


Office for the Community Sector  
Department of Planning and Community Development  
Victoria, Australia

# Guiding Principles for Collaboration between Government and Philanthropy

*Working together for a strong community sector*

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# Guiding principles for collaboration between government and philanthropic organisations

Government and philanthropic grant-makers both provide funding to not-for-profit community organisations. Both government and philanthropy recognise that value and efficiency can be added when they work collaboratively. These guiding principles have been developed to support collaborative relationships.

The Office for the Community Sector (OCS), within the Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development, has established strong working relationships with philanthropic grant-makers by providing opportunities for open dialogue and looking at how collaboration can lead to better outcomes for the community sector.

This Guiding Principles document has been developed for government and philanthropic grant-makers that are considering partnership. The document draws on information gathered from desktop research and consultation with a range of philanthropic grant-makers that jointly fund not-for-profit (NFP) organisations with government.

The consultation and research report is located on the OCS website: <http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/communitydevelopment/community-sector>

## 1. Creating the Environment

- 1.1. Engage each other early when the potential idea/interest/need for a collaborative approach is being considered
- 1.2. Ensure that expectations about goals and how partners are going to work together are clarified early on in the collaboration's development
- 1.3. Recognise that collaboration works most effectively when the partners have shared values and principles, and when it meets each organisation's guidelines and agendas
- 1.4. Government/philanthropic collaborations work better when each sector understands the others directions and priorities and philanthropy understands government's policy environment.

## 3. Decision Making and Management Practices

- 3.1. Agree to processes for selecting organisations to be funded and the nature of projects to be jointly supported
- 3.2. Communicate frankly throughout the collaboration time frame
- 3.3. Document the history, context and development of the collaboration. Where there is a change of personnel, ensure that a formal handover process is put in place to ensure adequate information about the history and culture of the collaboration is passed on.

## 2. Shaping Partnerships and Building Relationships

- 2.1. Understand each other's roles, policies, priorities and limitations
- 2.2. Ensure sufficient time to develop trust, mutual respect and agreed approaches
- 2.3. Ensure the right people are at the table(s), with commitment and involvement from senior and operational representatives of each partner organisation, as appropriate. Seek consistency of personnel representing the partners over the length of the collaboration, as far as possible
- 2.4. Develop a formalised 'Statement of intent', once principles, goals, outcomes, expectations, roles and responsibilities are agreed.
- 2.5. Build in a flexible approach to roles, responsibilities and collaboration activities in order to accommodate changing circumstances and opportunities as they arise
- 2.6. Appoint a member of the collaboration to drive and co-ordinate governance, operational and communication activities and build this role into their job description for the duration of the collaboration (this role would generally be taken by the lead agency).

## 4. Evaluation and Sustainability

- 4.1. Ensure there is an evaluation framework and the resources available to undertake the level of evaluation agreed upon
- 4.2. Address sustainability issues early including development of a funding plan, where appropriate. As part of this, plan and develop an exit strategy if the collaboration, or partners' involvement in it, is time limited.




# Collaboration Spectrum

## Defining Collaboration

A cross sector collaboration is a deliberate, structured arrangement which brings together each sector's intellectual, organisational and financial capital to meet agreed goals. It involves joint planning, resourcing, governing and monitoring.

**Is collaboration for you?** This matrix depicts the continuum of successful relationships that can exist between government and philanthropy when funding a NFP organisation. It can be used to define the nature of the relationship from networking to collaboration and ask whether it is achieving desired outcomes.

Principles	Responsibilities / Tasks	Networking	Coordinating	Cooperating	Collaborating
					<b>Collaborating</b> includes enhancing the capacity of the other partners for mutual benefit and a common purpose. Collaborating requires the partners to give up a part of their turf to another agency to create a better or more seamless service system. This will involve high levels of trust, and will include complementary resourcing, collaboration in all aspects of planning, governance, implementation and evaluation.
		<b>Networking</b> involves the exchange of information for mutual benefit. This requires little time and trust between partners and will most likely involve talking, sharing knowledge and learning.	<b>Coordinating</b> involves exchanging information and altering activities of each organisation for a common purpose. This may involve developing a coordinated campaign to lobby for better services.	<b>Cooperating</b> involves exchanging information, altering activities for a common purpose and sharing resources. It requires a significant amount of time, a level of trust between partners, and an ability for agencies to share turf. This often involves independent co-funding by each organisation, rather than contributing to a common pool.	
<b>Project Planning</b>					
1 – Creating the environment	Program/project planning initiation	○	○	○	●
	Shared organisational goals, values, directions and priorities	○	●	○	●
<b>Project Initiation</b>					
2 – Shaping partnerships and building relationships	Governance	○	○	○	●
	Sharing subject matter expertise	○	○	●	●
	Project management/ time	○	○	●	●
<b>Project Execution</b>					
3 – Decision making and management practices	Financial or in kind contribution	○	○	●	●
	Administrative input/ staffing contribution	○	○	●	●
<b>Monitoring and evaluation</b>					
4 – Evaluation and sustainability	Joint evaluation	○	○	●	●
	Communications	●	●	●	●