

M-REDD+ COLLABORATION FACTORS INVENTORY

The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory

Report



January, 2013

Karen J. Wong

M-REDD+ -COLLABORATION FACTORS INVENTORY ASSESSMENT January, 2013

Index

Background of this Assessment.....	2
M-REDD+ Alliance and Collaboration – an effective way to work.....	2
Assessment Methodology: The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory	3
Factors influencing the Success of Collaboration.....	3
Assessment Results.....	5
M-REDD+ Collaboration Strengths.....	7
Factors that should be discussed by the group.....	8
Factors that need urgent improvement.....	9
Results by member organization.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Discussion and Recommendations.....	9
References.....	9
Annex 1. The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory Questionnaire	11

Background of this Assessment

After the M-REDD+ STAG (Steering and Technical Advisory Group) Meeting in August 2012, The Nature Conservancy, responding to a STAG’s request, conducted an assessment to understand what aspects of the collaboration needed to be improved and to be able to adapt key processes that can ensure the achievement of the shared goal. In a collaboration, it is a good idea to ask how we are doing from time to time and give members an opportunity to improve the collaboration.

M-REDD+ Alliance and Collaboration – an effective way to work

Mexico’s REDD+ Alliance is composed by a group of organizations that share the goal of promoting an adequate framework for the implementation of the REDD+ mechanism in Mexico, aligned with the Mexican vision of REDD+ and the National Strategy for REDD+ (ENAREDD+).

A fundamental factor in the successful progress of the M-REDD+ Alliance efficient collaboration, and understanding which collaboration factors delay and which ones advance the Alliance’s shared goals is critical. In order to understand the current status of the M-REDD+ collaboration and to implement effective actions for improvement, in December 2012, The Nature Conservancy applied the *Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory Assessment Tool*¹ (Mattessich, 2008) to the M-REDD+ Alliance.

Members of the M-REDD+ Alliance aims to join organizational strengths creatively to implement a shared work plan. The interdisciplinary nature of the M-REDD+ strategy cannot be addressed by an isolated organization; the ramifications of the project are inherently multi-organizational. Collaboration is thus essential because it results in easier, faster and more coherent access to services and benefits, and in greater, system-wide results, since “the synergistic efforts of the collaborating partners often result in creative ways to overcome obstacles”.²

For the purposes of this assessment, “collaboration” is defined as:

¹ Mattessich, Paul; Murray-Close, M; Monsey, B.R. (2008) Collaboration –what makes it work; 2nd. Ed Fieldstone Alliance, USA.

² The McKnight Foundation (1991)

A mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals. The relationship includes a commitment to mutual relationships and goals; jointly developed structure and shared responsibility; mutual authority and accountability for success; and sharing of resources and rewards.

Assessment Methodology: The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory

The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory was developed by the Wilder Research Center and has been tested with a variety of groups. The inventory helps groups to do a systematic, careful examination of where they stand on the factors that influence the success of collaboration.

The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory identifies twenty factors that influence the success of collaborations formed by nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and other organizations. The factors are grouped into six categories:

1. Environment
2. Membership Characteristics
3. Process and Structure
4. Communication
5. Purpose
6. Resources

Each factor is listed, under its category, with a brief description.

Factors influencing the Success of Collaboration

1. Factors related to the ENVIRONMENT

a. History of collaboration or cooperation in the community

A history of collaboration or cooperation exists in the community and offers the potential collaborative partners an understanding of the roles and expectations required in collaboration and enables them to trust the process.

b. Collaborative group seen as legitimate leader in the community

The collaborative group (and by implication, the agencies in the group) is perceived within the community as reliable and competent – at least related to the goals and activities it intends to accomplish.

c. Favorable political and social

Political leaders, opinion-makers, persons who control resources, and the general public support (or at least do not oppose) the mission of the collaborative group.

2. Factors related to MEMBERS CHARACTERISTICS

a. Mutual respect, understanding, and trust

Members of the collaborative group share an understanding and respect for each other and their respective organizations: how they operate, their cultural norms and values, their limitations, and their expectations.

b. Appropriate cross section of members

To the extent that they are needed, the collaborative group includes representatives from each segment of the community who will be affected by its activities.

c. Members see collaboration as in their self-interest

Collaborating partners believe that they will benefit from their involvement in the collaboration and that the advantages of membership will offset costs such as loss of autonomy and turf.

d. **Ability to compromise**

Collaborating partners are able to compromise, since the many decisions within a collaborative effort cannot possibly fit the preferences of every member perfectly.

3. **Factors related to PROCESS AND STRUCTURE**

a. **Members share a stake in both process and outcome**

Members of a collaborative group feel “ownership” of both the way the group works and the results or products of its work.

b. **Multiple layers of participation**

Every level (upper management, middle management, operations) within each partner organization has at least some representation and ongoing involvement in the collaborative initiative.

c. **Flexibility**

The collaborative group remains open to varied ways of organizing itself and accomplishing its work.

d. **Development of clear roles and policy guidelines**

The collaborating partners clearly understand their roles, rights, and responsibilities and they understand how to carry out those responsibilities.

e. **Adaptability**

The collaborative group has the ability to sustain itself in the midst of major changes, even if it needs to change some major goals, members, etc., in order to deal with changing conditions.

f. **Appropriate pace of development**

The structure, resources, and activities of the collaborative group change over time to meet the needs of the group without overwhelming its capacity, at each point throughout the initiative.

4. **Factors related to COMMUNICATION**

a. **Open and frequent communication**

Collaborative group members interact often, update one another, discuss issues openly, and convey all necessary information to one another and to people outside the group.

b. **Established informal relationships and communication links**

In addition to formal channels of communication, members establish personal connections – producing a better, more informed, and cohesive group working on a common project.

5. **Factors related to PURPOSE**

a. **Concrete, attainable goals and objectives**

Goals and objectives of the collaborative group are clear to all partners, and can realistically be attained.

b. **Shared vision**

Collaborating partners have the same vision, with clearly agreed-upon mission, objectives and strategy. The shared vision may exist at the outset of collaboration, or the partners may develop a vision as they work together.

c. **Unique purpose**

The mission and goals, or approach, of the collaborative group differ, at least in part, from the mission and goals, or approach, of the member organizations.

6. **Factors related to RESOURCES**

a. **Sufficient funds, staff, materials, and time**

The collaborative group has an adequate, consistent financial base, along with the staff and materials needed to support its operations. It allows sufficient time to achieve its goals and includes time to nurture the collaboration.

b. **Skilled leadership**

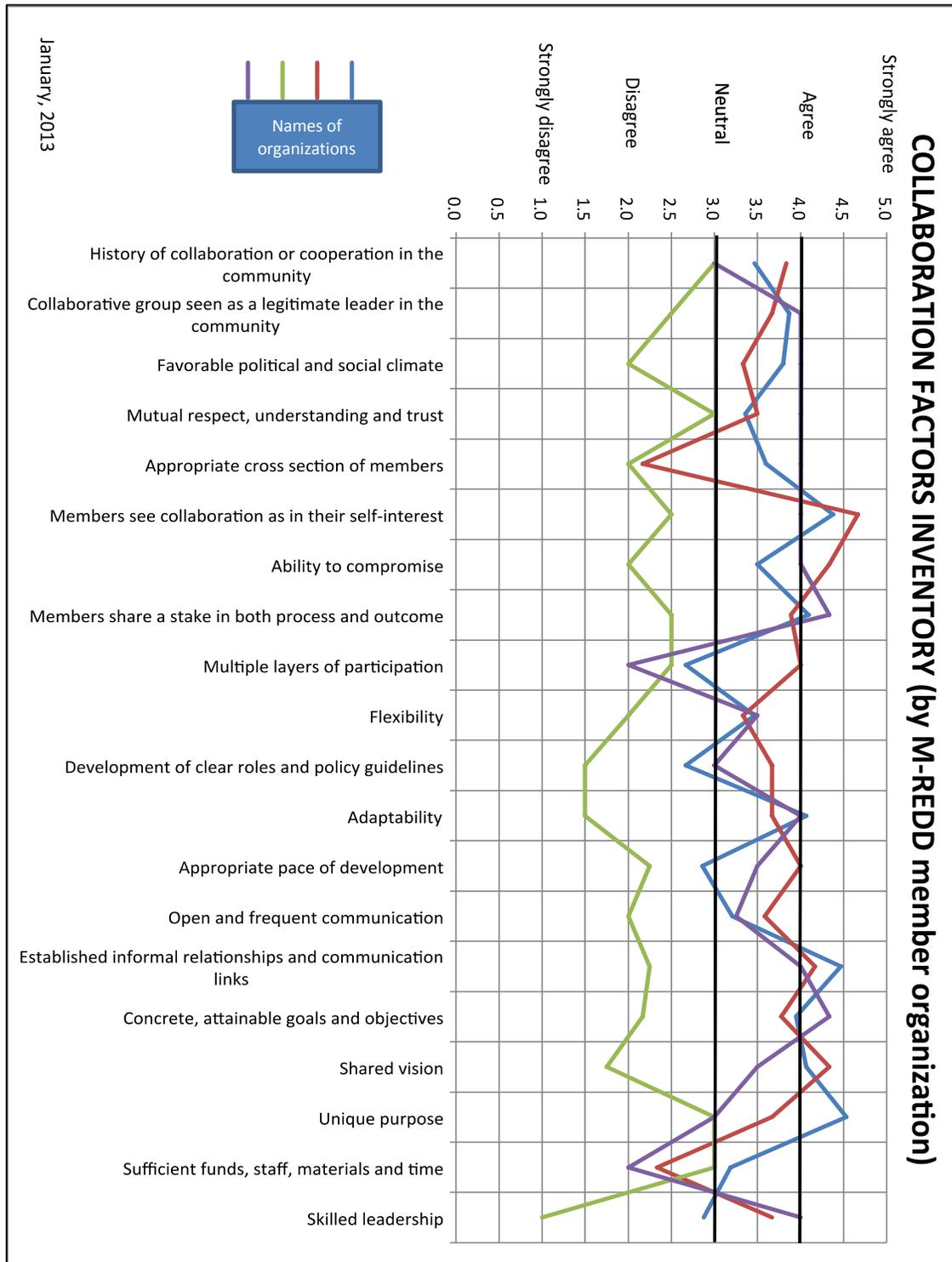
The individual who provides leadership for the collaborative group has organizing and interpersonal skills, and carries out the role with fairness. Because of these characteristics (and others), the leader is granted respect or “legitimacy” by the collaborative partners.

14 members of the Alliance responded to a questionnaire to assess the collaboration factors in December 2012 and early January 2013, all the individuals rated each factor in a scale of 1 to 5 (1- Strongly disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Neutral/No opinion, 4-Agree, 5- Strongly agree).

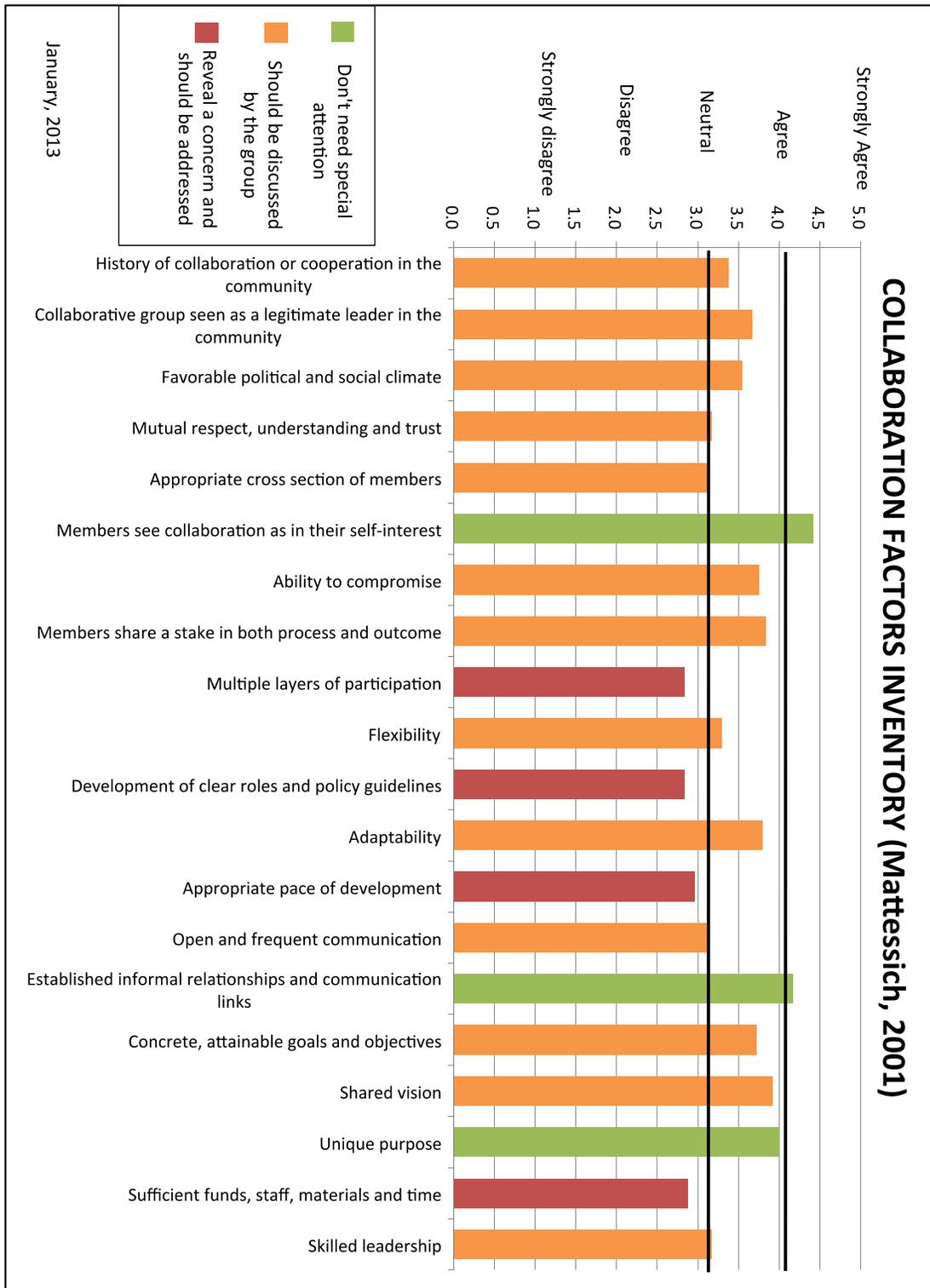
Assessment Results

It is important to note that scores on The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory are not an absolute reflection of the group’s ability to collaborate effectively, but can be used as a basis for commonsense judgments about how to improve the collaboration. The results of the Assessment are shown in **Graph 1. Collaboration Factors Inventory** (by M-REDD+ member organization) and **Graph 2. M-REDD+ Collaboration Factors Inventory** (average)

Graph 1. Collaboration Factors Inventory (averages per M-REDD+ member organization)



Graph 2. M-REDD+ Collaboration Factors Inventory (average across all respondents)



M-REDD+ Collaboration Strengths

Scores of 4.0 or higher probably indicate a strength in that factor, suggesting no need for special attention. These factors will require ongoing maintenance to sustain the Alliance's effectiveness. For the M-REDD+ Alliance, the collaboration strengths perceived by respondents are:

- Factors related to MEMBERS CHARACTERISTICS
 - **Members see collaboration as in their self-interest:** This strength means that collaborating partners believe that they will benefit from their involvement in the collaboration and that the advantages of membership will offset costs such as loss of autonomy and authority.
- Factors related to COMMUNICATION
 - **Established informal relationships and communication links:** This means that in addition to formal channels of communication, members have established personal connections – producing a better, more informed, and cohesive group working on a common project.
- Factors related to PURPOSE
 - **Unique purpose:** The mission and goals, or approach, of the collaborative group differ, at least in part, from the mission and goals, or approach, of the member organizations.

Factors that should be discussed by the group

Scores from 3.0 to 3.9 ought to prompt some discussion by the group to determine if the group needs to devote attention to them. For the M-REDD+ Alliance the factors that should be discussed by the group are:

- Factors related to ENVIRONMENT (Score)
 - History of collaboration or cooperation in the community (3.4)
 - Collaborative group seen as legitimate leader in the community (3.7)
 - Favorable political and social climate (3.5)
- Factors related to MEMBERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS (Score)
 - Mutual respect, understanding and trust (3.2)
 - Appropriate cross section of members (3.1)
 - Ability to compromise (3.8)
- Factors related to PROCESS AND STRUCTURE (Score)
 - Members share a stake in both process and outcome (3.8)
 - Flexibility (3.3)
 - Adaptability (3.8)
- Factors related to COMMUNICATION (Score)
 - Open and frequent communication (3.1)
- Factors related to PURPOSE (Score)
 - Concrete, attainable goals and objectives (3.7)
 - Shared vision (3.9)
 - Skilled leadership (3.2)

From these factors the lowest scores were related to *Open and frequent communication* (3.1) *Appropriate cross section of members* (3.1), *Mutual respect, understanding and trust* (3.2) and *Skilled leadership* (3.2). Special attention and group discussion would be needed to determine if the group need to devote attention to them.

Factors that need urgent improvement

Scores 2.9 or lower probably should raise concern and the group may need to take steps to improve these factors.

- Factors related to PROCESS AND STRUCTURE
 - **Multiple layers of participation (2.8):** This factor evaluates decision-making process structure. This factor is evaluated through two statements: 1) When the collaborative group makes major decisions, there is always enough time for members to take information back to their organizations to confer with colleagues about what the decision should be and 2) Each of the people who participate in decisions in this collaborative group can speak for the entire organization they represent, not just a part.
 - **Development of clear roles and policy guidelines (2.8):** The collaborating partners clearly understand their roles, rights, and responsibilities, and they understand how to carry out those responsibilities. This factor also has to do with decision-making structure, and is evaluated through two statements: 1) People in this collaborative group have a clear sense of their roles and responsibilities and 2) There is a clear process for making decisions among the partners in this collaboration.
 - **Appropriate pace of development (2.9):** The structure, resources, and activities of the collaborative group change over time to meet the needs of the group without overwhelming its capacity, at each point throughout the initiative. This factor involves two statements: 1) This collaborative group has tried to take on the right amount of work at the right pace and 2) We are currently able to keep up with the work necessary to coordinate all the people, organizations, and activities related to this collaborative project.
- Factors related to RESOURCES (Score)
 - **Sufficient funds, staff, materials, and time (2.9)** This factor is evaluated by two statements: 1) Our collaborative group has adequate funds to do what it wants to accomplish and 2) Our collaborative group has adequate “people power” to do what it wants to accomplish. This factor was scored low mainly because the raters strongly disagree with the statement: The collaborative group has adequate “people power” to do what it wants to accomplish.

Discussion and Recommendations

The results of the Wilder Research Factors Inventory can be used to develop a an inventory of a consortium’s strengths and weaknesses with respect to the factors that influence collaborative success. However, the inventory results do not provide a single numerical index or score on a group’s overall potential to succeed with the collaboration.

This assessment can be applied anytime during the project’s life. This baseline serves as a reference point to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the M-REDD+ Alliance and then take steps to address the weaknesses and maintain the strengths.

The results shown in the previous section shows that the factors that need urgent attention are those related to **decision-making structure/process and clear roles**. It is recommended that the collaborative group to discuss organizational concerns related to the M-REDD+ Alliance to prevent development of future conflicts.

References

- Mattessich, Paul; Murray-Close, M; Monsey, B.R. (2008) Collaboration –what makes it work; 2nd. Ed Fieldstone Alliance, USA.

- The MicKnight Foundation (1991) The Aid to families in Poverty Program. Minneapolis, MN: The McKnight Foundation
- Encuesta de Diagnóstico de evaluación de Factores de éxito en la colaboración:
<http://wilderresearch.org/tools/cfi/index.php>

Annex 1. The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory Questionnaire

The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory

Name of Collaboration Project _____

Date _____

Statements about Your Collaborative Group:

Factor	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral, No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
History of collaboration or cooperation in the community	1. Agencies in our community have a history of working together	1	2	3	4	5
	2. Trying to solve problems through collaboration has been common in this community. It's been done a lot before.	1	2	3	4	5
Collaborative group seen as a legitimate leader in the community	3. Leaders in this community who are not part of our collaborative group seem hopeful about what we can accomplish.	1	2	3	4	5
	4. Others (in this community) who are not a part of this collaboration would generally agree that the organizations involved in this collaborative project are the "right" organizations to make this work.	1	2	3	4	5
Favorable political and social climate	5. The political and social climate seems to be "right" for starting a collaborative project like this one.	1	2	3	4	5
	6. The time is right for this collaborative project.	1	2	3	4	5
Mutual respect, understanding, and trust	7. People involved in our collaboration always trust one another.	1	2	3	4	5
	8. I have a lot of respect for the other people involved in this collaboration.	1	2	3	4	5
Appropriate cross section of members	9. The people involved in our collaboration represent a cross section of those who have a stake in what we are trying to accomplish.	1	2	3	4	5
	10. All the organizations that we need to be members of this collaborative group have become members of the group.	1	2	3	4	5
Members see collaboration as in their self-interest	11. My organization will benefit from being involved in this collaboration.	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to compromise	12. People involved in our collaboration are willing to compromise on important aspects of our project.	1	2	3	4	5
Members share a stake in both process and outcome	13. The organizations that belong to our collaborative group invest the right amount of time in our collaborative efforts.	1	2	3	4	5

Factor	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral, No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
	14. Everyone who is a member of our collaborative group wants this project to succeed.	1	2	3	4	5
	15. The level of commitment among the collaboration participants is high.	1	2	3	4	5
Multiple layers of participation	16. When the collaborative group makes major decisions, there is always enough time for members to take information back to their organizations to confer with colleagues about what the decision should be.	1	2	3	4	5
	17. Each of the people who participate in decisions in this collaborative group can speak for the entire organization they represent, not just a part.	1	2	3	4	5
Flexibility	18. There is a lot of flexibility when decisions are made; people are open to discussing different options.	1	2	3	4	5
	19. People in this collaborative group are open to different approaches to how we can do our work. They are willing to consider different ways of working.	1	2	3	4	5
Development of clear roles and policy guidelines	20. People in this collaborative group have a clear sense of their roles and responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5
	21. There is a clear process for making decisions among the partners in this collaboration.	1	2	3	4	5
Adaptability	22. This collaboration is able to adapt to changing conditions, such as fewer funds than expected, changing political climate, or change in leadership.	1	2	3	4	5
	23. This group has the ability to survive even if it had to make major changes in its plans or add some new members in order to reach its goals.	1	2	3	4	5
Appropriate pace of development	24. This collaborative group has tried to take on the right amount of work at the right pace.	1	2	3	4	5
	25. We are currently able to keep up with the work necessary to coordinate all the people, organizations, and activities related to this collaborative project.	1	2	3	4	5
Open and frequent communication	26. People in this collaboration communicate openly with one another.	1	2	3	4	5

Factor	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral, No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
	27. I am informed as often as I should 28. be about what goes on in the collaboration. 29. The people who lead this collaborative group communicate well with the members.	1	2	3	4	5
Established informal relationships and communication links	30. Communication among the people in this collaborative group happens both at formal meetings and in informal ways. 31. I personally have informal conversations about the project with others who are involved in this collaborative group.	1	2	3	4	5
Concrete, attainable goals and objectives	32. I have a clear understanding of what our collaboration is trying to accomplish. 33. People in our collaborative group know and understand our goals. 34. People in our collaborative group have established reasonable goals.	1	2	3	4	5
Shared vision	35. The people in this collaborative group are dedicated to the idea that we can make this project work. 36. My ideas about what we want to accomplish with this collaboration seem to be the same as the ideas of others.	1	2	3	4	5
Unique purpose	37. What we are trying to accomplish with our collaborative project would be difficult for any single organization to accomplish by itself. 38. No other organization in the community is trying to do exactly what we are trying to do.	1	2	3	4	5
Sufficient funds, staff, materials, and time	39. Our collaborative group had adequate funds to do what it wants to accomplish. 40. Our collaborative group has adequate "people power" to do what it wants to accomplish.	1	2	3	4	5
Skilled leadership	41. The people in leadership positions for this collaboration have good skills for working with other people and organizations.	1	2	3	4	5