

# READY TO COLLABORATE?

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# Background to collaboration

- Collaboration is the ‘holy grail’!
- BUT:
- Hard to achieve & even harder to sustain
  - 50-70% business collaborations fail
- Cost of failure:
  - Lost opportunity costs
  - Transaction costs of relationship building, new structures etc.
- WHY:
  - Mismatch of purpose to integration model
  - Not really ready for collaboration & all it entails

## Integration Continuum

COOPERATIVE

COORDINATIVE

COLLABORATIVE

Low trust — unstable relations	Medium trust — based on prior relations	High trust — stable relations
Infrequent communication flows	Structured communication flows	Thick communication flows
Known information sharing	'Project' related and directed information sharing	Tactical information sharing
Adjusting actions	Joint projects, joint funding, joint policy	Systems change
Independent/autonomous goals	Semi-independent goals	Dense interdependent relations and goals
Power remains with organisation	Power remains with organisations	Shared power
Resources — remain own	Shared resources around project	Pooled, collective resources
Commitment and accountability to own agency	Commitment and accountability to own agency and project	Commitment and accountability to the network first
Relational time frame requirement — short term	Relational time frame medium term — often based on prior projects	Relational time frame requirement — long term 3-5 years

# Fit-for-purpose designs



- All relations have merit & application
- Approaches & relational strength must be *requisite to purpose*
- Independent, adjusting actions & information sharing: cooperation
- Do same, but more efficiently through joint working, aligned resources & action: coordination
- Systems change: collaboration
- Also – need to consider the vertical relations!
  - Linking across layers, into resources, legitimacy & power/influence

# Collaboration ... not business as usual !

- Collaboration – brings together disparate & often previously competing agencies together to achieve what can't be delivered by working alone.
- To be effective participating organisations must – realise their interdependency, let go of autonomy, share resources & power and risk & rewards – be willing to work for collective good

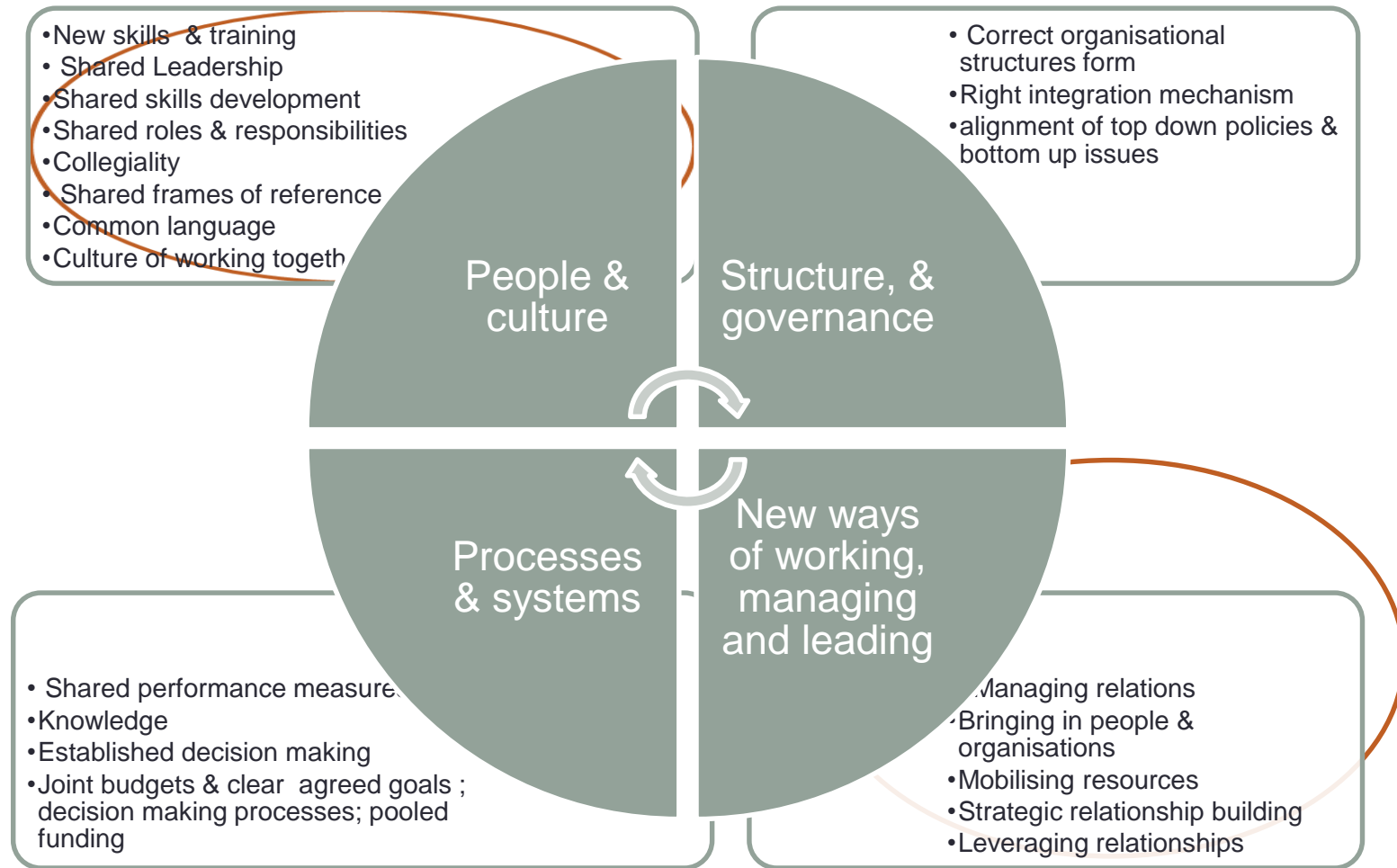
Not always an easy undertaking!!

# Do we really need to do this?

Collaboration – high rewards – high resources & risks

- Is there a genuine need to collaborate ?
  - Would some other form of ‘working together’ suffice?
- What are you looking to achieve?
- Are there any other ‘drivers’ for collaboration
  - Funding; legitimacy; ‘right thing to do’?
- What are the collective outcomes?
- What will my organisation ‘get’ out of the collaboration?

# FILLING OUT THE GREY SPACE



# Change ready?

- Collaboration demands change – people & organisations
  - Institutional arrangements, policies, ways of working and funding streams
  - **Is your organisation ready & able to make these changes?**
- Does it have the organisational structures, systems & processes – management commitment & resources to enable & sustain collaboration?
- Does your organisation resist change – or unable to generate degree of change needed?



# Capability & capacity to work collaboratively?

## Collaboration costs \$, time & effort

- Assess organisation's capability to contribute sufficient resources
  - Results take time to accrue – can require a long term commitment
- Time is a crucial resource
  - Time invested in building new relationships & sustaining existing ones
    - Ramping up & scaling down as necessary – monitoring
- Demand high level of intellectual energy & effort from staff
  - Might reduce their focus on parent organisations' activities
    - Weigh internal needs against those of the collaboration - worth the investment
- Collaborative competencies
  - Different skill set - often not currently appreciated or valued by organisations
    - Skills assessment

# Able & willing to delegate decision making?

- Representatives have sufficient decision-making authority
  - Level of authority = the issues being addressed
- Representatives accountable to collaboration & organisation
  - Can create tensions unless this has been agreed to at the start
- Specific support of staff to work outside of boundaries
  - Not just boundary spanning – boundary crushing!



Can have implications where parent organisations are not locally based

# Different skill set

- initiate and nurture relationships
- be trustworthy
- build agreement around a collaborative vision
- articulate and communicate the collaborative vision and the advantages of working that way
- network within and across sectors to build support for both the initiative and collaborative ways of working
- influence within the collaboration as well as upwards and outwards to other groups and decision makers
- read and diagnose collaborative processes and actions and know when and how to intervene
- • see the 'big picture': how members are connected and the opportunities for synergistic actions
- take risks and encourage others to be comfortable with taking risks.

# Core organisational & personal collaborative competencies

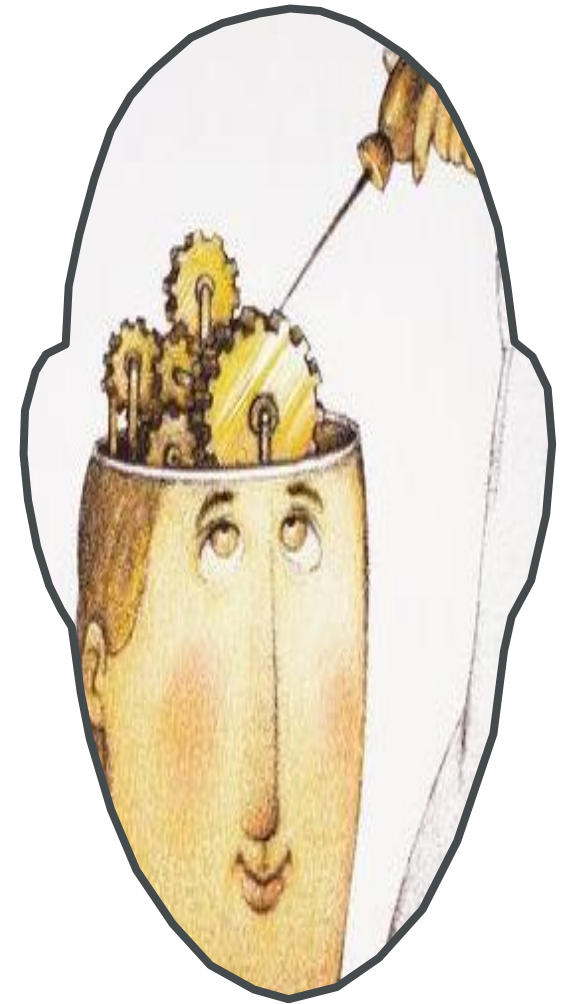
Organisational	Systems & Processes	Personal Competencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance: fit-for-purpose designs</li> <li>• Management : Across boundaries Driving, molding maneuvering Leadership: Dispersed &amp; process catalyst</li> </ul>	<p>Adjusted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance &amp; measurement evaluation</li> <li>• Accountability Processes</li> <li>• HR approaches</li> <li>• Culture of working together</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nurturing</li> <li>• Group work skills</li> <li>• Negotiation skills (interest based)</li> <li>• Political savvy</li> <li>• Process analysis</li> <li>• Listening, learning, linking &amp; leveraging</li> </ul>

# Open to scrutiny?

- Be prepared for & accept critical examination of operations
  - Frank exchange of views vs scoring points
  - Genuine contribution vs fence sitting
    - Such actions undermine the effectiveness of the collaborative effort and quickly damage an organisation's reputation.
- Each organisation and its representative must commit, up front, to actively contribute and share with other participants in the collaboration.

# Prepared to be accountable to collaborative agreements?

- Expectation for P/O to genuinely thrive to collective goals
  - As opposed to individual goals/self interest
  - Accountable to collaboration & P/O
    - Dual accountability function is difficult
- Are there appropriate structures & processes to support & sustain collaboration?
- Balance organisational priorities & commitments against those of the collaboration



# From theory to practice .....

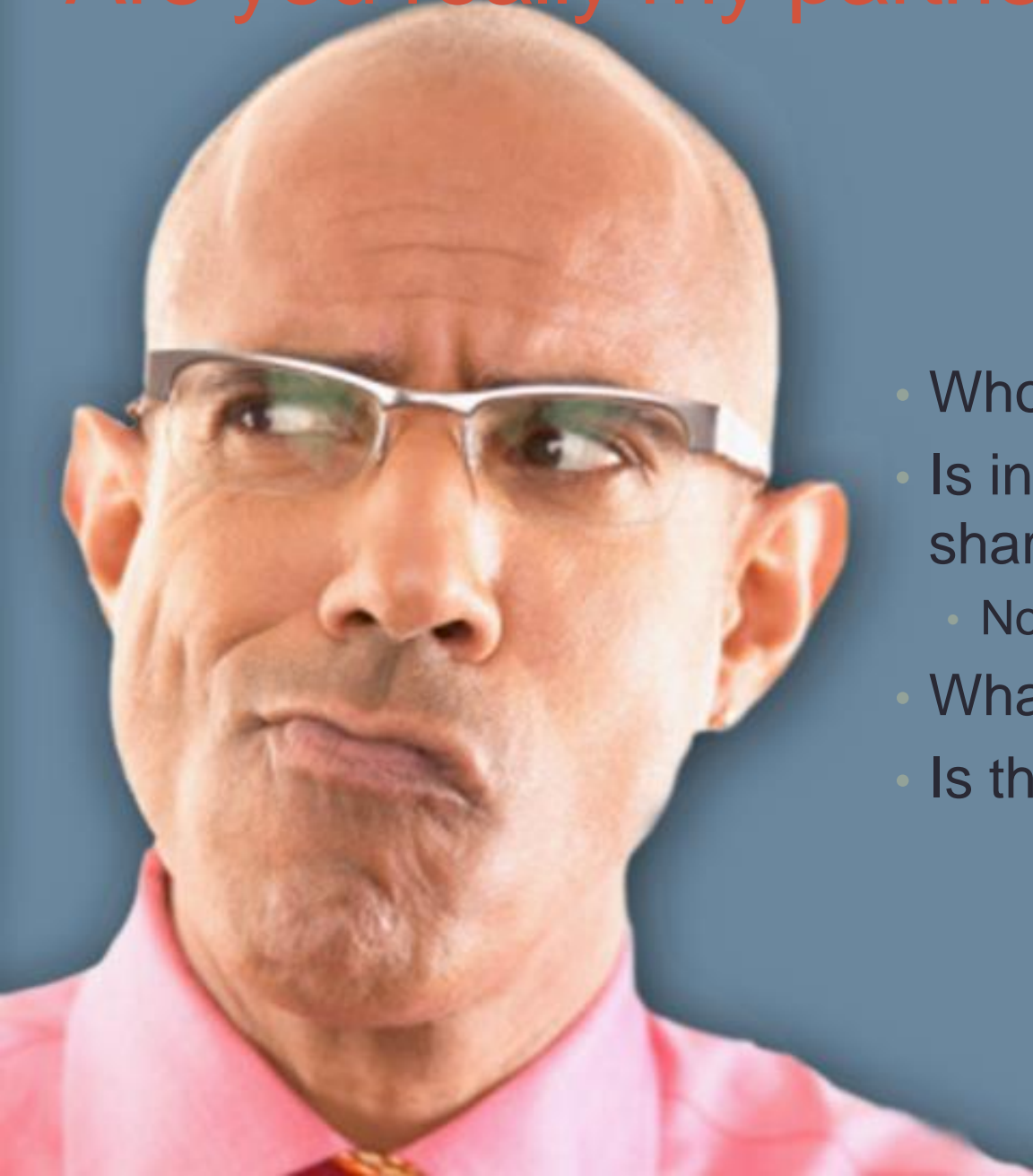
<b><i>Collaboration actions/decisions</i></b>	<b><i>Parent Organisational Adjustments</i></b>
<b>Membership stability - agree not to take promotions or changes in roles</b>	<b>HR processes focused on organisation advancement Loss of ability to control staff Collaborative skills audit; Organisational 'readiness' audit</b>
<b>Shift from focus on organisational 'positions' to 'issues' 12 months 'down time' learning about each other</b>	<b>Expectation for immediate action/outcomes Expectation that members will push 'positions'</b>
<b>Agreement to fund/support member organisation Draw from pooled funding</b>	<b>Expectation that P/O &amp; collaboration resources are directed to collaboration &amp; P/O benefit Changed funding agreements Expectation of equivalent contribution Collective vs individual outcomes</b>
<b>Accepting 'free riders' involvement in collaboration in hope that</b>	<b>As above</b>
<b>Accepting 'new' agencies into existing collaborative arrangements</b>	<b>Willingness to let other 'new' agencies to 'free ride' on prior 'relational or network' capital &amp; efforts</b>
<b>Adoption of processes &amp; procedures for the collaboration – contradictory to P/O</b>	<b>Willingness to 'step back' allow space for the collaboration to establish &amp; evolve Trust the collaboration process</b>
<b>Members commitment to collaboration &amp; each other first</b>	<b>Expectation that workers represent P/O first Accountability widened &amp; blurred Acceptance of dual role &amp; need for stronger legitimacy to 'work outside organisation'</b>

# Implications & conclusions

- Collaboration can produce great outcomes!
- Not everything needs to be a collaboration & most collaborations will face challenges
  - Collaborations should not be entered into lightly
    - Be strategic & deliberate in decisions and actions
- Organisations must: ask the big questions
  - know what they are looking for in a collaboration; determine the level of commitment required; your capacity and ability to act in new ways; and assess your organisation's internal tolerances for participation and risk.
  - Weigh the potential benefits & challenges against business as usual



# Are you really my partner?



- Who has the power?
- Is information genuinely shared?
  - Not just base information
- What is the trust level?
- Is there commitment?