the collaboration process will be.





Discussion questions

- How do we ensure we have the proper prerequisites to collaborate with civil society?
- Which key individuals do we need to involve to establish suitable conditions for collaboration within our organisation?
- What obstacles could prevent us from collaborating with civil society at this time?



Keep in mind:

- The work to improve prerequisites should preferably be done before the start of the collaboration process but can also be done during the process.
- Collaboration takes time. Create a schedule for your work.





Ownership

– *Finances, mandate, and attitudes*

Financial conditions, mandates, as well as perceptions and attitudes, influence the outcomes of the collaboration process. The more work done to create a high degree of ownership internally, the more successful the collaboration process will be.

The more opportunity there is to work on these issues before and/or during the collaboration process, the more likely collaboration will produce positive results and effects. Sometimes this work cannot be prioritised, but it is essential to know that it may affect collaboration with civil society.

Public actors and civil society have different prerequisites. Collaboration is more likely to succeed if the financial circumstances are

good. Sometimes the public actor may need to support the involvement of civil society actors in the collaboration process. If the task of collaboration is backed by a political decision or is initiated by an individual employee, this can also impact the outcome. It can also make a significant difference if the issue of collaboration is raised at a strategic level.

Previous relationships between the parties may also influence the collaboration. In such cases, it can be helpful to draw on best practices from your operations and examine how you have worked with civil society in the past, learning from successes and mistakes.



Discussion questions

Financial preconditions

- What are our financial prerequisites for engaging in collaboration with civil society?
- What types of resources, besides financial ones, can we access?
- What are our civil society parties expected to contribute?
- What can the collaboration consist of if we do not include financial resources?



Perceptions and attitudes

- Do we have a common understanding of who makes up civil society and how we can collaborate with them?
- What are our organisation's perceptions and attitudes towards civil society and collaboration?
- What do we do if there is resistance to collaborating with civil society?
- What previous experience can we draw on from working with civil society?

Acceptance and mandates

- At what level in our organisation has the decision been taken that we should collaborate with civil society?
- At what level in our organisation is collaboration to be carried out?
- What stakeholders are involved?
- How do we get more people from our organisation involved? What key people are we missing?
- How do we ensure that we can work with collaboration in the long term?
- Are there documents in place, such as an agreement with civil society or a strategy for collaboration with civil society, on which we can build?

Keep in mind:

- Those individuals who are committed to the mission are a great resource, but make sure they can pass on their knowledge. Basing collaboration on these people alone is not sustainable.
- Inter-departmental partnership can strengthen collaboration.





Moving forward

Conduct an impact or risk assessment.

Based on your answers to the questions, it may be helpful to analyse the implications of these conditions for your collaboration process. There are great benefits in highlighting the consequences of the choices you make. A well-structured analysis can be used both for evaluation and to facilitate the follow-up of the collaboration process. There are different types of methods that you can use. For example, using a risk matrix is a simple way to identify the likelihood of potential risks and assess their potential impact. Choose the method that best suits your collaboration.

Work with attitudes. Depending on your situation, it may be essential to work on the perceptions of civil society in your organisation – to understand who makes up civil society and how you view your relationship with them. Civil society is complex and consists of different types of organisations and associations. Read more about civil society in the Knowledge step.

Financing collaboration. One way to finance collaboration is through projects in which a public and a civil society actor enter a partnership. If the project concerns youth, Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps could be relevant in this regard. Read more at <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/> and https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity_en.



Knowledge

– of collaboration and civil society

Knowledge of collaboration and civil society, in general, can strengthen the collaboration process.

It is a good idea to survey the knowledge in your organisation in both areas and invest time in improving knowledge where needed. This can be done before the collaboration process starts or during the process. The more knowledge you have, the higher the chances of ensuring smooth collaboration and avoiding various pitfalls.

Civil society* is made up of different types of actors working in a range of sectors. If the public actor learns more about civil society in general and understands its distinctive characteristics, it is easier to identify the right partners. Knowledge and understanding of your partners are often the keys to good collaboration.

Collaboration can also take place in various ways. The more the public actor familiarises itself with and learns about different forms and methods of collaboration, the easier it is to find the right approach.

*For the purposes of this Collaboration Model, civil society refers to organisations operating outside the governmental and for-profit sectors. For example, voluntary groups, non-profit organisations, associations, foundations, charities, and geographic or interest-based community and advocacy groups.



Discussion questions

- Within our organisation, what knowledge is there about civil society and the areas of collaboration?
- How can we make use of knowledge that already exists?
- How can we improve our knowledge in the long term?

Knowledge of civil society

- Who are the civil society actors operating in our area of activity/ geography?
- What are their activities, and how are they structured?
- What motivates them?

Knowledge of collaboration

- What is the added value of collaborating with civil society?
- Do we have a local agreement with civil society or a strategy for how to collaborate?

Keep in mind:

- It may be helpful to engage civil society actors to help raise your level of knowledge.



Moving forward

Actors that can help raise your level of knowledge.

- **There may be national agencies responsible for civil society issues** that can share their knowledge. Find out which authority is responsible for these issues in the country in which you operate. For example, Sweden has an agency responsible for youth and civil society issues (The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society), tasked with enhancing the conditions for civil society and expanding knowledge about civil society, which has originated this Collaboration Model. Access the agency's collective knowledge here: <https://www.mucl.se/en>

- **At the EU level**, the European Economic and Social Committee organises several annual initiatives and events focusing on civil society. <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work>
- **It may also be helpful to contact civil society organisations and networks** to obtain knowledge about civil society directly from civil society itself. One example is the European Youth Forum, platform of over 100 youth organisations <https://www.youthforum.org/>. At an international level CIVICUS is an example of a global alliance of civil society organisations <https://www.civicus.org/>.





▶▶ Access more knowledge here:

The Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) of the Council of Europe is the representative body of the INGOs enjoying participatory status with the Council of Europe <https://www.coe.int/en/web/ingo>. Among other things, they have adopted the Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process (Council of Europe, 2019). The Code describes the different types of collaboration and levels of involvement that a partner can have. It provides a good picture of how collaboration can take various forms and how clarity can be achieved regarding the meaning of collaboration. The Code can be downloaded from <https://rm.coe.int/code-of-good-practice-civil-participation-revised-301019-en/168098b0e2>.



Research

Many researchers at several universities and colleges have extensive experience studying civil society, with its various organisations and activities. Here are some of the Swedish universities that have centres for civil society research: Marie Cederschiöld University, Södertörn University, Lund University, Luleå University of Technology, and Stockholm School of Economics.

Outside of Sweden, the Johns Hopkins University's Center for Civil Society Studies is another example. They work in collaboration with governments, international organisations, investment innovators, and research colleagues around the world.



Laws and governing documents

To strengthen and gain full acceptance for the collaboration process in your organisation, it is essential to keep in mind overall strategies, visions, and plans that are important for and/or govern each area of activity.

One example is the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (2015–2030), and another is the EU Youth Strategy (2019–2027).

These international agreements identify civil society as a critical actor to collaborate with.

Where the public sector is concerned, engagement is also governed by several national laws and regulations that are important to consider when collaborating with civil society.

Discussion questions

- What overall perspectives, strategies, visions, laws, and regulations do we need to consider when working with the collaboration process?
- How do we gain full acceptance for and create awareness of these governing documents among all involved in the process?
- How do we integrate/consider these governing documents in the process?

Keep in mind:

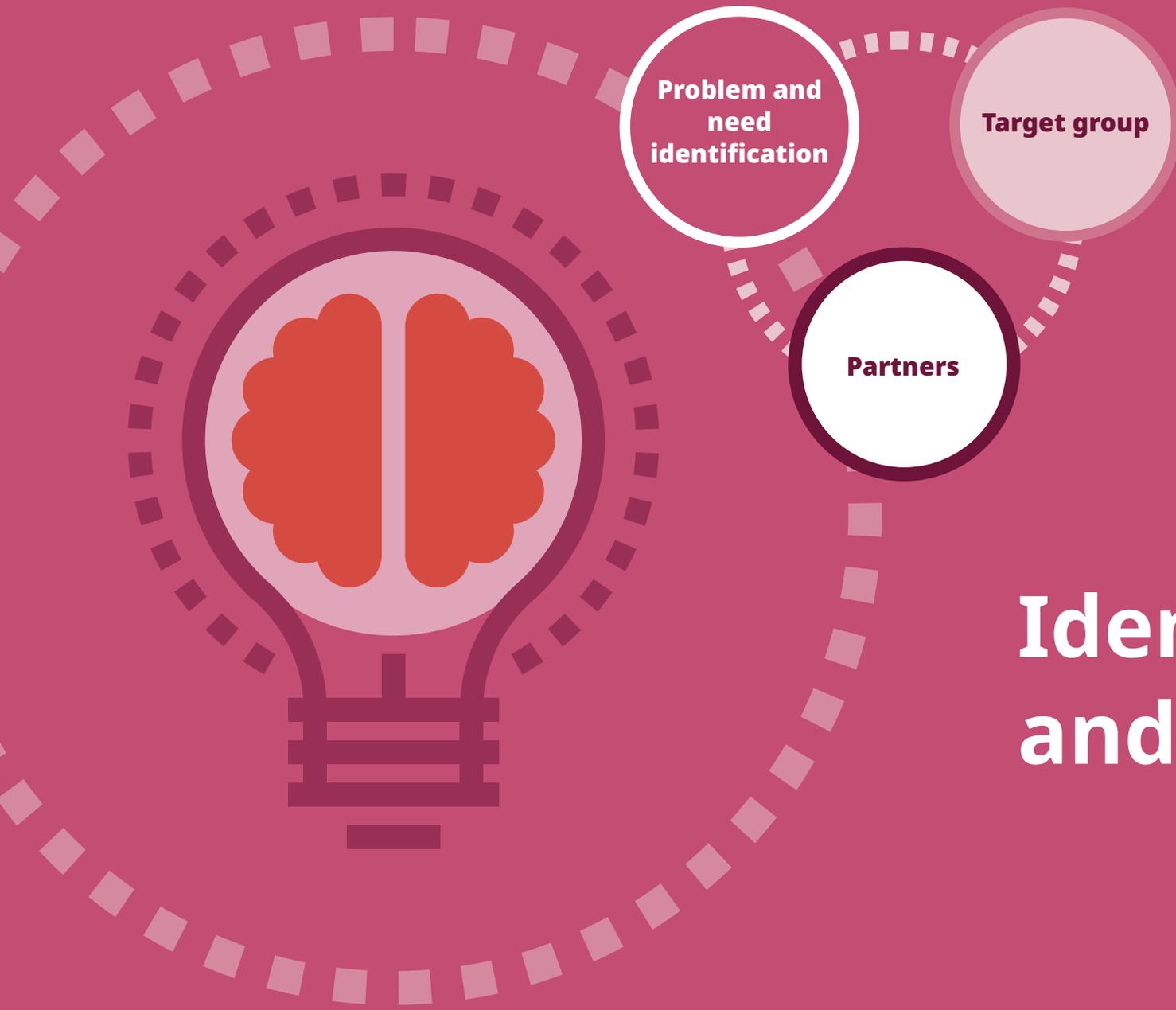
- In addition to laws and governing documents related to the context of the collaboration, there may also be laws and governing documents related to your target group.



Moving forward

Identify laws and governing documents related to the context of the collaboration – before the collaboration starts. This will ensure you are prepared and have considered how different laws and governing documents may affect the collaboration process.

Scan the horizon. Learning how others have done things is always a good idea. If you are new to collaboration, get in touch with someone with more experience. You can read more about how the European Commission works with civil society partnerships in international development at https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/our-partners/civil-society_en and how the Council of Europe works with them at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/ingo>. There are also various networks on civil society issues at the EU level and various national networks that can offer support and guidance.



Identify and involve



Identify and involve

The possibility of success increases if everyone involved in the collaboration process knows what needs to be done and why. It is also essential that all stakeholders see the benefits of collaboration and understand that they have something to gain from engagement.

It helps to be flexible and open to working through the steps in the phases in various order. For example, what is done first may depend on whether the public actor has identified a problem to work on or whether the target group approaches the public actor with

a need. A civil society actor may also approach the public actor and wish to collaborate, or it may be the other way around. It may be necessary to work in different ways in various collaboration processes.



Discussion questions

- Who are the critical individuals needed for the successful implementation of this phase?
- It is easy to identify people committed to the collaboration process, but how do we identify more people to participate in the collaboration process?
- Who should own the process?
- How can civil society get involved early in this phase?
- What forums exist for civil society to raise issues they wish to collaborate on? How do we handle such initiatives?
- Is there any step in this phase in which we cannot involve civil society, and if so, why?
- What is the best step to start with in our process?



Keep in mind:

- The target group and partners are divided here into different steps, but sometimes they can be the same.
- Invite civil society to participate at an early stage. Civil society organisations acknowledge that they are often consulted too late in the processes.
- Be clear about the starting point of the collaboration process and the underlying reasons it is being started.
- Always ensure that the work has earned full acceptance so that the collaboration can continue regardless of specific individuals.
- This is a process that will take time.





Problem and need identification

The identification of a problem or need can emerge in many different ways.

A civil society actor may, for example, come up with a problem and want to solve that problem in collaboration with the public actor.

It may also be that the target group has recognized a need that requires solving. Or perhaps a political decision has been taken on an issue that a public actor has been tasked with resolving.

Discussion questions

Identify needs/problems

- Has a problem been identified that needs to be solved.? If so, what is the problem?
- Is there a need to be met? If so, what is the need?
- Do we want to develop collaboration with civil society within a specific area, or do we want to develop it more generally?

Involve others when needs/problems are formulated

- Who has identified the need/ problem?
- Who should be involved in the formulation process? Target group? The partners? Other groups?
- Who has not been consulted? What boundaries have we set?
- What are the risks if one party identifies the problem independently and without the input of other stakeholders?





Keep in mind:

- Ensure that there are forums or channels where civil society actors can present their ideas.
- Everyone tasked with working on the need or problem, regardless of who has identified the problem, must work closely together to solve it. All involved must agree on formulating the need/problem to achieve maximum effectiveness and success.
- Collaboration founded on a high degree of ownership and based on the target group's needs is often well positioned to bring about change.



Moving forward

Narrow and define. If you have a vague understanding of the need/problem that requires attention, it may be useful to narrow your focus. A helpful method for this is to create a problem tree, starting with asking the question Why? until you get to the root cause of the need/problem. This method can be used alone or in a group.

Involve others in the formulation process. When deciding what stakeholders should be involved in addressing the issues, alternatives must be considered. A public actor can invite individuals/organisations to a consultation session. The public actor sets the agenda, and the civil society actors provide input. Another alternative is to organise a stakeholder dialogue, which is advisable to have

an equal relationship. In this scenario, all parties set the agenda together and, through dialogue, work sustainably to achieve results. You can read more about both these methods in the Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process (Council of Europe, 2019) <https://rm.coe.int/code-of-good-practice-civil-participation-revised-301019-en/168098b0e2>

Current status. Establishing a baseline analysis at the beginning of the collaboration process makes it easier to follow up on the outcome at the end. This can also be achieved through consultation. The public actor and civil society most likely have different views of the situation.





Partners

Different situations may require different types of partners, the selection of which will impact the outcome.

Financial and time constraints may, for example, influence what methods are chosen to identify and involve partners. The extent of the work may also depend on the scope of the issue that the parties have identified – whether it is a single issue that a party wants input on or a multi-year project. During this step, it is essential to be aware of the choices being made and why.

There is a greater chance of identifying the right partners if the public actor surveys, identifies, and discusses the issues to be addressed with several civil society actors that operate in the geographical area/

area of activity. This avoids contacting only those you know or usually collaborate with. By establishing a broad dialogue with civil society, the public actor and civil society can build a stable and accepted framework for collaboration that goes beyond a core group of committed individuals.

As a public actor, it may also be helpful to consider how requests from civil society regarding collaboration are managed and handled. It is essential to establish systems and procedures for managing civil society initiatives. For example, the broad dialogue mentioned above can present a good opportunity for civil society to put forward their ideas.



Problem and
need
identification

Target group

Partners

Keep in mind:

- Involve your partners early in the process.
- Make sure there is sufficient time to build good relationships and trust.

Discussion questions

Identify partner(s)

- Has a civil society actor taken the initiative for the collaboration, or is the question posed by the public actor?
- Who decides who participates and collaborates on an issue?

When a public actor initiates the idea of collaboration

- What types of partners could strengthen the work?
- How many partners should we have?
- Do we need different partners at different stages of the collaboration/ for different purposes?

- Who are the civil society actors operating in our geographical area/ area of activity?
- How can we identify them?
- How do we invite them to participate/ collaborate?
- Do any of our partners represent our target group?

Involve partner(s)

- How and when can we involve our partners?
- How can we avoid competition between different actors?





Problem and
need
identification

Target group

Partners



**Moving
forward**

Surveying civil society actors.

As a public actor, you can do this on your own or with the help of, for example, a reference group from civil society or an umbrella organisation. As a public actor, you can, for example, survey the lists of civil society actors that receive grants as a starting point. You can also explore opportunities available from international organisations, such as the EU, and see what opportunities are available for collaboration. The SALTO-YOUTH database allows you to find partners in the youth field. <https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/otlas-partner-finding/>

Provide information about the possibility of collaboration.

Invite a wide range of organisations! Explore which channels to reach as many people as possible in civil society. Many civil society actors are engaged in various activities outside their main scope of work. A broad invitation can lead to exceptional opportunities and collaboration with actors who, at first glance, did not appear to be relevant to the issue at hand. Also, consider the times that civil society representatives are available to meet if you wish to provide information at a meeting.

Conduct dialogue with those who are interested. You can use World café or other dialogue methods to ensure everyone gets a

say. Many different actors can help facilitate this type of meeting if such expertise is unavailable in your organisation. This is where civil society actors often can help. Many organisations have a long history of working with participatory and inclusive approaches.

Make a selection. It is up to each party to decide on selection criteria, but please be straightforward when dealing with civil society regarding the requirements and preferably engage in a dialogue on how the selection process may be structured. It is important that it is not only the public actor that chooses which civil society actors are suitable partners for them. The parties must have a mutual need to collaborate.

Give feedback to everyone involved. Inform everyone how the collaboration process is proceeding, even those who were not selected as partners.

Learn more about different tools for involving civil society in the Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process (Council of Europe, 2019) <https://rm.coe.int/code-of-good-practice-civil-participation-revised-301019-en/168098b0e2>



Collaboration Model



Phase: Identify and involve



Step: Partners



Target group

Early in the collaboration process, parties must consider the target groups for the identified need/problem.

Working too broadly with different target groups can be inefficient. Therefore, identifying the group with the greatest need is necessary. The target group can be defined as

those individuals or groups whose problems/needs are addressed through the collaboration between the public actor and civil society.

It is essential to involve the target group early on, to evaluate the work with them while it is in progress so that the process, and the results of the collaboration, are well received.

Discussion questions

Identify target group

- Who is our target group?
- What knowledge do we have about the target group?
- What external analysis have we done to identify our target group and their needs?

Involving the target group

- How can we prepare and involve the target group in the collaboration?
- Should the target group be involved in identifying the need/problem?
- Should representatives for the target group also be a partner?

Keep in mind:

- If you are too general, there is a significant risk of not reaching the right people. Therefore, it is essential to be specific when describing and addressing the target group directly.
- Involve your target group in the process early on and stay in regular contact for the best chance of a successful outcome.





Moving forward

Segment the target group. When identifying and surveying your target group, it may be important to segment the group, i.e., to identify both primary and secondary target groups. A secondary target group can benefit from the results and experience you have gained in addressing the needs/problems of the primary target group. This secondary target group could include decision-makers who make decisions on issues related to your target group but could also include other actors.

Conduct a target group analysis. A target group analysis provides a better understanding of the target group's needs. There are many different methods for conducting a target group analysis. Dialogue forums, surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions are examples of how you can broaden and deepen your understanding of the target group's needs.





Method

**Common
vision**

**Role
allocation**

**Plan and
adjust**



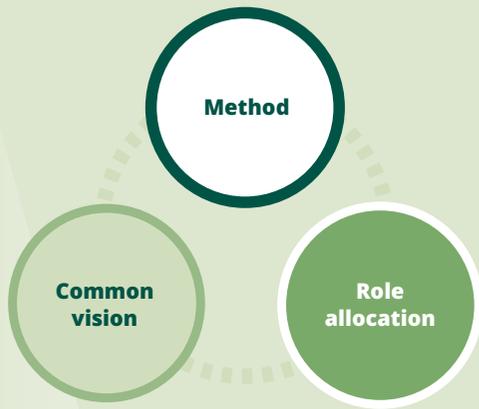
Plan and adjust

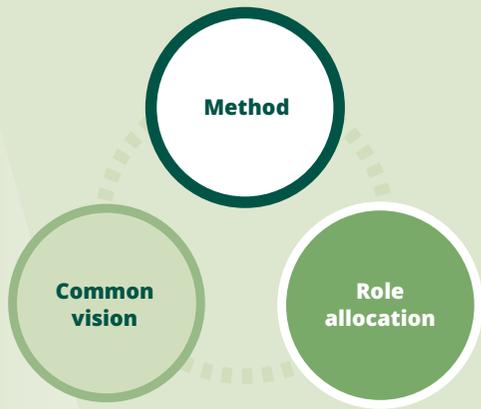
This phase focuses on laying a solid foundation for working together and planning how the collaboration will be carried out to address the needs and/or problems that have been identified.

This process involves working together to clarify the different parties' objectives for collaboration and the roles and prerequisite of the other parties. Spending time on this together reduces the risk of problems later in the collaboration process. It is important not to assume that all parties have the same view of the process or objectives for the collaboration. Different organisational principles guide civil society and the public sector. Civil society is driven by people united around a common idea or set of values, while laws and regulations govern the public sector. It is good to be aware of this

potential challenge when the parties collaborate. This can also be seen as a strength, as different parties have different strengths and weaknesses. Open dialogue is often key to establishing a shared vision of the situation and finding an effective way to work together. Collaboration must be based on established criteria and guidelines, as well as trust and confidence.

Planning together and maintaining an ongoing discussion regarding the added value and goals of the collaboration, is essential for the success of this phase of the collaboration process.





Discussion questions

- How can we remove any obstacles to ensure smooth collaboration moving forward?
- Is there an imbalance of power between the parties that affects us at this stage?
- How can we reduce the risks of an imbalance of power affecting our process?
- Do different parties use different language/ words/concepts in their collaboration? How do we find a common language?
- Have we performed a joint risk analysis? What happens if conditions change?
- How do we ensure that collaboration is transparent, sustainable, and long-term?
- What timeframes do we have to adhere to?

Keep in mind:

- All parties should consider what they are prepared to compromise on.
- Be clear about what you agree on and document your process. Consider whether or not you need some form of a written agreement.
- Spread awareness of the collaboration process beyond the core group of committed individuals.
- Maintain ongoing discussions regarding the added value of collaboration.





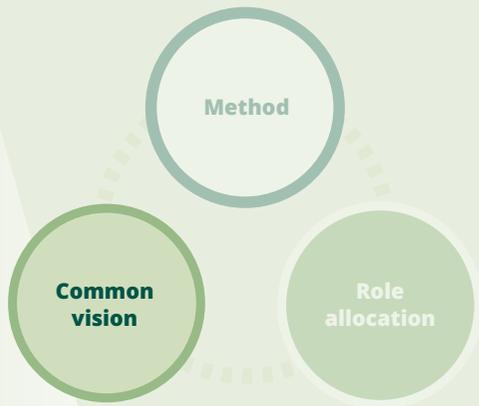
Common vision

In this phase, all partners must have a chance to explain how they envisage the collaboration process.

You must take the time necessary to reconcile with each other and ensure that all parties share the same vision. Perhaps something needs to be adjusted that will affect planning in the future. Before entering a collaboration, it is helpful to discuss expectations to

reduce the risk of misunderstandings and dissatisfaction – and to ensure understanding of each other's reasons for engaging in the collaboration.

But it is essential to remember that a shared vision of how the collaboration should work does not necessarily mean that all parties must have the same collaboration goals; different goals can complement each other.



Discussion questions

- What are the expectations of the different parties for the collaboration?
- How do we make sure we are talking about the same things?
- How do we ensure we have the same view of what we want to achieve through collaboration?
- What do we do if expectations differ? What can we compromise on?
- Is there anything that has changed or needs to be adjusted in our problem/need statement?

Keep in mind:

- Remember that civil society and the public sector operate according to different organisational principles. Get to know one another.
- Keep the need/problem statement in mind and remind yourselves why you have chosen to work together.

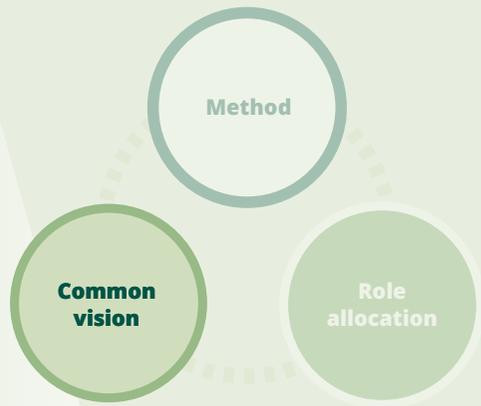


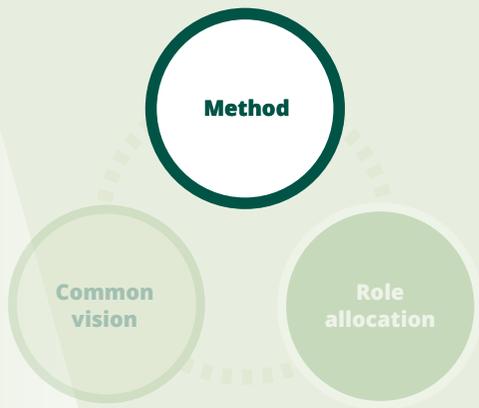
Moving forward

The common vision. Please use the collaboration model diagram (see page 6) when defining your shared vision of the collaboration with your partners. By referring to the diagram, you can ensure that all parties use the same language when talking about the different parts of the process.

Documents defining collaboration. Developing a joint statement of intent and a timetable for your collaboration process will lead to fewer misunderstandings. A local agreement can provide a reasonable basis for this. In a local or regional agreement, civil society and the public actor define the principles of collaboration and the intention to collaborate. Read more about this kind of agreements in the Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process (Council of Europe, 2019) <https://rm.coe.int/code-of-good-practice-civil-participation-revised-301019-en/168098b0e2>

Financial issues. At this stage of the collaboration process, it may also be helpful to start discussing finances if you have not already done so. As soon as you discuss the collaboration, it is important to determine who will bear what costs. For example, those involved on a non-profit basis may need to be paid for working hours or travel expenses if they attend planning meetings related to the collaboration. Subsequently, there may be higher costs to bear in the process, such as salaries, depending on the type of collaboration.





Method

Different methods can be used depending on the parties' aims, the scope of the collaboration, and the prevailing prerequisites.

The various parts of the collaboration process may also need different methods. The parties in each collaboration process must review their needs together to identify the best method(s).

Discussion questions



- What conditions influence the choice of method (time/financial resources/staff resources etc.)?
- What are our needs?
- Are different methods needed to address different parts of the problem/need?
- Which method(s) is/are best for us?

Keep in mind:



- The methods chosen may influence the roles that different parties need to adopt in the collaboration process.
- Depending on the choice of method, written agreements may need to be made between the parties.



Moving forward

Here are some methods that may be relevant to your collaboration process.

Please use the collaboration model diagram (see page 6) to decide together when different methods should be used.

Civil society provides input and information.

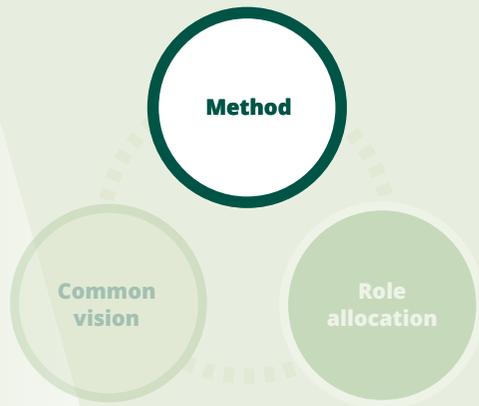
- **Dialogue** can be incorporated in different ways. You can have a broad dialogue or a collaborative dialogue. The broad dialogue can be helpful at the beginning of the collaboration process when there are still no clear objectives or plans. Collaborative dialogue is a frequent dialogue with a clear purpose. All parties should be involved in setting the agenda. It is good to keep a dialogue going throughout the collaboration process.
- **Consultation** is offered by the public actor. Here, civil society receives information and has the opportunity to provide input. This is an excellent method to use at the

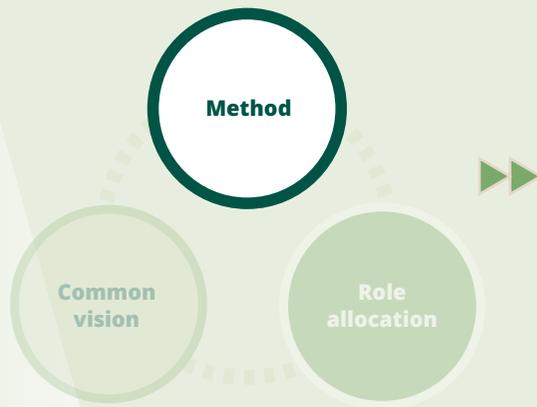
beginning of the process and when you are working on development and reformulation, for example.

Read more about dialogue and consultation in the Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process (Council of Europe, 2019) <https://rm.coe.int/code-of-good-practice-civil-participation-revised-301019-en/168098b0e2>

Civil society as a provider.

- **Public procurement.** Civil society actors can naturally be involved in regular procurement processes. In this case, using functional requirements can make it easier for civil society actors to participate.
- **Reserved procurement.** Under some national procurement legislation within the EU, a public actor can also reserve participation in procurement for a civil society organisation. This is the case in Sweden, for example, if it expands opportunities for people with limited chances





of entering the labour market or people with disabilities to access employment. This also applies to the procurement of certain welfare services. You can find more information on the Swedish procurement legislation here <https://www.upphandlingsmyndigheten.se/en/conducting-business-with-public-sector-stakeholders/>

- **Procurement in the EU.** All Member States' procurement laws are based on the EU procurement directives, but all EU Member States have their own procurement laws. Since they follow the same directives, they are similar, but some things may differ. More information https://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/public-procurement_en

Develop together.

- **Project.** Within the scope of a project, the parties can explore collaboration. Together you can identify new creative solutions and perspectives on the problems/needs you are trying to address. It is an effective way to test and determine whether new methods work.
- **Service design** is also a collaboration method you can use to develop innovative ideas.
- **Read more** about various tools for involving civil society in the Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process (Council of Europe, 2019) <https://rm.coe.int/code-of-good-practice-civil-participation-revised-301019-en/168098b0e2>



Role allocation

Role allocation is not always easy, and roles and conditions may change along the way.

A good starting point is for the parties to identify the roles needed in the collaboration process and who is best suited to carry out which tasks.

The parties must be clear and make joint decisions regarding each party's roles so that nothing is taken for granted or falls through the cracks.

In this context, it may be important to consider whether there are prejudices that can stand in the way of effective collaboration.

Discussion questions

- What resources do the different parties bring to the table (time, financial resources etc.)?
- What is the balance of power between the different parties?
- How do we deal with a possible power imbalance?
- What roles are needed in different phases of the collaboration?
- Who has the right to allocate tasks?
- Who owns the process?
- Is there a need for contracts or agreements?

Keep in mind:

- Take sufficient time to get to know each other.
- In addition to public and civil society actors, it may be helpful to involve other actors at different stages of the process, such as your target group, experts, or researchers.
- Remember that roles and responsibilities may need to be renegotiated if people are replaced or leave or new partners join.





Moving forward

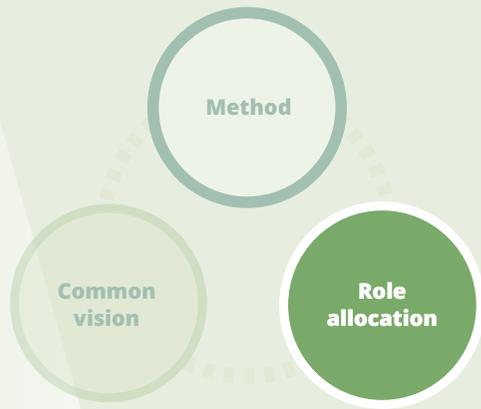
Identify the roles. Please use the collaboration model diagram (see page 6) as a starting point for developing the critical roles with your partners. Write down the roles needed in different parts of the process. Remember that someone needs to be appointed to coordinate all those involved and ensure the continuity of the process. It may be interesting to learn more about the phenomenon “boundary spanners”, who have critical yet unspecified roles and functions in managing cross-boundary relationships.

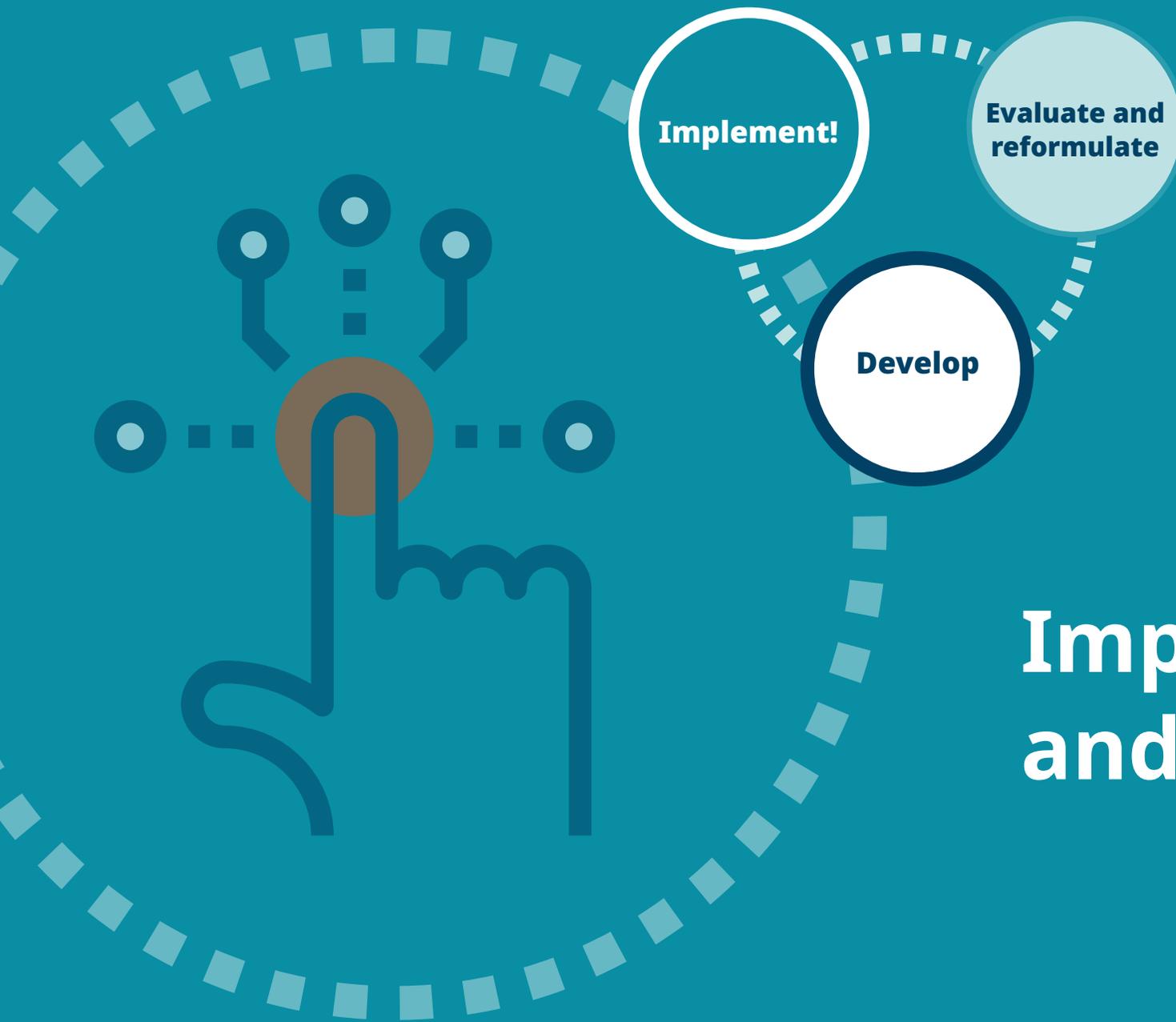
Level of collaboration. The Code can help you identify the level of collaboration you should have at different stages. Some parts of the collaboration concern sharing information, while others concern entering a partnership. Code of Good Practice for Civil

Participation in the Decision-Making Process (Council of Europe 2019) <https://rm.coe.int/code-of-good-practice-civil-participation-revised-301019-en/168098b0e2>

Strengths and prerequisites of the parties.

Work should be allocated based on the different strengths and prerequisites of the parties. Some civil society actors may be necessary for their role as advocates, accepted at the grassroots level in the local community; others may be important in their role as service providers, working on initiatives as a complement or alternative to the activities of the public actor. On the other hand, the public actor may have more significant resources to engage in collaboration in different ways and has the benefit of representing the interests of all citizens.





Implement and refine



Implement and refine

Now it's finally time to act and put the collaboration into practice. Some things should be done jointly, while others should be done independently by the various parties.

When the planned process is implemented, it is essential to maintain an open dialogue and provide feedback to one another. This way, there is a greater chance the process will turn out as planned. Through continuous dialogue, the collaboration process can be developed, refined, and modified according to needs that arise along the way without causing problems. In this regard, it is important to remember that the Identify and

involve and Plan and adjust phases form the basis for this final phase to work and achieve a positive outcome.

Once the planned process has been implemented, it is essential to pause, evaluate and reformulate. Consider what can be incorporated into the work in the future and whether there is a need for the parties to continue to work together.



Discussion Questions:

- Is there anything that needs to be updated in our planning?
- Is there any other actor that should be invited at this stage?
- How do we measure the quality of collaboration?
- How do we measure the results of collaboration?
- How do we keep the discussion about why we collaborate and the added value it provides?

Keep in mind:

- Keep on going and remember the added value of collaboration.





Implement

After the preparatory steps, it is time to implement and execute.

The method(s) chosen by the parties for the collaboration should naturally be used and adhered to. Still, it is essential to remember

to tailor the method(s) to the particular needs identified by the parties. It will help if you are open to the fact that conditions may change during the collaboration.

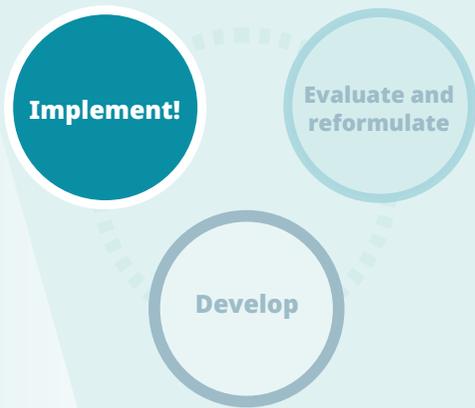
Discussion questions:

- Have we performed an impact/risk analysis regarding what issues may arise during work (e.g., when conditions change)?
- How do we monitor whether the method(s) work for our collaboration process?
- How do we maintain open lines of communication, and how do we provide feedback to each other during implementation?
- How do we share and spread awareness of our work?

Keep in mind:

- Civil society must still be able to perform its role as advocates, even when collaborating with the public actor.
- Take time to reflect during the process!
- Monitor your progress continuously and celebrate your successes.





Moving forward

Documents and guidelines. Coordinate with each other to ensure everything is in place before implementation – agreements, schedules, and other essential documents that define the implementation.

Dialogue and feedback. Ensure you have a plan and a structure for maintaining a dialogue between the parties during implementation. Even if there is nothing in particular to report, it is better to communicate this than not to provide any feedback.

Quality. If civil society operates on behalf of the public sector, its activities may need to be adapted to the regulatory framework and quality regulations governing the public sector. Even then, it is a good idea to make space for dialogue on various issues, such as how to define the quality of the activity.

Voice and service. In cases where civil society organisations define themselves as both advocates and service providers, it is important to be attentive as a public actor. The collaboration mustn't hamper the ability of civil society organisations to perform both roles.





Develop

An important step in the collaboration is developing the work.

The collaboration can progress when the parties evaluate the process and the outcome together.

In this step, there is an opportunity to adjust the process and consider what can be improved. Development can take place at any point when the need arises.

Discussion questions:



- Have the conditions for the collaboration changed?
- Is the need/problem the same now as when we started?
- Have the roles/needs changed?
- Are our chosen methods working, or is there something we need to adjust?

Keep in mind:



- As the world changes, so can the needs and expectations of your target group.
- Dare to make adjustments and adapt to external circumstances.



Moving forward

Dialogue is crucial throughout the collaboration process. Maintaining an open dialogue between the parties makes it easier to identify areas for improvement. If the target group is not represented by one of the parties, it is also essential to have regular coordination meetings with the representatives of the target group to see if the circumstances have changed.

Situational analysis is essential for bringing additional perspectives to the development of your work. If the collaboration process has a long time horizon, it may be beneficial to appoint someone to conduct a situational analysis of the issue you are working on.



Evaluate and reformulate

At the end of the collaboration process, it is time to evaluate the results of the collaboration.

Based on these results, the parties can develop future initiatives most appropriately.

This applies to the collaboration process itself and how well the need/problem has been addressed.

Discussion questions:

- How do we evaluate the work of our collaboration process, and how do we use the evaluation?
- What were the results of the collaboration itself? Was it different from what we anticipated at the beginning of the process?
- What have we learned during the course of the collaboration?
- Have we achieved the goal of the collaboration? Have we met the need/solved the problem we identified?
- How do we pass on and share our results?
- Do we need to continue working together? How?

Keep in mind:

- Look back at the discussion questions from the other parts of the collaboration process and follow up.
- Involve the target group and provide feedback so they know the results.





Moving forward

Evaluation of the initiative and the collaboration process may, in many cases, go hand in hand. It is helpful to agree on the forms of evaluation and follow-up early in the collaboration. Use the evaluation to learn more about the extent to which the collaboration has affected the outcome, i.e., whether the collaboration has affected how well the need/problem has been addressed.

An evaluation of the effects of the collaboration may also be of interest to determine whether your efforts are generating sustainable results.

The final step – reformulate. After you have gone through the collaboration process together, you will have to decide whether to continue your collaboration. If you have worked together on a project, the activity may become permanent if the need remains. Perhaps new actors should be invited. It is time to restart the collaboration process.

Thank you to all the civil society and public actors who shared their knowledge and experience with us. Your input has been invaluable for the development of the Collaboration Model. It is through collaboration that the Model has become a reality.

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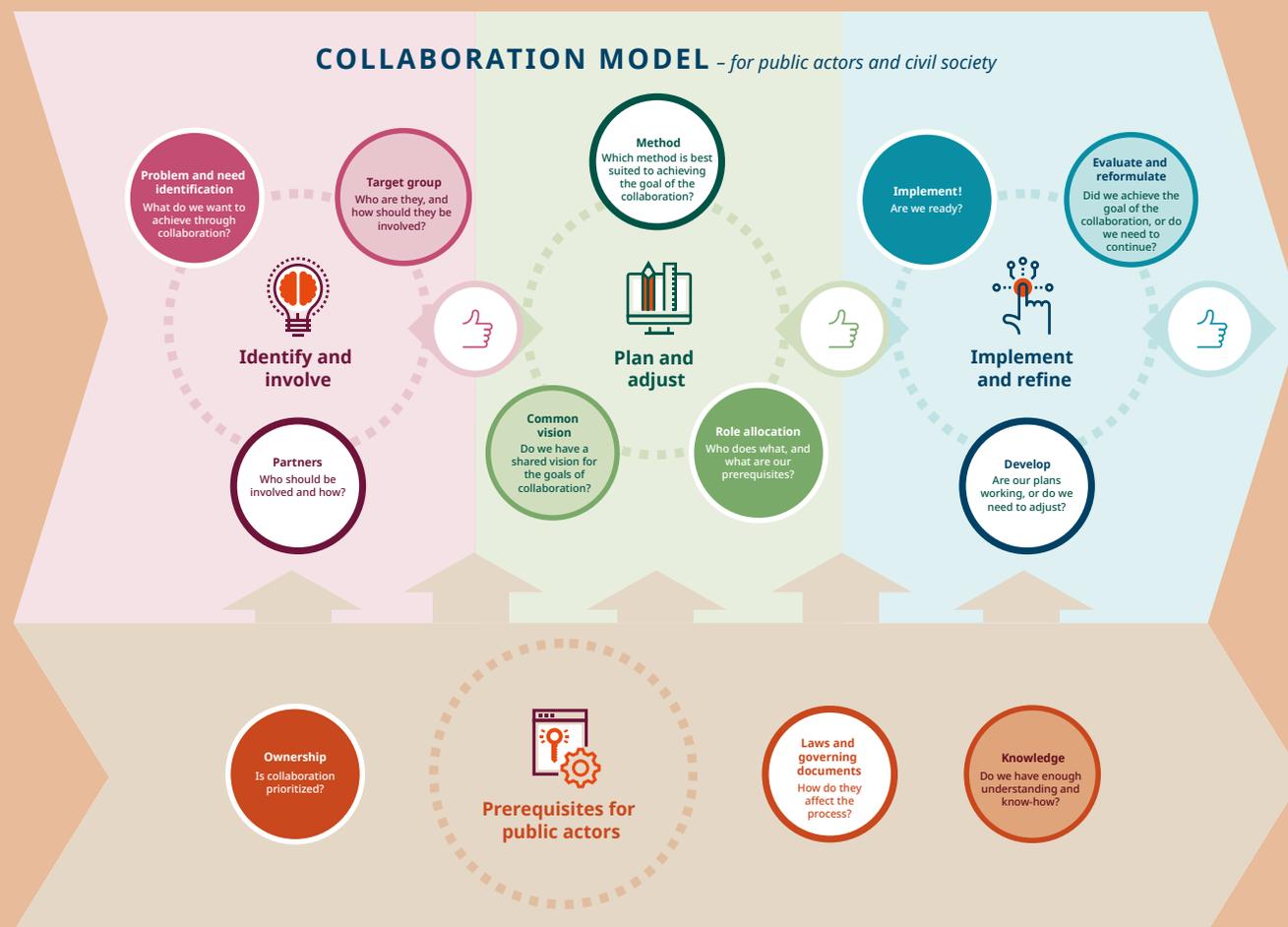
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