

Ready to collaborate?



Adjustments
organisations must
consider to open the
magic box

Collaboration ... not business as usual

- Collaboration – brings together disparate & often previously competing agencies together to achieve what can't be delivered 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 thing!!!

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

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?

Change ready?



- Collaboration demands change
 - 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?

Collaborative capacity & capability

- investment of staff effort and contribution of funds and materials that could be used beneficially elsewhere
 - Genuine assessment of capability to commit & contribute sufficient resources
- Long term - benefits – commitment
- Requires a particular set of skills – often different to everyday functioning

- Relationship building; facilitation; negotiation & shared action
 - Collaborative skills audit
 - Past experience in collaboration beneficial

Time –is a critical resource
Invested in relationships & redirected from other tasks

High level of intellectual efforts

Weigh these aspects against organisational needs

Able & willing to delegate decision making

- Representatives have sufficient decision-making authority
- Level of authority = the issues
- Representatives accountable to collaboration & organisation
- Specific support of P/O to work outside of boundaries

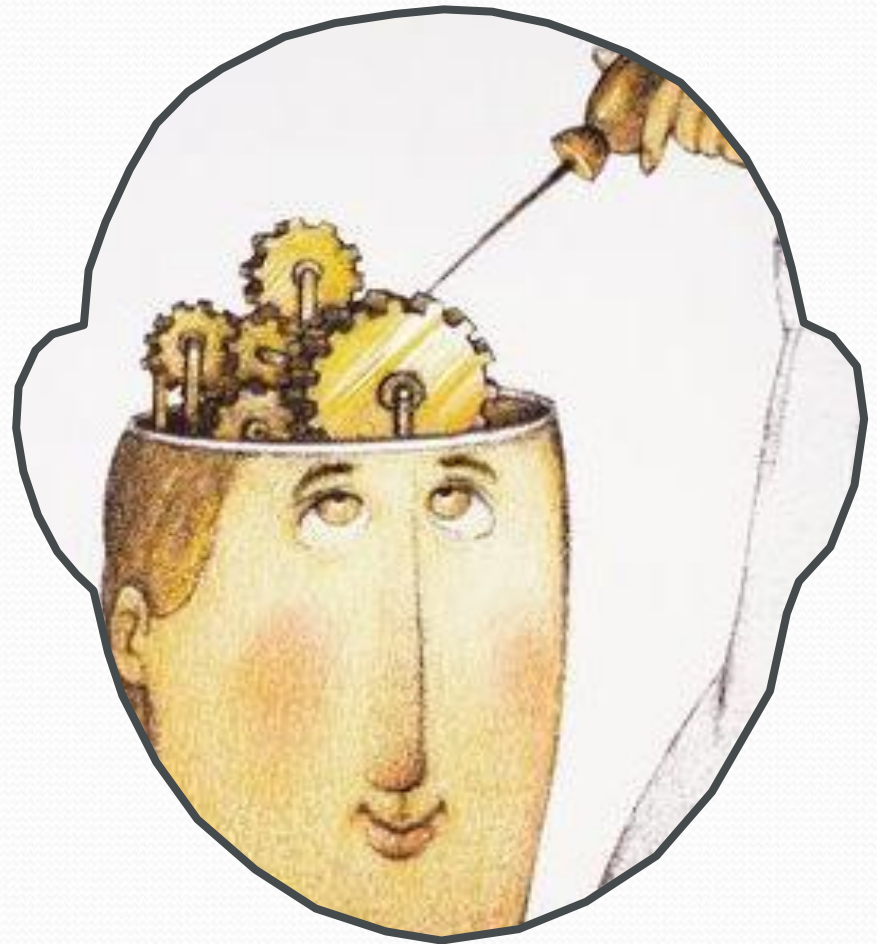


Open to scrutiny?

- Be prepared for & accept critical examination of operations
 - Frank exchange of views vs scoring points
 - Genuine contribution vs fence sitting
 - 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.

Accountability

- Expectation for P/O to thrive to collective goals
 - Accountable to collaboration & P/O
 - Dual accountability function is difficult
- Are there appropriate structures & processes to support & sustain collaboration



From theory to practice

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

Conclusions & Implications

- Challenges - higher complexity & uncertainty
Loss of autonomy/control; exposure
- Changes in expectation & behaviour
- Not enter into collaborations lightly
- Must : know what to look for in a collaboration; determine its level of commitment, capacity and willingness to act; and assess internal tolerances for participation and risk.
- If able to negotiate various interests, identify and act on trade offs, and generally work in a collaborative spirit – **collaboration will work!!!!**

