**USAID**
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## COLLECTIVE ACTION IN PROGRAMMING:

# A Practical Guide for USAID Missions

**JULY 2022** Version 1.1.

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# Foreword

In her Georgetown University speech in November 2021, USAID Administrator Samantha Power conveyed her vision for confronting the greatest challenges of our time, advancing inclusive development, stabilization, and humanitarian partnerships, and building a more diverse, empowered, and effective USAID. Administrator Power said "We must offer people, not a vision merely of international development but a vision of inclusive development… we have to broaden our coalition to allow people from more diverse backgrounds and partners of all kinds to participate in our mission. We must make aid more accessible… we must shift our thinking to be more focused on the voices and needs of the most marginalized. We must make aid more equitable… we must listen to what our partners in the countries where we work are asking of us. We must make aid more responsive."

Collective Action — an intentional and agreed-upon process that engages interested parties to take joint actions in support of shared objectives — is critical to helping us achieve this and shift more leadership, ownership, decision making, evaluation and implementation to the local people and institutions who have the capability, connectedness, and credibility to propel change in their own communities. The Collective Action approach prioritizes engaging stakeholders directly to build cohesion and support them to lead efforts to enact their own agendas. This kind of action will lead to greater success, producing lasting change.

The Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL) is one of the USAID actors taking action to advance the Administrator's vision for localization and inclusive development. As we work to build more equitable and inclusive responses to today's global challenges, we must build upon the priorities, knowledge, lived experiences, aspirations, and expertise of the people who face them every day. This *Collective Action in Programming: A Practical Guide for USAID Missions* represents an opportunity and a tool to advance that vision. Collective Action is an intentional and agreed-upon process that engages interested parties to take joint actions in support of shared objectives. The Collective Action approach prioritizes engaging stakeholders directly to build cohesion and support them to lead efforts to enact their own agendas. This kind of action will lead to greater success, producing lasting change.

Collaborative approaches such as Collective Action have flourished in recent years at USAID and in the larger development community. Yet, until now most Mission teams have designed programs using lessons and guidance targeting settings in the United States and specific sectors, or gleaned from academic books and journals. This *Collective Action in Programming: A Practical Guide for Missions* provides a clear and practical set of resources to help USAID advance localization goals and objectives. This Guide marks the first time USAID has compiled lessons of Collective Action from within its own programs, and puts into practice the principles articulated in a range of recent USAID policies and technical resources.

This Guide is significant because it addresses the needs of both USAID programming teams and facilitators in the implementing community. It bridges funding, operations, and communications.

Recognizing that each operational context is unique, this Guide:

- Discusses the relevance of Collective Action for a given context and presents discussion questions for whether it should be considered;
- Describes the roles, relationships and skills needed for the different actors in a Collective Action and resources to build cohesion;
- Identifies the most important design factors to target when designing programs; and
- Provides illustrative activities, scopes of work, budgets, and recommendations for monitoring, evaluation and learning.

This Guide provides a clear and practical set of resources to support the renewed focus on localizing development. It also puts into practice the principles articulated in a range of recent USAID policies and technical resources. The Guide's authors drew upon case studies of Collective Action from 10 USAID Missions and were guided by a Technical Review Committee comprised of representatives from PPL and the Bureaus for Management, Development, Democracy, and Innovation, (DDI), and Global Health. I am grateful to PPL's Innovative Design Team and its contractor, LINC, a U.S. small-business awarded under the Innovative Design Services Contract, for developing these tools with a commitment to quality and rigor. Recognizing that the job of engaging local stakeholders to collaborate on a common goal is complex in itself, and that programming Collective Action within USAID requires working within the Agency's unique timelines, rules, and regulations that influence how programs are designed and delivered, I give special thanks to everyone who shared their time and experience.

PPL is pleased to see this Guide help deliver on Administrator Power's vision while advancing the Bureau's commitment to elevating USAID thought leadership, shape U.S. Government and international development policy and practice, and challenge ourselves, the Agency, and our partners to achieve sustainable development outcomes.

**Michele Sumilas**, *Assistant to the Administrator*
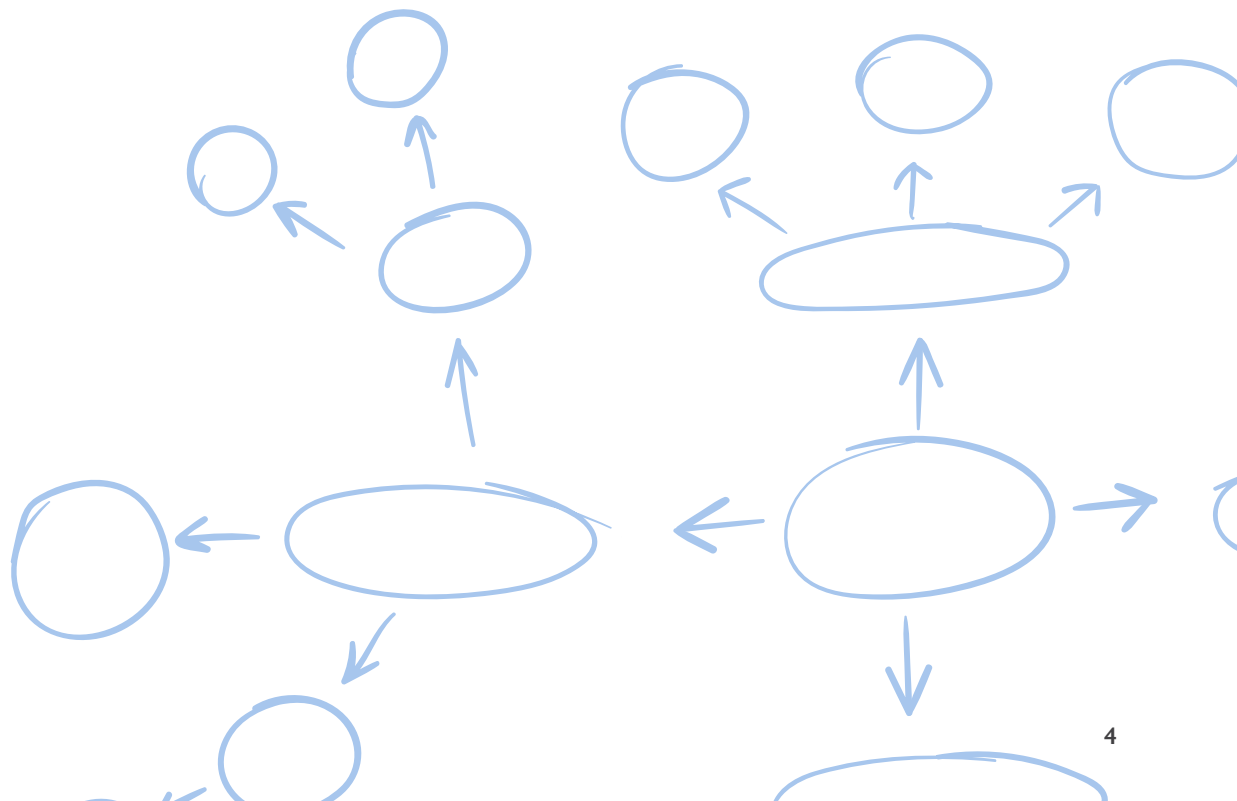Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning
April 19, 2022

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# How to Use This Guide

In recent years and across scores of countries, USAID and its partners have increasingly employed Collective Action (CA) to bring diverse stakeholders together to take joint action toward shared complex development challenges in numerous sectors and landscapes. The Innovative Design (iDesign) team, part of USAID's Policy Planning and Learning Bureau's Strategy and Program Planning Office (PPL/SPP), is dedicated to empowering USAID Mission staff to be more innovative throughout the program cycle by supporting Missions with knowledge, tools, skills, and an enabling environment. In line with this purpose, USAID's iDesign team commissioned LINC under the Innovative Design Services contract to research Collective Action through a case study approach and to develop utilization-focused tools for practitioners. This Practical Guide aims to assist USAID Missions to better design, support and incorporate CA in programming efforts.

## How This Guide is Organized

This Guide is organized into ten modules, each covering a specific topic or step in the program cycle related to CA. They are designed to provide practical guidance and tips on how to apply CA principles in a relatively concise, easy-to-reference format that can be utilized as needed. In this way, users need not necessarily read the entire guide in sequence, but rather refer to those modules applicable in the moment. You may find that completing a step in one module may lead you to retrace your work in an earlier module, as many of the components are interrelated and, in general, design is an iterative process. Throughout the document we have hyperlinked all references to other modules to facilitate navigation and quick reference. The ten modules are:

- **Module 1**: Understanding Collective Action
- **Module 2**: Assessing Suitability for Your Context
- **Module 3**: Roles in Collective Action
- **Module 4**: Important Considerations for Designing Collective Action
- **Module 5**: Factors for Effective Collective Action
- **Module 6**: Drafting a Scope of Work for Collective Action
- **Module 7**: Budgeting for Collective Action
- **Module 8**: Solicitation Process
- **Module 9**: MEL for Collective Action
- **Module 10**: Sustaining Collective Action

## Who Should Use This Guide

This Guide has been organized and developed specifically to support USAID Mission staff to design projects or activities that will use CA to align external stakeholders in their work to address a shared development problem. The language, guidance, tips, and recommendations are targeted to Mission-based staff in the process of designing or overseeing a program that would benefit from CA as an entire activity, across a portfolio of activities, or as an intervention within an activity. It is particularly relevant for Mission staff leading the design process, and the eventual Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) or Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) of the activity. However, the Guide advocates for a team approach to designing and supporting CA, so its content is relevant to Mission teams as well as Washington-based staff. It will also be useful for Implementing Partners who may be designing or managing sub-awards that use CA. As noted below, a separate **practical guide for CA Facilitators** provides more targeted support to organizations or individuals playing the role of facilitator, "hub" or "backbone" for a CA coalition.

Based on the target audience for this Guide, the content incorporates several assumptions. Note that the Guide can be used even if the assumptions do not fit a particular situation. These assumptions include that:

- **USAID is just starting the program design process**. Many of the recommendations and decisions discussed in the Guide assume that the design is at an early stage and therefore able to be defined using the advice and exercises contained here. The Guide still provides valuable information for programming that is further along in the design process or even if an award is in progress.
- **USAID will allow implementing partners and/or CA coalitions to make some design decisions**. Although much of the language and content of this Guide provides tips for the reader to make a design decision, it is often more effective for USAID to be aware of the topic and key considerations, while allowing an IP or the coalition itself to make the final decision.
- **Acquisition or assistance mechanisms may be appropriate**. Collective Action has been applied under acquisition and under assistance, and the case studies researched (see below) include examples of each. This Guide does not provide advice on which is more appropriate for a given context as the Mission Contract or Agreement Specialist should be consulted. The Guide generally uses terms that can apply to either type of mechanism, including award, implementer, solicitation, and proposal (referring to either acquisition or assistance).

## Accompanying Facilitator's Guide

In addition to this USAID Mission Guide, the team has developed a second CA **Facilitator's Guide** for use by organizations, institutions and individuals implementing or facilitating CA or acting as a hub or backbone organization for the CA effort. While some sections are similar, there may be valuable information in each guide that is helpful to both audiences. The contents of each guide were prepared based on research of case study examples of CA and input from Mission staff, USAID implementing partners, and local stakeholders in approximately 20 countries.

# Background Research and Case Studies

The guidance offered in this Guide draws on research conducted through a comprehensive literature review of CA in USAID programs, and was backed by a diverse portfolio of ten **Case Studies** conducted as part of this effort in which USAID Missions have specifically applied multi-stakeholder Collective Action methodologies and principles. These Case Studies, shown in the box below, examine the key factors, design decisions, and effectiveness of different CA approaches applied.

## Case Studies

❶ **Family Care First**,
*Cambodia* (Child Social Services)

❷ **Clean Air Green Cities**,
*Vietnam* (Reducing Air Pollution)

❸ **Mindanao Youth for Development**,
*Philippines* (Youth)

❹ **Bangladesh Livestock Coordination Group**,
*Bangladesh* (Agricultural Value Chains)

❺ **Partnership for Resilience and Economic Growth**,
*Kenya* (Resilience)

❻ **Sanitation for Health**,
*Uganda* (WASH)

❼ **Core Group Polio Project**,
*Horn of Africa* (Healthcare)

❽ **Partnership for HIV-Free Survival**,
*Tanzania* (Healthcare)

❾ **Strengthening Advocacy and Civic Engagement**,
*Nigeria* (Advocacy and Governance)

❿ **Transparency Rapid Response Project**,
*Mexico* (Reducing Corruption)
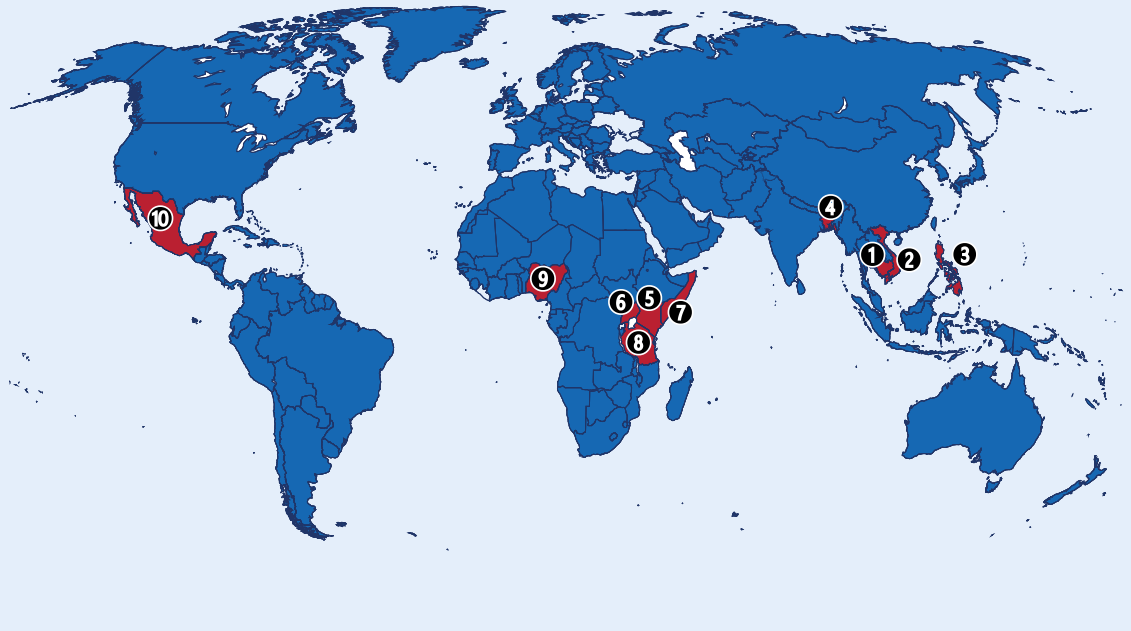
# Glossary of Key Terms

Before proceeding, it is worthwhile to review a brief glossary of terms for Collective Action used throughout this Guide.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Collective Action (CA)** | An intentional and agreed-upon process that engages interested parties to take joint actions in support of shared objectives or a shared issue. |
| **Coalition** | A group of stakeholders participating in a CA effort. |
| **Hub / Backbone** | An organization or institution that provides the logistics, administrative functions, coordination, and/or management of the coalition's collaboration. When the hub role is undertaken by a body of representatives from multiple organizations or institutions, it is often referred to as a secretariat. |
| **Convener** | An organization, institution, or individual who invites and engages stakeholders to join a CA coalition as members. The Convener may or may not be the same as the Hub or the Facilitator. |
| **Facilitator** | An organization, institution, or individual who helps the coalition work together, for example, to set a shared agenda or to make joint decisions. Remains neutral in discussions and decisions. The Facilitator may or may not be the same as the Hub or Convener. |
| **Participant / Member** | The individuals, organizations, or institutions that participate as members of the CA coalition. |
| **Stakeholder / Actor** | Stakeholders or other actors with a vested interest in the shared problem, including those not participating in the coalition. |
| **Shared Problem or Shared Issue** | The development problem or challenge that brings together stakeholders to participate in CA. Note that initially not all stakeholders may define the problem or issue the same way, but through CA, the members come to a common understanding of the problem. |
| **Shared Objective** | In addition to a shared problem that stakeholders are working to address, they commonly agree on a shared vision or objective to which they align their actions. |
| **Joint Actions or Joint Decision Making** | The CA coalition members agree to coordinate their actions through a joint approach to addressing the shared problem. This requires processes for coalition decision making and planning for mutually-reinforcing actions. |
| **Entry Point for CA: Project, Activity, Intervention** | Using USAID's terminology, CA can take place in multiple ways.<br>**Project:** A portfolio of USAID activities.<br>**Activity:** A single USAID award.<br>**Intervention:** One component or action within an award.<br>At each level, CA can help align diverse stakeholders around a shared problem. |

# MODULE 1

# Understanding Collective Action

Before designing or starting a Collective Action (CA) effort, it is important to understand why this approach to development challenges is valuable for your work and what CA entails. USAID has been supporting and implementing CA for many years and this Guide is based on a review and lessons learned from example cases in USAID programming. At the end of this module, you should have a better understanding of what Collective Action is, how it is defined by USAID, and how it differs from other collaborative approaches and from direct implementation.

## WHAT IS COLLECTIVE ACTION?

Collective Action is an *intentional and agreed-upon process that engages interested parties to take joint actions in support of shared objectives or a shared issue*. This definition highlights key points that differentiate it from other approaches in development. The CA process identifies and actively involves relevant stakeholders to address the development challenges and opportunities of interest. Engaging stakeholders consists of a coordinated, deliberate effort - and involves aligning and integrating the actions of the coalition.

Collective Action can be a highly effective means to address complex development problems,[1] such as poverty, access to education, climate change, child mortality, access to potable water, corruption, and more. These types of challenges often exceed the mandates of individual organizations and institutions involved and/or competing efforts by these stakeholders lessen their collective results due to unintended consequences and reliance on "perverse" incentives.

Collaborative approaches to address shared problems require both structures and processes, though the relative amounts may vary. For instance, a USAID Mission's monthly implementing partner coordination meetings typically have fewer set processes, but a more established structure, including who is expected to attend, communications, and USAID leading the meetings. Alternatively, participatory stakeholder consultations such as those facilitated during the development of a Mission's Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) generally follow an established process, but their respective structures may vary depending on the stakeholder or issue involved.

Collective Action describes a specific type of collaborative approach seeking to align and even integrate the work and objectives of the participants. Effective CA has higher degrees of both structures and processes. While CA is a more structured and intentional form of collaboration, it can utilize a variety

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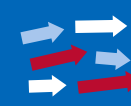
1    Complex problems are sometimes referred to as wicked problems, adaptive problems, systems problems or other terms. Collective Action can address any of these types of problems that are dynamic, differ depending on context, have multiple potential solutions, and do not have clear cause-effect relationships or clear root causes.

of methods depending on the context and needs around the issue and convened stakeholders. Defining the details of a CA approach is the subject of the remainder of this Guide.

**More Structured**

**Less Structured**

### Coordination

Structured but fewer processes, for example a USAID IP coordination meeting, a donor coordination meeting, or a sector specific association or meeting.

### Collective Action

Effective Collective Action includes both established processes and structures, providing sustained collaboration to take joint action and align the work of participants.

### Informational

Few processes and unstructured, for example an information sharing community of practice. May be better for learning, or to address technical problems rather than complex problems.

### Participatory Consultation

Follows processes, but less structure, for example a process to gather input from stakeholders for a Country Development Cooperation Strategy or Strategic Plan.

**Less established processes**                **More established processes**

While the term "collaboration" at USAID covers a range of topics and activities, there are some features that differentiate CA. In the diagram below, we compare three steps along a "collaboration spectrum" from Individual Action (low collaboration), through Coordinated Action (moderate), to Collective Action (high collaboration) that USAID programs might apply to address a development problem. The first approach illustrates potential requirements and features of more traditional, direct implementation by an individual organization leading activity implementation toward its mission. The second approach illustrates moderate collaboration, with information sharing and coordination requiring intermediate levels of structure and process. The third approach illustrates Collective Action highlighting the alignment of participants and their joint actions.

**Table/Diagram:** Comparison of Program Approaches Along a Spectrum of Collaboration[2]

| | Individual Action: Direct Implementation (low collaboration) | Coordinated Action: Information, Coordination, Consultation (moderate collaboration) | Collective Action: Alignment (high collaboration) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Approach Participants and Relationships** | Individual organizations and end-users. Some formal/informal coordination with other organizations. | Participants include other stakeholders to the problem. May or may not be consistent in participation. | Members who participate consistently, preferably representing diverse stakeholders of the problem. |
| **Level of Engagement in Collaboration** | Low engagement between one organization and others. | Low-moderate engagement: May be one-time or infrequently repeated. | Moderate-high engagement: Sustained over time including regular communication, joint decisions, and actions. |
| **Shared Purpose** | Organization has its own funding, objectives, and mission. Other organizations may be working on the same problem with different goals or expected results. | Participants are all working toward the same general goals with respect to the problem. | Members align their understanding of explicitly agreed upon goals with respect to the problem. |
| **Coordination of Action** | Individual organization's actions informed by limited knowledge of others' actions. | Participant actions aligned toward the same goal, attempting to avoid duplication or contradiction. | Collective problem analysis and aligned purpose leads to joint decisions on actions. |
| **Commitment from Stakeholders** | Stakeholders / individual organizations retain full autonomy. | Participants have some accountability to one another or to the same end-users/goals. | Members have influence over one another's actions and are held accountable. |

2    Adapted from USAID Sustainable WASH Systems Learning Partnership "Defining Collective Action Approaches in WASH" April 2020, and USAID/Vietnam Learns "Collective Action for Environmental Health Study" September 2020.

# EFFECTIVE COLLECTIVE ACTION

While CA can be designed and implemented in many ways depending on the context, shared problem, and local needs, there are some crucial decisions and strategies that can contribute to positive results. This Practical Guide provides information, advice, examples, and decision points to help make your CA effort effective. LINC's field research in preparing this Guide shows that CA in USAID programming manages several important factors that contribute to success regardless of the context. Those factors include:

- Appropriate roles for USAID, implementing partners, facilitators, and CA participants;
- An understanding of potential entry point (such as Project, Activity, or Intervention), geographic scope, and time period for collaboration;
- Capable hub organization with convening authority to lead and focus the group's efforts;
- Ability and openness of convened stakeholders to adapt;
- Funding and material and human resources to support activities and interventions;
- Perceived value for all participants, accompanied by a commitment to action; and
- Government and institutional buy-in commensurate with their roles and responsibilities on the issue.

While each of these factors are consistently helpful to drive CA and make it more effective, it is not necessary to maximize all of them right from the start. It is possible to begin with a few, building on and improving them over time, and then deciding which are most feasible as the context evolves. More guidance on this and related issues can be found in **Module 3**, **Module 4**, and **Module 5**.

As well, some efforts may require a longer time, greater effort, or increased adaptation to be effective; this is natural, and can be illustrated by a number of real-life examples in USAID programs (see box below). It is important to remember that for CA, success is a matter of degree and can change over time. Whether a CA effort is achieving significant progress, moderate progress, or little progress, learning and adaptation can always improve effectiveness. Similarly, for CA, failure is not the opposite of success, but can be an important step in the process. Learning from the challenges or flaws in the design and implementation of CA is a powerful way to improve and create lasting impact.

## Adaptation Leads to a Shared Vision

In one case study, the Strengthening Advocacy and Civic Engagement activity in Nigeria, initial outreach to engage Ministry officials in a youth-focused CA effort proved unsuccessful until the CA facilitator identified a group of young legislators who shared a common vision with the coalition. The legislators used their influence with their more tenured colleagues to champion the work of the coalition and co-sponsor legislation that addressed their shared objectives. In this case, expanding the range of stakeholders and identifying those with a commitment to action helped to advance the CA effort.

# CO-CREATION AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

Co-Creation, widely applied in commercial and creative industries and somewhat newly applied to development, is related to and aligned with CA. USAID defines Co-Creation as follows:

*"a design approach that brings people together to collectively produce a mutually valued outcome, using a participatory process that assumes some degree of shared power and decision-making. It is a time-limited process that focuses on generating a specific outcome. Co-creation is a technique that can be used at various points throughout the Program Cycle."*[3]

At USAID, Co-Creation is often used as a procurement and award process, to select and improve on concept papers initially developed individually. This, however, is only one usage of co-creation as a collaboration tool. Co-Creation is a method for consensus-building and design. It is often used by CA members throughout their work together - from inception through implementation. In the USAID context, the field research also revealed that several USAID teams used Co-Creation during the process of designing and awarding CA activities.

# INTEGRATION WITH OTHER USAID FRAMEWORKS

Many of the terms and concepts used in this Guide mirror those in other USAID frameworks and guidance. In fact, Collective Action builds on many of these other frameworks and can readily be integrated. For instance:

- Collective Action is one particular method of Strategic Collaboration, a part of USAID's CLA Framework.
- The ability of Collective Action to engage and empower local stakeholders encourages movement along the Locally Led Development Spectrum and integrates well with the Locally Led Development Checklist.
- The shared values between Co-Creation and Collective Action provide ample opportunity for integration as shown in the Co-Creation Discussion Note.
- The diverse perspective of the participants in Collective Action adds to the holistic understanding of situations as called for in the Local Systems Framework.
- The Local Capacity Development Policy also acknowledges the value of collective capacity for collaboration with and between local actors.

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3    USAID's specific definition of co-creation is included in this Co-Creation Additional Help Discussion Note

## MODULE 1: KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Collective Action is an intentional and agreed-upon process that engages interested parties to take joint actions in support of shared objectives or a shared issue. CA is well suited for complex development problems that require multiple stakeholders working together.

- Collective Action is structured and has processes to support collaboration. It takes more time than individual action (such as direct implementation or individual organizations and projects) or coordinated action (raising stakeholders' awareness of one another's actions so they can avoid duplication). However, as CA aligns stakeholders' work and supports joint action, it can be more effective and more sustainable than individual or coordinated action.

- Collective Action can be designed and implemented in many different ways to suit the context and needs, but there are some important factors that contribute to effective CA in any context (guidance for those is provided in **Module 3**, **Module 4**, and **Module 5**).

**MODULE**

# 2

# Assessing Suitability for Your Context

Collective Action (CA) and other collaborative approaches are increasingly employed by USAID and other donors in their development efforts. Many of the social issues and challenges we commonly face can be more effectively addressed through CA, but in some cases it may not always be the most effective or appropriate tool. This module offers guidance on conditions where CA can be beneficial, the trade-offs for CA compared to traditional direct implementation approaches, and those external constraints that may be unfavorable for CA. At the end of this module, you should be able to articulate your rationale for using — or not using — CA, and identify the main contributing factors.

## WHEN IS COLLECTIVE ACTION BENEFICIAL?

CA is likely to be beneficial in most situations where USAID is working to improve or influence a complex development problem and where the context is ready for collective approaches. Below is a checklist with questions and some scenarios to guide users on when CA is most appropriate.

### Will the problem benefit from CA?

☑ **Do multiple actors influence the problem?**

*For example, there may already be more than one program actively seeking to address the problem, there may be diverse actors with the knowledge or power to influence the problem.*

☑ **Do the actors take different or diverse approaches to address the problem?**

*For example, different experts may see the problem from a different perspective and offer different opinions on potential solutions.*

☑ **Are there "silos" such as a lack of communication or common goals among the actors working on the problem?**

*For example, actors may not work together constructively, may be duplicating efforts, or may even be unaware of one another's work.*

☑ **Does the problem tend to return again and again, or improve for a period only to worsen again?**

*For example, the problem may get better after a program has been running, but eventually worsens again when it finds a new way of manifesting.*

☑ **Does the problem or do current solutions treat different populations unequally?**

*For example, there may be disparate outcomes for marginalized groups, limited power sharing for decisions or policy, or a lack of voice for some groups.*

☑ **Have current activities failed to expand reach or scale?**

*For example, current solutions only reach a small percentage of the affected population, or there are barriers to effective scaling of activities.*

The more "yes" responses there are to these questions, the more likely the issue can benefit from CA.

## Is the problem and context ready for CA?

☑ **Is there a sense of urgency or a clear need for change among stakeholders?**

*CA is easiest to catalyze when the stakeholders recognize a need for a new approach and feel increased pressure or incentive to make progress.*

☑ **Is there a history of collaboration or an openness to collaboration?**

*In contexts where there is a negative history of collaboration or collective governance, it may be more difficult to create group cohesion within a coalition.*

☑ **Are there any existing or potential resources to support collaboration now or after a USAID activity ends?**

*USAID can provide the resources for collaboration during implementation, but if resources are unavailable or otherwise fully obligated, it is less likely that stakeholders will dedicate time and effort in the coalition.*

☑ **Are there any "early adopters" with an interest in building a CA coalition?**

*These may be champions or leaders that can help catalyze CA, or they may simply be positive voices that help build momentum for collaboration. As well, an existing coalition or network currently collaborating may be easier to engage than establishing a new one.*

☑ **Is there reason to believe that influential and powerful actors (like the Government) will be supportive of a coalition working to address the problem?**

*This support can be built over time if necessary, but powerful actors might also impede CA if they explicitly disapprove.*

The more "yes" responses there are to these questions, the more ready the context is for CA.

# TRADE-OFFS OF COLLECTIVE ACTION

CA can be a highly effective means to scale and sustain impact through increased alignment and coordination between stakeholders, especially if resource levels for activities can be mobilized and maintained to facilitate joint actions between coalition members. In such cases, the cost-benefit for USAID is much greater — and more locally driven — than through direct implementation.

CA provides an opportunity to support and strengthen an organized effort among both practitioners and end-users affecting — and affected by — the development challenge. Collaborating together, this group is better able to understand and articulate the dynamics, turbulence and uncertainty of the situation, and is better positioned to adapt and ultimately succeed. However, it requires all participants — donors, implementers, collaborators, included — to release the control they previously had, even over their own activities as they align with others.

Due to USAID's procedures and regulations, it can be difficult for USAID to release control or share power, even when the individuals involved have the will to do so. Despite this challenge, CA has the potential for more sustainable and significant impact when USAID allows the hub and coalition to take responsibility for important decisions such as membership of the group, types of expertise needed for the situation, and goals and activities for CA.

In addition, AOR/CORs of CA activities often report that they put more time and effort into supporting CA activities, even if USAID itself has adopted a "light touch" approach; this is generally due to an increased need to adapt activities, objectives, and targets based on coalition decisions, and the enhanced benefit of USAID involvement in supporting the coalition to manage difficult relationships. As will be illustrated (see **Module 3**), it is recommended to encourage coalition members to lead the design and implementation of CA.

LINC's research also showed that CA may require additional time to begin achieving significant results as compared to direct implementation. That said, CA results tend to be more sustainable and even continue to build momentum over time, whereas direct implementation often sees results slow or fizzle out after the activity's funding ends.

Change — and in particular systemic change — rarely takes place without a sense of urgency, and often faces obstacles from agents desiring the status quo. By engaging a more diverse group of stakeholders with different perspectives and priorities, CA approaches are thus often likely to unveil and endure periods of conflict, particularly at the outset. While this conflict can challenge efforts to build consensus, facilitate trust and acceptance between stakeholders, collectively plan, and achieve joint action, the results that are achieved are more likely to be equitable, inclusive and ultimately sustainable.

In some cases it can be challenging to get stakeholders to view one another as "cooperators" rather than competitors or adversaries, and is thus more challenging to stimulate cooperation. Figuring out how to appropriately incentivize CA both from within the coalition and through USAID support are key factors contributing to sustainability. Further, since interventions are likely to inherently rely on the actions of different stakeholders, impact and effectiveness might be harder to measure and attribute (**Module 9** MEL for Collective Action). The main trade-offs between CA and direct implementation are summarized in the table below.

| Benefits of CA over Direct Implementation | Challenges of CA Compared to Direct Implementation |
|---|---|
| ✔ Higher likelihood for sustainable results.<br>✔ Potential "ripple effects" to expand and scale impact.<br>✔ Facilitates systemic change.<br>✔ Cost-effective USAID investment with high potential to leverage local resources.<br>✔ Higher degrees of local engagement and buy-in.<br>✔ More opportunity for creating diverse, inclusive, and equitable discussion and decisions.<br>✔ Builds trust, confidence, and consensus among stakeholders to address the problem.<br>✔ Ability (and need) to adapt to changing conditions. | ⚑ May be slower to show results.<br>⚑ Slower pace of change can make it difficult to maintain momentum.<br>⚑ Requires more commitment and facilitation, possibly including AORs/CORs and other USAID stakeholders.<br>⚑ Potential for goals and joint actions to veer in unanticipated directions.<br>⚑ Requires USAID (and other participants) to release control and share power.<br>⚑ Can be challenging to get traditional competitors or adversaries to collaborate.<br>⚑ Can be more difficult to evaluate impact, as interventions are distributed between different stakeholders and actions. |

# WHEN IS COLLECTIVE ACTION UNSUITABLE?

Even in contexts where CA holds promise, there are certain situations that might make it unsuitable or otherwise not recommended, such as when convening could present harm to some of the stakeholders, where participation by some groups is restricted or discouraged, or where deep-held animosities are likely to be to difficult to overcome. Some contexts and some potential alternatives are outlined in the table below.

| Context for Unsuitable CA | | Options to Mitigate Unsuitability |
|---|---|---|
| **Do No Harm:** | One of the most significant unsuitable contexts is where the participants could be harmed simply by participating, such as under severe authoritarian rule, active violent conflict or diminishing democratic processes.<br><br>Triggers may include in-person meetings of the coalition, involvement of foreign actors (like USAID and their partners), or addressing controversial issues. | ➔ Consider virtual meetings or other more anonymous approaches.<br>➔ Support coalitions and their members without direct involvement or branding of USAID.[4]<br>➔ Encourage coalitions to focus on "acceptable" topics while still making an impact. |

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4    With proper justification, USAID's branding and marking requirements allow for exemptions in challenging circumstances, including to avoid doing harm to implementers or program participants

| **Context** for Unsuitable CA | | **Options** to Mitigate Unsuitability |
|---|---|---|
| **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility:** | Coalition members must be willing and able to accept and listen to all groups or stakeholders to the shared issue. In contexts where diverse or marginalized groups are unable to access a collective process or participate equitably, CA may not be recommended. | → Initially establish multiple or sub-coalitions to introduce opportunities for marginalized groups to participate, then merge coalitions equitably.<br>→ Keep in mind that CA might also contribute favorably to diversification and inclusion by giving a seat at the table to those traditionally excluded. |
| **Lack of Interest:** | Insufficient interest from stakeholders to participate in CA or to try new ways to address the challenge is a significant constraint to CA. | → Build awareness of the issue and its persistence despite hard work and good intentions applied to date.<br>→ Engage champions passionate about the issue and ready to act. |
| **Animosity or Distrust:** | Stakeholders that historically compete for resources sometimes have trouble working together.<br><br>Similarly, stakeholders that have long been on opposite sides of a conflict may find cooperation a challenge. | → Start by supporting smaller collaborative efforts to build trust.<br>→ Start with multiple coalitions with a plan to merge, adapting and proceeding as feasible. |
| **Insufficient Resources:** | CA requires time, money, materials, and other resources for its "hub" to provide administrative and logistical support for the coalition. It also takes time, effort, and commitment from coalition members. It is most effective when there are resources to address joint priorities. | → Be clear with champions and stakeholders about time commitments and resources needed.<br>→ Provide interim financial support, seek additional, and/or realign existing resources. |

# ARTICULATING SUITABILITY

Now that you have reviewed the benefits and challenges of CA for different contexts and development problems, we recommend articulating in a few sentences your rationale for using — or for not using — CA.

From interviews with USAID AOR/CORs, Chiefs of Party, and hub leaders, LINC's research identified several common aspects of their rationale for using a CA approach.

- For many, their priority was to elevate local voices to encourage greater diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.
- Some explicitly sought to address root causes and create systemic change, made more feasible by engaging stakeholders with the knowledge, authority, perspectives, and interest to do so.
- Many felt that bringing multiple stakeholders together was required to align activities and scale impact.
- Some have an explicit learning or CLA-related objective to their collaboration.

**!** **Decision Point:** Is CA beneficial and appropriate for your context and needs? Why or why not? Articulate your rationale in a few sentences, and consider the factors for effective CA.

## MODULE 2: KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Collective Action is most beneficial for addressing complex problems that are persistent, involve multiple stakeholders with multiple solutions, and/or treat marginalized groups differently from others.

- Collective Action is most appropriate when the context is ready for it with an acknowledged need for collaboration, an openness to cooperate, and/or existing support available for such efforts.

- In cases where CA is beneficial and the context is ready, there are a number of trade-offs to be aware of compared to direct implementation. Those include, among others, increased sustainability of results, although results take longer to generate, and an ability to adapt to a changing context that also makes it difficult to measure results.

- There are also some contexts in which CA is not suitable, in particular where it may harm stakeholders to participate, when diversity and inclusion are not possible, if there is a lack of interest in the issue, or when there is animosity among stakeholders.

- Regardless of your decision, it is best to articulate the rationale for using or not using CA for your development problem.

**MODULE**
# 3

# Roles in Collective Action

There are many ways to engage in Collective Action (CA). Many of the design choices discussed in later modules of this Guide derive from role choices discussed in this module, including how roles are defined and distributed between USAID and local stakeholders. Decisions range from who is engaged and how they can influence the design, to the size and scope of the role USAID wants to take, and whether there is an existing group to support through CA or if the activity will establish a new one. The roles discussed in this module span design and implementation, and how the roles envisioned during implementation should align with the initial design decisions.

CA is most effective and sustainable when it is organic and locally owned. Recognizing that this is not always feasible, a guiding principle throughout is that USAID's role should be as small as possible, and only as large as necessary. Keep a light touch to allow the CA process to develop locally and organically, but listen to see where USAID's technical skills, financial resources, convening power, and network are needed to help the coalition work effectively.

This module starts by presenting the key roles and responsibilities of organizers and participants during implementation of CA. Then it discusses the role of USAID in CA, including designing a CA effort, engaging stakeholders in design, supporting an existing coalition versus establishing a new one, and how USAID can best support CA while being cognizant of the power dynamics that can affect results.

At the end of this module, you should have a solid understanding of why a small role is best for USAID and what that means, when it is important for USAID to be more involved, and how local stakeholders can best be engaged in design and implementation.

## KEY ROLES IN IMPLEMENTING COLLECTIVE ACTION

**Hub:** Sometimes referred to as the "backbone," the Hub supports the logistics, administration, coordination and management of the coalition and its activities. A good Hub is neutral, has credibility with stakeholders, maintains and builds strong relationships across members, has convening authority, and collects feedback from members to improve their work. The Hub may stay behind the scenes to allow the coalition greater collective ownership and equity. They generally do not set the agenda or drive the solutions, but rather ensure that these things happen. They may or may not also assume the role of Facilitator.

**Facilitator:** The Facilitator is an individual or an organization whose primary role is to help the coalition work together to set a shared agenda, reach consensus, identify priorities and other efforts.
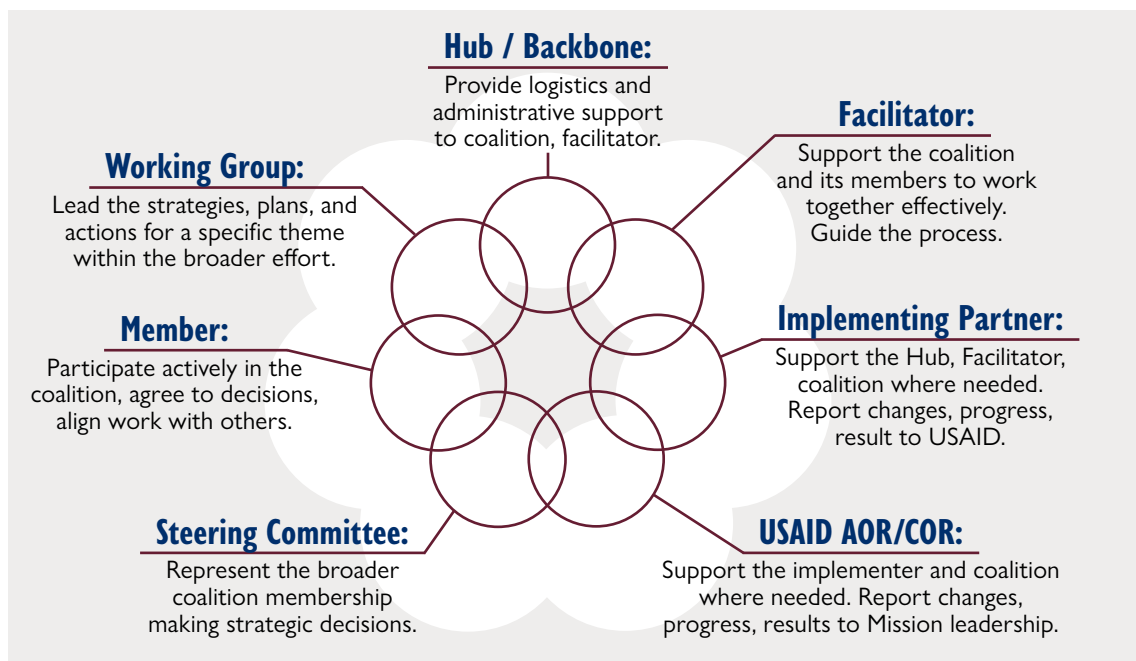
Facilitators should remain neutral in discussions and decisions. Many CA coalitions underestimate the value of a good Facilitator and the need to dedicate resources to improve group cohesion.

**Member:** A Member is a stakeholder actively participating in the CA coalition, and may include NGOs or Community-Based Organizations (CBOs); government offices, institutions, or officials; private businesses; community leaders; donors; academic institutions; and others. All Members play an important role in the CA effort by participating in discussions and decision-making, conducting advocacy and outreach, engaging in working groups, and aligning their actions and goals with the coalition's priorities.

**Stakeholder:** A Stakeholder is an organization, institution, or individual with an interest in the outcome and resolution of the development issue. Stakeholders include members of the coalition, as well as any other non-members relevant to the issue. In some cases, a coalition seeks to include as many Stakeholders as possible, while in other cases a smaller coalition is more effective, although outreach and dialogue with all Stakeholders remains a priority.

**Steering Committee and/or Working Groups:** Sometimes a coalition is organized into smaller groups to divide work and decision-making. These groups remain accountable to the broader coalition, and are expected to work toward the shared agenda, goals and priorities. A Steering Committee is important when a coalition becomes large enough that not every member can be included in every discussion and decision. The Steering Committee members therefore represent the broader coalition, help set the shared goals, champion the overall effort, and provide guidance and feedback. The Steering Committee meets regularly and can be fluid in its composition based on evolving needs over time. Working Groups are typically smaller groups focusing on more specific aspects of the coalition's objectives and activities. They are usually formed based on the priorities of the coalition, and more may be formed or dissolved over time. Working Groups set the strategies for their work, use data to inform decisions, and coordinate with one another and with the coalition overall.

# OVERLAPPING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



**Hub / Backbone:**
Provide logistics and administrative support to coalition, facilitator.

**Facilitator:**
Support the coalition and its members to work together effectively. Guide the process.

**Working Group:**
Lead the strategies, plans, and actions for a specific theme within the broader effort.

**Implementing Partner:**
Support the Hub, Facilitator, coalition where needed. Report changes, progress, result to USAID.

**Member:**
Participate actively in the coalition, agree to decisions, align work with others.

**Steering Committee:**
Represent the broader coalition membership making strategic decisions.

**USAID AOR/COR:**
Support the implementer and coalition where needed. Report changes, progress, results to Mission leadership.

Although this Module provides definitions and guidance on some of the most important roles for designing and implementing CA, LINC's research showed that there is no single way to separate or combine the responsibilities of each actor in the process. Cases of effective CA each separated or combined the key roles in ways that worked for their context. For example, the Implementing Partner of the Clean Air Green Cities activity in Vietnam was also the Hub/Backbone and Facilitator. The Family Care First activity in Cambodia also had the Implementing Partner take on the Hub/Backbone and Facilitator role, as well as being an active coalition member, and it formed working groups to focus on specific themes. The Bangladesh Livestock Coordination Group did not have working groups or a steering committee, but USAID took on the role of Hub/Backbone and Facilitator. The Partnership for Resilience and Economic Growth in Kenya transitioned over time from USAID as Hub to an Implementing Partner as Hub, and included numerous other Implementing Partners as members. The Implementing Partner for the Strengthening Advocacy and Civic Engagement activity in Nigeria identified "anchor organizations" to be the Hub and Facilitator for each CA coalition formed, and those organizations were also active coalition members. The Transparency Rapid Response Project in Mexico engaged a subawardee as Facilitator and Sub-national Government as Hub.

# ROLES OF THE USAID ACTIVITY DESIGN TEAM

Each USAID Mission's design process and implementation procedures have developed their own details based on the needs and organizational structure of that Mission. Typical roles for USAID offices and specialists involved in activity design are included in ADS 201, specifically 201.3.4.1. These roles do not change when designing and implementing CA. Below we highlight some areas that may require particular attention when designing for CA.

In the case studies LINC examined supporting this effort, USAID Mission staff highlighted some of the key positions and roles of the design team. When designing for CA, the earlier you can engage and consult other USAID colleagues, and the more input they can provide, the more effective your activity is likely to be.

- The USAID Program Office can help identify specific experts to engage or to inform about your plans. Gender specialists should also be engaged early to help ensure gender balance and equity considerations are built into the activity design.
- Representatives of other Mission Technical Offices can assist by identifying additional local stakeholders who are also involved in other development challenges that may be relevant.
- The Agreement or Contract Specialist can help to build flexibility appropriate for CA into the design, keeping in mind that effective CA should be largely driven by the coalition members themselves rather than USAID. Thus, the goals, actions, inclusion, and targets may evolve over time, necessitating some level of adaptive management. The AO/CO can help inform how to arrive at a design that meets the light touch principle while complying with USAID's internal oversight requirements.

As noted previously, USAID's role should be as small as possible, and only as large as necessary. Maintain a light touch to allow the CA process to develop locally and organically, but listen to see where USAID's technical skills, financial resources, convening power and network can help the coalition function more effectively.

# Engaging Local Stakeholders in Design

Perhaps more so than for traditional activity designs, designing for CA requires a solid understanding of the local context, needs, stakeholders and their relationships. Reaching out to local stakeholders to gather information, collect input, learn new perspectives and validate or debunk current assumptions can significantly assist the design effort. When conducting this outreach, we recommend paying attention to some key issues:

A range of techniques or tools to identify and understand the needs and expectations of major interests inside and outside the project environment. Understanding the interests, influence, and risks of different stakeholders helps engage the right ones in the right way.

- Are there *existing* networks, coalitions or other groups that are relevant to the development issue? Understanding who they are, what they do, and how they function is important. USAID's Stakeholder Analysis and Stakeholder Mapping are useful tools.
- Are there particular relationship dynamics that will affect the cohesion of a CA coalition or the ability to collaborate effectively? These dynamics can include both reinforcing and destabilizing forces. A high-level Social Network Analysis (SNA) or Listening Tour with stakeholders might prove sufficient. A Political Economy Analysis (PEA) is also a useful tool to identify stakeholders and networks, better understand the underlying reasons why things work the way they do, and identify the incentives and constraints impacting the behavior of actors.
- Are there other constraints or barriers to collaboration or CA that USAID needs to work around or that USAID can help remove? These may include legal requirements, capacity constraints, cultural norms related to collaboration, government support, donor coordination and overlap, geographic challenges, or any other common limitations.

Co-Creation might also be an effective option to engage local stakeholders. If utilized, be sure that it embodies an equitable and inclusive process for dialogue and consensus, and provide a clear objective for the Co-Creation process to ensure that participants understand their roles and clarify how the process is expected to advance the design process. Several of the case studies conducted in preparing this Guide began their CA activity through Co-Creation.

As you engage stakeholders in the design, be sure to do so in a way that does not introduce competitive procurement issues or constraints, such as conflicts of interest, unequal access to information among offerors or applicants, or barriers to entry for currently unengaged stakeholders.

> **!  Decision Point:** How will you engage local stakeholders in designing or planning CA? Which stakeholders' perspectives are vital for input? What tools will you use to facilitate input?

# Supporting an Existing Coalition vs. Establishing a New One

In many contexts there are likely to be existing alliances, associations, consortiums or other groups related to the development issue. Supporting existing coalitions or efforts is quite different from establishing a new CA coalition or procuring an activity to establish something new. Based on LINC's

**TOOL BOX**

**Stakeholder Analysis**

A range of techniques or tools to identify and understand the needs and expectations of major interests inside and outside the project environment, thus helping to engage the right stakeholders in the right way.

research, there are important trade-offs to consider when evaluating whether to support an existing or establish a new coalition.

An existing coalition is more likely to be organically developed, and its creation is often driven by the members' recognition of the need to collaborate. This type of starting point is generally more sustainable and effective, and as well may require less effort and resources to facilitate. Establishing a new coalition when one already exists can also generate confusion and misunderstanding, and dilute resources and memberships. These dynamics have created challenges for USAID CA efforts in the past, in particular in those cases where government institutions manage, support or participate in the existing coalition.

On the other hand, existing coalitions are also likely to come with their own pre-existing biases. For example, the existing coalition may have limited diversity, exclude some important voices, have unequal power dynamics, display a lack of transparency, or use unfair processes for decision-making. Despite this, however, it may still be more effective to support the existing coalition, especially if they are willing to adapt. In other cases, establishing a new CA coalition may be the most effective way to address the development issue fairly and at scale.

> **!** **Decision Point:** Is there an existing coalition or network that you can support to collectively, equitably and inclusively address the development issue? What are its positive and negative internal dynamics, and how might these come into play during implementation?

## Implementation: USAID's Direct and Indirect Roles and Power Dynamics

> *USAID's role should be as small as possible, and only as large as necessary.*

USAID and its implementing partners should assume as small a role as possible that still allows for effective CA, such as those responsibilities that are necessary for the CA effort and that no other actor is currently able or willing to provide. The most effective roles in line with a light touch include:

- **CA Design Organizer:** As described throughout this Guide, in most cases the CA design will be organized or even led by USAID. In many cases, USAID and its implementing partners' roles may be limited to this, as deeper involvement may affect power balances, incentives, and the actions. Still, even during design, local stakeholders can take a lead role in defining important aspects of the CA effort.
- **Funder:** USAID frequently provides financial resources to the coalition or to the "hub" that is supporting the administrative needs of the coalition. Stay mindful that providing financial resources can affect the power dynamics within the group, incentives for stakeholders and other aspects that affect group cohesion. Alternatively to providing direct resources, It may be possible to support the CA coalition to mobilize other resources, either through facilitative support from USAID or matching fund commitments. In the Clean Air Green Cities activity in Vietnam, USAID provided

funding not only to support the hub to organize the CA effort, but also to support joint actions prioritized by the coalition.

- **Convener:** Ideally, the coalition members and the hub have the reputation and network to attract the relevant stakeholders to participate. In cases where that is not possible or where there is a set of valued stakeholders that are not engaging, USAID can use its name recognition, social capital, or even diplomatic connections to attract those stakeholders. Facilitators of the Family Care First activity in Cambodia asked USAID to lend its convening power to the coalition, in particular to engage government stakeholders in the coalition.

In rare cases, USAID may take on other roles in CA implementation, though these are not recommended.

- **Facilitator:** USAID has occasionally assumed a facilitator role in conjunction with initially forming and convening the coalition, which is often later transferred to an external coalition leader. In more rare cases, USAID implementers have taken on the role of CA facilitator, though direct facilitation of the coalition is generally not recommended as it can affect power dynamics, equity and participant incentives. In the Bangladesh Livestock Coordination Group case study, a USAID specialist with a passion for the topic and a strong network was able to effectively facilitate a group of stakeholders that included USAID activity leads together with other donors and their funded activities.

- **Hub:** There are a few examples where USAID implementers have assumed the hub role, although it is generally not a recommended best practice in terms of sustainability. As well, it is likely to require significantly more time and resources, and negatively affect power dynamics, equity, inclusion and incentives of other stakeholders. However, at the start of a small CA effort where the hub responsibilities can later be transitioned to a third party, this might be feasible. In the case of the Partnership for Resilience and Economic Growth in Kenya, USAID began the effort as the hub. As the CA coalition and work expanded, USAID transitioned the role of the hub to an external implementer through a new award. Even when that award ended, USAID made another award to provide continued logistical support to the coalition.

## Other Ways for USAID to Support Collective Action

If the development issue is likely to benefit from CA, but USAID is not able to award an activity to facilitate the coalition, there are other, less direct, ways that USAID can support CA:

- **USAID Activity as Coalition Member:** One of the most common ways USAID indirectly supports CA is through its implementing partners' participation as active coalition members. This involvement still has some important considerations. First, existing and relevant CA coalitions and efforts should be identified in advance of award if possible. Second, participation is likely to require time, commitment, and resources for the implementing partner, so ensure that participation and appropriate budget is included in the award. Third, recognize that the award activities, targets, and results should adapt to those agreed to by the CA coalition, so the award should be appropriately flexible in those respects. Some examples where this has been done successfully include the Partnership for Resilience and Economic Growth in Kenya and the Millenium Water Alliance in Ethiopia, where USAID implementing partners participated as members.

- **USAID as Coalition Member:** In the U.S., foundations and other donors commonly participate as coalition members, and this is something some USAID Missions have also done on a limited basis.

Frequently, such participation includes providing subject matter expertise, engaging in dialogue, supporting equality and diversity, and making and supporting decisions in line with mandates. In these cases it remains vitally important to stay aware of power dynamics and not become a dominant voice. This participation can help USAID gain a better perspective of its contributions to the issue and how its efforts fit with others. Through its participation, USAID may commit to taking action that the group agrees upon, such as diplomatic outreach to the Government, facilitating best-practice sharing with other groups, or designing new activities targeting more specifically coalition needs.

- **"Blind Funder:"** This role is relatively common with global initiatives like the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and emergency response to a natural disaster, where numerous bi- and multilateral donors and private foundations provide resources into a pooled fund. Applied to CA, a pooled fund might be valuable for an existing coalition to draw upon to address their priorities. While this mechanism may prove complicated, there are some USAID examples to draw from, such as Family Care First in Cambodia, where the coalition has transparent rules to determine priority activities, allowing USAID to leverage its funding with that of other donors to further the objectives.

Regardless of USAID's roles, AOR/CORs interviewed about CA efforts in programming routinely reported that they dedicated more time to CA efforts than with other activities. Relationship dynamics can be sensitive, often requiring increased attention from the AOR/COR to support challenges as they arise. The goals of the coalition, actions they agree to take, and metrics of progress may shift with time or emerge based on the coalition's efforts, potentially requiring the AOR/COR to be more flexible to the needs of both implementing partners and coalition members. Further, AORs and CORs should note that even if USAID is taking a relatively hands off role, they still need to have regular updates from implementers to be aware of issues, shifting dynamics, and changing priorities.

A light touch will help result in a design that is less prescriptive, leaving more of the key decisions up to coalition members. When considering taking a "light touch" your CO or AO is an excellent resource for help in getting started.

> **!**  **Decision Point:** To what extent (how light or heavy a touch) does USAID need to be involved to support effective collective action? How can you mitigate power imbalances and other effects that may arise from USAID involvement?

### A Note on Challenging Coalition Members

Sometimes key stakeholders may include some with whom USAID faces restrictions in cooperating. In these cases it is necessary to understand where those lines are, and if some flexibility may exist. Examples may include police, who constitute an important voice on issues related to violence and security; or rebel groups that may have critical roles in water rights and supply issues. When such issues arise, there may be ways to adapt. Working with Mission leadership may uncover ways to engage these stakeholders without causing harm, or ways to mitigate the impact of their exclusion. Such cases may also be a good moment to reflect on whether or not CA still makes sense as the most effective tool to address the issue.

## MODULE 3: KEY TAKEAWAYS

- USAID's role should be as small as possible, and only as large as necessary. In other words, allow the CA process to develop locally and organically, but be attentive to see where USAID's knowledge, network, or resources are needed to help the coalition work effectively.

- Key roles in implementing CA include the Hub, Facilitator, Members, other Stakeholders, and structures such as a Steering Committee or Working Groups.

- USAID colleagues from other offices can help with design decisions if engaged and consulted early in the process. Similarly, local stakeholders have significant knowledge, experience, and networks to provide valuable input to the design of CA.

- Identifying an existing network or coalition to support in CA may be the most efficient, sustainable, and locally driven. However, in some cases it may be better to establish a new coalition, especially if the existing coalitions are not diverse, inclusive, or equitable.

- USAID's role is most commonly to support CA design, provide financial support for the hub or the coalition activities, and/or to use its convening power to engage stakeholders. However, there are other potential roles that USAID can take to support CA.

# For Your Information:
# Facilitating Collective Action

This Practical Guide for USAID Missions is targeted for USAID Mission staff designing and overseeing Collective Action (CA) awards. However, it will also be useful for you to understand the responsibilities and considerations of a CA Facilitator, Hub, or Backbone, because USAID's design decisions have implications for the implementers. This section, an excerpt from the **Practical Guide for Facilitators**, highlights the ongoing effort demanded for that work. Based on LINC's research and analysis, organizing and facilitating CA requires maintaining three types of momentum for the coalition and its work. During certain moments, one topic may require more focus than another, but in general, the facilitator must keep an eye on the three types of momentum at all times.

## THREE TYPES OF MOMENTUM FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION

The three types of momentum are: Participation, Operations, and Results. The **Practical Guide for Facilitators** has more detail on each, providing tips and guidance for maintaining member participation, operations and functioning of the coalition, and ongoing results of the effort. Note that the three types of momentum are not mutually exclusive - they are interdependent and some of the important factors or considerations discussed under one area are also relevant under another area.

**Participation**
- Convening Power
- Government Buy-In
- Range of Actors
- Geographic Scope

**Results**
- Adaptation
  (feedback, reflection, learning)
- Value Proposition
- Commitment to Action

**Operations**
- Capable Leadership
- Activity Funding
- Communications
- Joint Action Planning Process
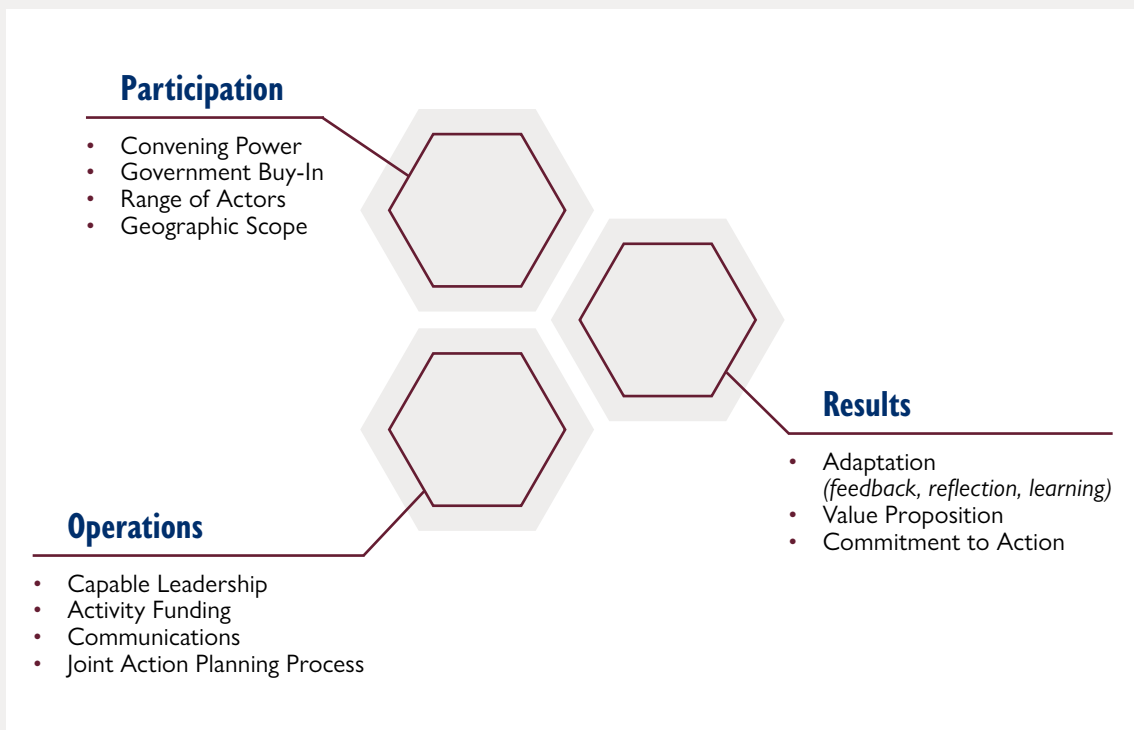
**Participation:** Mobilizing and maintaining participation of coalition members is an important challenge. As shown in the graphic above, this includes identifying and convening the key stakeholders, getting buy-in from influential actors, determining the scope of the effort in terms of diversity of perspectives and geographic area of focus, and adjusting membership and scope over time. While these are important at the launch of your CA effort, they are also an ongoing need. Participation is closely connected with *operations* because the coalition needs capable leadership to engage members, processes and structures for adjusting membership, and internal and external communications to keep members and other stakeholders informed. Participation is also closely connected to *results* because learning from feedback, adapting, maintaining value for the members, and follow-through on member commitments help the coalition maintain participation.

**Operations:** Defining and maintaining the functioning of the coalition is a second important area of focus. As shown in the graphic above, this includes establishing and supporting leadership and other structures, providing funding for joint activities of the coalition, internal and external communications, and processes to support collective planning, decision-making, activities, and learning. Operations are dependent on active and effective *participation*, and they rely on learning from feedback and member actions to see continued *results* of processes and structures.

**Results:** Reflecting and learning on results is an often overlooked element of effective CA. It allows improvement over time to ensure continued progress of the coalition and provides space to take a longer term view of the overall effort. As shown in the graphic above, this area includes adaptability of goals, actions, and processes, value for the participants, and accountability of participants to meet their commitments. A focus on results supports both *participation* and *operations* by providing tools for learning and motivation for continued participation.

# COLLECTIVE ACTION FACILITATION: FOUNDATIONAL FACTORS

There are several foundational factors for a CA organizer or facilitator to keep in mind that support the participation, operations, and results of the effort.

- **Balance process and product:** Coalition ownership of the CA effort centers on control over the process, and the products or results of that process. This requires a careful balance – too much focus on process can decrease member motivation for participation, while too much focus on products can result in weaker sustainability of the effort. A good facilitator will manage the balance carefully and ensure the coalition is encouraged to own both the process and products.
- **Focus on group cohesion to achieve results:** The research highlighted that in order to achieve progress toward their shared goal, the coalition needs to focus on cohesion among the members. The traditional emphasis on results-oriented programming has led many CA efforts to underinvest in group cohesion. A balance between cohesion and results is still necessary, and can shift over time, however, it is clear that sustained progress requires group dynamics and group cohesion. (**Module 9** contains further discussion and recommendations on measuring group cohesion.)
- **Identify a network catalyst if available:** The personality of an individual or organization leading the CA collaboration can heavily influence its success. A catalyst (this term may be more

accurate rather than champion) of the CA effort has energy, interpersonal skills, connections or reputation, and cares deeply about the results on the shared problem. If a catalyst exists in your context, they are often able to help launch the CA effort efficiently with convening power, building buy-in, establishing processes, supporting internal and external communication, encouraging members to follow through on their commitments, and other important factors. People interested in collaboration can be trained on these skills or found within the coalition, but it is worth the investment to find and engage those people. That said, if a catalyst is not available in your context, it is not a requirement for effective CA.

- **Facilitate, don't lead:** Inherent to CA is a philosophy of neutral facilitation. Hubs, organizers, and facilitators must step back to let the coalition lead or manage the process. This provides the safe space required to allow members to fully participate, and build shared results over time. The facilitator should seek to support the coalition to come to agreement on goals, make the right decisions for their situation, and take joint actions without imposing an external agenda. The key skills required of facilitators are:

  » Actively involving participants in the process;
  » Understanding the shared issue;
  » Bringing tools to support discussion and decision-making;
  » Listening, paraphrasing, observing, clarifying, elaborating;
  » Interpreting verbal and nonverbal behavior;
  » Mitigating differences or conflict - not avoiding it;
  » Managing time;
  » Demonstrating empathy;
  » Building a trusting environment;
  » Believing in the value of the CA coalition.

# MODULE 4 Designing Effective Collective Action

There is no single best-practice approach for designing successful Collective Action (CA) activities, as the influences of local needs, norms, actors and relationships can vary widely across different contexts and complex development challenges. Planning for CA is most effective when USAID carefully considers the intricacies of the development challenge and then develops an approach that is responsive to that context. In this module we cover the four high-level elements, or "design decisions" to plan effective CA: Entry Point, Geographic Scope, Range of Actors, and Time Period. These four design decisions will guide the development of a Scope of Work for collaboration, to be covered in **Module 6**.

The options can be determined internally within USAID, drawing on the expertise and experience of Mission staff or Headquarters (HQ) support, or through a more collaborative process such as Co-Creation[5] or Listening during the design phase. As covered in **Module 3**, CA is most effective when locally owned, so to the extent feasible, USAID should avoid prescribing the design.

After considering these design decisions, you may determine that CA is not suited to address the technical objectives. That's okay! As **Module 2** pointed out, not every complex issue requires CA, especially if sufficient time and resources are unavailable.

## ENTRY POINT:
## PROJECT, ACTIVITY, OR INTERVENTION

The first step in planning your CA approach is determining the most appropriate entry point for USAID. LINC's research identified several examples of USAID supporting a CA approach at various levels: project, activity/award, or as an intervention within an activity. Each entry point provides different options to design, procure, and implement a CA effort.

**Project-Level CA:** Project-Level CA is best suited when the development challenge is large in scope and cuts across multiple geographic or technical areas; where a coalition seeks to address diverse development objectives or intermediate results; and where multiple USAID awards (plus potentially non-USAID efforts) are active and have potential to support, reinforce, compete with and/or undermine one another. Due to their larger scale, projects will likely require more significant resources and support, which may necessitate a separate USAID award to a hub or backbone entity for the CA coalition. Project-level CA may also require more USAID Mission staff commitment, leadership, and facilitation of the coalition; may or may not have commensurate timeframe limitations; and may lend itself more readily to continuity and ongoing USAID support.

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**Activity-Level CA:** Activity-Level CA is often appropriate if one of the objectives is to promote local leadership around an endemic development challenge. Under Activity-Level CA, the USAID award is typically made to a hub or backbone supporting the coalition to address the development challenge. Activity-Level CA can be quite cost-effective because it allows USAID to leverage existing resources and efforts brought by diverse members of the coalition into joint actions by the group while catalyzing actors on a large scale. Activity-Level CA is of course limited to the duration of the award, although follow-on awards or sustainability planning (see **Module 10**) remain a possibility.

**Intervention-Level CA:** Finally, Intervention-Level CA can be delivered within an activity. This is best suited when the scope of the CA effort is relatively narrow within an award that has a wider scope and additional objectives. This is especially useful when one or more objectives or components of an activity can benefit from a structured collaborative effort. It is best if it complements other objectives of the activity that are addressing constraints beyond collaboration. For example, an anti-corruption activity may include an Intervention-Level CA effort as one component to engage stakeholders in improving policy and enforcement, while another activity component strengthens the capacity of civil society to provide oversight of Government transparency and accountability. If Intervention-Level is the most appropriate entry point, there are some trade-offs of having an implementing partner as the driving force: while it may help catalyze the coalition, it may also challenge members' perceptions of neutrality and power dynamics, or result in actions that are not fully aligned with the coalition's priorities.

Regardless of the level, it is important to consider how the coalition will be supported by USAID before addressing the remaining design factors below. Under all scenarios, CA will benefit from flexible award structures that accommodate adaptation, iteration, and learning. Incorporating these principles from the outset will help the coalition be more responsive to its members' needs while building value and trust in the CA approach, ultimately resulting in more effective impact.

## Key Consideration for CA Entry Point

| | Entry Point | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Project-Level** | **Activity-Level** | **Intervention-Level** |
| **Issue Scope** | Broad, cross-cutting development objective | Relatively broad, Intermediate Result / Sub-IR | Relatively narrow, complementing other activity interventions |
| **Timeframe** | Long, Flexible | Medium-Long | Short-Medium-Long |
| **Range of Actors** | Targeted to diverse | Targeted to diverse | Targeted |
| **Extent of USAID Role** | Facilitator, Hub, Funder | Funder, Technical Support, Convenor | Funder (Hands-Off) |
| **Beneficial Situations** | Many different individual efforts, including multiple USAID efforts acting in the same scope/geography. | Multiple actors/efforts - in particular local - and existing resources that can be aligned for more impact and local ownership. | Narrower scope requiring parallel actions that the coalition cannot effectively take on itself. |

| | Entry Point | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Project-Level** | **Activity-Level** | **Intervention-Level** |
| **Challenges** | Higher effort and resources

Potential for competing stakeholders

Typically less local ownership | Getting started and showing results.

Engaging stakeholders.

Sustainability post-USAID funding | Potential for power imbalances

Potential for duplication of existing groups

Sustainability post-USAID funding |

### Entry Point: Guiding Questions

- Will the coalition be a stand-alone activity or part of a larger effort of actions on the issue?
- What will be the relative scope and size of the CA effort?
- Are there any existing mechanisms through which the coalition could be established/engaged?
- Will the approach require a sustained funding stream across multiple program cycles?

**!** **Decision Point:** Will your CA approach be best suited to a project, activity, or intervention?

# GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

When considering the scope of the development issue it is also important to define certain boundaries, including the target geography. This helps to delineate the factors, actors and processes that are internal to the boundary (i.e., explicitly included in or targeted by your effort) and those that are external (i.e., acknowledged, but excluded from direct participation or influence).

To maximize the effectiveness of the CA initiative, the geographic level where efforts will be focused should be defined; for example, at a national, sub-national, or local level. The most appropriate level depends on the scope of the challenge, range of actors involved, and resources available. Selecting the level of focus will help determine which stakeholders will be targeted, what timeline is required, and how key collaboration factors will be addressed (**Module 5**). In determining the most appropriate geographic scope, also consider the influence of funding mechanisms, policy priorities and existing relationships with host country partners.

When dealing with particularly complex development issues with multi-faceted factors such as Government policy, social norms, institutional frameworks and other factors, Systems Mapping approaches (as described in the Systems and Complexity White Paper and this Learning Lab post on Systems Mapping) can be beneficial at the design phase to identify the geographic scope as well as

### TOOL BOX

### Systems Mapping

Any process used to identify the boundary of a complex issue and thus the factors, actors, interconnections, influences and outcomes that are internal and external to the boundary.

the internal and external factors of that boundary. Whichever method or approach is adopted, it is important to allocate sufficient time and resources to scoping the scale of the CA approach, as the decisions made at this stage will influence those that follow. At the same time, selecting the geographic scope should be an iterative process that evolves as USAID and its implementers begin to engage more intensively with local actors.

LINC's case study research did not include any global CA initiatives, such as the Open Government Partnership (OGP), or HQ-based initiatives, as this Guide is intended to assist Missions on field-based CA. Other resources review USAID practices for global collaboration, such as the report on Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives with the Private Sector.

## Key Considerations for Geographic Level

| Geographic Level | Example Contexts | Example CA Objectives |
|---|---|---|
| **Local** | Neighborhood, Village, Municipality | • Improve local ownership<br>• Create action networks<br>• Stimulate community-based development |
| **Sub-National** | Province, State, Region, District, County, Watershed | • Align efforts<br>• Leverage resources<br>• Strengthen capacity<br>• Improve a situation unique to the regional landscape |
| **National** | Country-Wide and/or involving National-Level Actors | • Support policy development<br>• Develop responsive national budgeting<br>• Establish priorities<br>• Strengthen capacity |
| **Cross-Border** | Watershed, Border Regions | • Facilitate international cooperation<br>• Improve a situation unique to the cross-border landscape |

## Geographic Scope: Guiding Questions

- Where are the potential beneficiaries of your program located? Where and how do they receive the services and goods you seek to improve? What constraints exist to improving access or quality of these services? Where do these constraints lie? (Hint: they may exist at different geographic levels)
- Are there organizations, institutions, agencies, or existing programs that have a mandate for your objective? If so, at what level does their role most prominently exert itself (e.g., national, sub-national, local)?

- Are there potential obstacles or opportunities for implementing CA at a certain level?
- What government offices and officials will need to be involved at each level? Will you be able to get their buy-in on the program? (see Government Buy-In discussed in **Module 5**)
- Where does past experience and research show is the most effective level to intervene?

**!**   **Decision Point:** What is the most appropriate geographic scope for your CA approach - local, sub-national, national, cross-border, or another scope?

# RANGE OF ACTORS TO ENGAGE

Ultimately, CA is about helping stakeholders to align themselves on a shared issue toward a greater good. To do this, it is necessary to determine which actors to engage and how to get them on board with your approach. Even in the case that USAID is supporting an existing coalition or CA effort, it is necessary to ensure the right actors are engaged.

This process may appear slightly different depending on the context and nature of the development challenge. For example, if your goal is to develop and promote best practices within a particular sector (e.g., healthcare delivery) your coalition is likely to include those stakeholders most relevant to the health sector. Conversely, if your objective is broad and cross-cutting in nature (e.g., community resilience) you might target a more diverse group of actors with varying perspectives on the issue. In some cases, the members of your coalition may already have a shared and aligned understanding of the issue, in which case a more targeted group may be more appropriate; in other cases, the goal of the coalition itself may be to better understand and collectively define the issue, in which case a more diverse group might be appropriate.

The range of actors involved will also depend on the geographical scope, as defining a clear scope will help to identify actors within the boundary, as well as those outside the boundary but with influence. In some cases, certain actors may be invited to participate because they lend legitimacy to the process or help strengthen the political economy of the coalition. Certain actors may need to be engaged early in the process to gain their buy-in, even if they do not end up with a large role in the CA effort. Tools like Stakeholder Mapping, Social Network Analysis (SNA) and Political Economy Analysis (PEA) can help support this process by illuminating the relationships between actors and networks.

A final dimension to consider is balancing the functional size of the group with the diversity of perspectives represented. Regardless of which stakeholders are involved, remember that CA ultimately benefits from building trust among members, being aware of power dynamics and ensuring equity among members (**Module 3**).

**TOOL BOX**

**Network Analysis**

A process of identifying key actors and stakeholders around a shared issue and their interrelationships. Network analysis can help to spot key influencers in the network and guide you in structuring your hub or backbone organization.

**RANGE OF ACTORS**

| | Targeted | Diverse |
|---|---|---|
| **Collective Action Examples:** | • Technical working groups <br>• Building local ownership <br>• Pilots and scale-up activities <br>• Capacity building <br>• Developing policy | • Collectively identifying development challenges and solutions <br>• Advocacy <br>• Collaboration along service "supply chains" <br>• Building consensus |

## Range of Actors to Engage: Guiding Questions

- Should the coalition be targeted at specific groups who are best placed to address the issue or better to be open to all stakeholders?
- What is an appropriate size for the group?
- Are there existing networks, coalitions, or working groups currently addressing this issue?
- Can you engage other donors and in a way that does not undermine the trust and power dynamics?
- How will you ensure that the coalition encourages equity, inclusion, diversity, and accessibility?
- How will you manage power dynamics, gatekeepers, and spoilers?

**!** **Decision Point:** Who are the most important stakeholders to be sure are engaged in your CA effort? Is a targeted or more diverse approach more appropriate?

# TIME PERIOD FOR COLLABORATION

Making progress on complex issues with diverse groups of stakeholders takes time. However, not all CA efforts need to be long-term endeavors. LINC's research highlights successful case studies ranging from less than one year to ongoing (even after more than five years). The timeline required for CA will depend on the nature of the challenge, the alignment of members in their understanding of the issue and solutions, and the resources available to support the coalition.

If a group of actors is closely aligned, and the necessary resources and conditions are available to enact change, it is possible to realize some "quick wins" and achieve the initial objectives of the CA effort within a relatively short time. More commonly, one can expect that it will take time for members to develop a shared vision and approach, especially if the issue being addressed is controversial or faces considerable skepticism. If the objective of the CA effort is to create more profound "systems change," then the work of the coalition might need to span multiple USAID programming cycles. In such scenarios, the coalition might best be institutionalized within a sector or absorbed into a Government office, sustaining it beyond USAID's period of support. (See **Module 10** Sustaining Collective Action.)

Long-term program design doesn't necessarily mean that CA approaches need to be more costly or resource-intensive, but rather reflects the reality that building trust, getting buy-in, and creating strong and lasting relationships takes time. The timeline for CA will depend on numerous factors that should be considered during the design phase, even if they aren't definitively known. Remember, iteration and adaptability help to foster more effective collaboration; thus, you may decide that the timeframe needs to be adapted once the effort is underway.

**EXAMPLE TIME PERIODS FOR COLLABORATION**

**Program Design** → **Startup**

Identify point of entry, geographic level, actors to engage. Initial stakeholder consultations and coalition design.

**Specific Achievable Purpose:** bounded scope, targeted actors, clear problem identification and technical objectives. → **< 3 Years**

Coalition Institutionalized

**Iterative Progress:** collectively-identified goals, joint actions, emphasis on learning, adaptation and iteration. → **3-5 Years** **Sustained**

**Sustained Initiative:** diverse actors, multiple perspectives, dedicated-resources, seeking long-term systems change. → **5+ Years** **Sustained**

## Time Period: Guiding Questions

- What is the motivation for collective action (e.g., increase local ownership, create systemic change, align and amplify efforts)?
- How long may it realistically take to identify and convene the actors for your coalition? How long may it take to build trust with certain key actors or institutions?
- Is there an achievable objective after which the coalition is no longer necessary?
- Should / will the coalition serve a longer-term role on the shared issue (e.g., national working group)?

**!** **Decision Point:** How much time is realistically required to achieve the objectives of your CA initiative?

# MODULE 4: KEY TAKEAWAYS

- There is no single best approach to effective Collective Action. Several key design decisions should be based on the context and needs for the development problem. The decisions are also interdependent, so defining them is an iterative exercise.

- The entry point for CA can be a USAID Project, a USAID Activity (or award), or an intervention within a USAID Activity. The decision of Project, Activity, or Intervention level is dependent on the scope of the issue and other decisions such as USAID's role and the range of actors to engage.

- The geographic scope of the CA effort defines the boundary for work, for example at a national, sub-national, local, or cross-border level, or within a specific watershed or tribal footprint. The decision depends on where the program participants are located and where the root causes exist.

- The range of actors that a CA effort engages can fall along a spectrum from narrowly targeted to broadly diverse. Whether USAID is supporting an existing coalition or establishing a new one, this decision requires balancing diversity and inclusion needs, the manageable size of the coalition, and the scope of the development problem.

- While CA takes time to launch and requires time to realize results, CA efforts can be designed to achieve short term goals or to sustain for long time periods. This decision depends on a realistic assessment of the time required to launch the effort and build trust among members, and the need for the coalition to continue beyond a certain set of results.

# MODULE 5

# Factors for Effective Collective Action

In addition to the context-dependent design options highlighted in **Module 4**, LINC's research highlighted seven key factors that contribute to effective Collective Action (CA). It is not necessary for USAID to outline or prescribe how each of these factors will be addressed. More likely the approach will emerge by defining the scope and learning from local stakeholders, and proceed into the implementation phase as the implementing partner works to address each factor. USAID can support the implementer in these efforts as necessary, but it is important to lead from behind, as "USAID's role should be as small as possible, and only as big as necessary."

LINC's research also showed that not all of the factors need to be satisfied in the same manner in every CA context. It is still possible to have effective CA even if there are some weaknesses in some factors. The key is to maximize each where possible and reflect on the potential impact of deficiencies in others. In essence, these seven factors serve as the core ingredients for effective CA, while substitutions may be appropriate depending on the scope, goals, and processes of specific coalitions.

This module overviews the seven factors for effective CA, why they are instrumental for success, and highlights some approaches through which they can be achieved.

## CONVENING POWER

Convening power represents the ability of a hub, implementer, Government office or other stakeholder to bring together prospective members of a coalition by using their relationships, social capital and reputation. A stakeholder's convening power lends it an essential sense of legitimacy in the eyes of coalition members and helps to motivate initial and continued participation. Convenors can foster engagement by using their position to demonstrate the value of the coalition and by emphasizing how CA can effectively catalyze change around shared issues and opportunities.

Convening power can be exhibited by an influential institution, organization, or individual, usually a recognized champion of the issue with technical expertise and a large network. While in some cases, USAID can be an effective convenor by leveraging its relationships with Government, civil society, and others, they should remain cognizant of transparency issues by setting clear expectations, being aware of potential biases, and ensuring equitable participation; this of course applies to all convenors. Effective CA relies on trust, transparency and dependable working relationships.

| Actor Type | Illustrative Examples of Exercising Convening Power |
|---|---|
| **USAID** | AOR/CORs or other Mission staff can leverage their relationships with Government counterparts, other donors, programs, and service providers to encourage participation. |
| **National Government** | If a CA approach is aligned with national priorities, then Government offices and institutions can lend legitimacy to the effort and signal the importance and benefits of participation. |
| **Donor** | Due to their unique position as financial supporters of local and international NGOs, donors have a sizable influence on the priorities and approaches of their recipients. Getting other donors on-board with a CA approach by demonstrating how it will better leverage their funding can bring more stakeholders to the table. |
| **Champion** | A "champion" can be a recognized NGO, business leader or other actor who can motivate others to participate. Identifying multiple champions to motivate different groups of stakeholders can help encourage wider engagement. |
| **Implementer** | Implementers can use their position as award recipients to convene stakeholders by identifying value propositions for different groups and building them into the CA approach. Implementers should, however, be cognizant of potential biases in acting as both the convenor and hub, as well as the central issue of sustainability following their withdrawal. |

# GOVERNMENT BUY-IN

Government buy-in is achieved when the key Government decision-makers believe in the coalition, support their efforts, and take action on their recommendations. In most contexts, Government buy-in is essential for CA to not only achieve progress, but to sustain the effort over the longer term. Government buy-in might support space for the coalition to meet and operate, as well as providing the necessary convening authority. Government buy-in is instrumental not only at the outset, but should be maintained throughout the process and ideally beyond the USAID program cycle.

In most cases, the Government should be involved in the coalition from the outset, providing an essential bridge between civil society, public institutions and others. However, Government buy-in does not necessarily require their participation in the coalition in every case. In LINC's research, even in cases where the coalition's efforts focus on advocacy or Government accountability, it was shown to be possible and valuable to have a level of Government buy-in.

Political Economy Analysis (PEA) and Advocacy Strategy Matrices are effective tools to help identify key Government actors and power brokers with whom to engage and seek backing. USAID efforts have succeeded in attracting Government buy-in through several strategies:

- Many coalitions have aligned their efforts with key Government priorities or objectives to show that they are all "pulling in the same direction."

**TOOL BOX**

**Political Economy Analysis**

A process for understanding the political dimensions around a development challenge and using this information to inform how you approach government actors. Politics represents both the formal and informal ways that influential actors collaborate on complex topics.

- Conveners have engaged the Government at the outset by soliciting their input on the structure and proposed objectives and priorities of the coalition.
- Staying aware of and sensitive to Government concerns has proven effective for the coalition to demonstrate its value and commitment to collaboration.
- The coalition can demonstrate value by providing expertise or other support that the Government lacks.
- In cases where the Government perceives that the coalition is duplicating its efforts or supplanting its role, coalitions have allayed that concern by incorporating those efforts into their work and demonstrating that they can achieve more together than separately.

If sufficient Government buy-in proves particularly challenging to obtain, USAID and CA implementers can re-assess their approach to find some common ground around the issue. In particularly challenging circumstances, USAID might try to leverage its diplomatic relationships to engage Government at higher levels than the coalition is able. Ultimately, to get the Government on-board, a coalition must demonstrate their value for both the Government and its constituency.
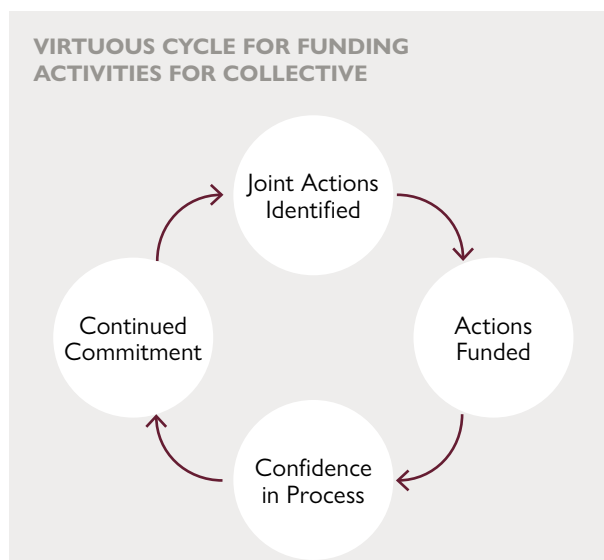
# FUNDING FOR ACTIVITIES

CA provides an ideal platform through which stakeholders can pool and leverage resources towards greater collective impact. In many cases funding is necessary to support the efforts of a hub, secretariat, or backbone organization. While there are examples of effective CA with minimal or even no funds for activities, CA is typically more effective when the coalition has the resources and ability to follow through on their decisions and priorities. That said, this is not the only role that funding plays in supporting CA.

Funding often represents a major value and motivator for stakeholders to join a coalition. In return, coalitions can act as effective vehicles to allocate funds for greater impact by motivating stakeholders to work together. Coalitions can serve as a platform for members to access potentially underutilized Government or donor resources, and can also offer members a network of like-minded organizations to build relationships as partners for future opportunities.

Funding for activities of shared interest can also build trust in the coalition; however, it is important to maintain transparency in determining which members receive support so as not to erode that trust. It is essential that coalitions intentionally determine how they will fund efforts, and not just what they will fund. In some cases, it is beneficial for members to vote on funding proposals or to distribute pooled funds to smaller groups of organizations.

Funding for activities can also have perverse or unintended effects. In some contexts, norms around per diems and stipends can promote a false sense of engagement that runs counter to collaboration. Also, the presence of international

**VIRTUOUS CYCLE FOR FUNDING ACTIVITIES FOR COLLECTIVE**

- Joint Actions Identified
- Actions Funded
- Confidence in Process
- Continued Commitment

funding may have negative connotations and thereby diminish participation. Funding can be a powerful tool to motivate collaboration and catalyze action, but since it can also have the opposite effect, it is important to assess the role of funding within the particular context before integrating it into the CA effort.

# CAPABLE LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

While CA coalitions can take different forms, they all need leadership structure and capable personnel to serve key roles. This is of critical importance as these personnel and structures have a direct influence on the day-to-day functioning of the coalition, and thus on its success. It is important to distinguish *leadership* from *power* (convening power, power dynamics), as the individuals who serve in leadership roles may not always have the most influence over other stakeholders, but they will need to work dynamically and adeptly to build trust among coalition members and drive the group towards consensus and accountability. In some cases, leaders may be stakeholders or implementer itself, while in other cases external facilitators might be brought in to assist.

Effective CA leaders should possess experience, energy, positive reputation, and the ability to adapt. Experience has shown that allowing the coalition to select leaders from champions within the group is one of the most effective means to support CA. In many cases, the ideal leader is one who is central to the network; recognized for their technical expertise in the field; maintains other members' trust; and ensures that the processes and structures governing the coalition are transparent, effective, and equitable.

# ADAPTABILITY

Effective CA requires regular reflection and adaptation. Here, adaptation means the ability of the coalition to realign its goals, processes, plans, and actions. By bringing together stakeholders with different perspectives, a group may find that the initial means by which they seek to effect change may not actually be the most impactful. Adaptation keeps members engaged, heeds their voices and perspectives, gives them ownership over the direction of the coalition, and is responsive to their needs and concerns. Thus, coalitions should organize regular and intentional feedback into the CA process.

Adaptation can be incorporated into a CA approach in different ways. Many collaboration frameworks such as CLA, Collective Impact, Quality Improvement, and Adaptive Management have built-in mechanisms to ensure regular reflection and adaptation. For CA, this might be as simple as regular member surveys and feedback to help understand what is working well and what should be improved, or an annual workshop where the coalition convenes to review their efforts and make a detailed plan for moving forward. Member feedback is essential to identify gaps in the coalition's approach. It may be beneficial to engage an impartial facilitator or evaluator who can more transparently solicit input to help guide and focus adaptation. Coalitions can also build adaptation into their work by establishing working groups to assess and explore different approaches to priority issues.

**TOOL BOX**

**Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA)**

CLA is a set of practices to help improve development effectiveness through strategic collaboration, continuous learning, and adaptive management throughout all components of the Program Cycle.

Implementers should consider how they incorporate adaptation into the CA process while staying within the USAID requirements, such as formal work plans and performance monitoring. See **Module 9** for more information on adaptive MEL activities.

# PERCEIVED VALUE TO PARTICIPANTS

CA coalitions essentially provide a forum for stakeholders to connect with others to pursue action around a shared interest toward a common goal. As we have seen, they may also provide organizations with funding for activities that are unavailable elsewhere. However, linkages and resources alone are not the only motivators for participation. Members need to derive some value or benefit through their participation. For example, coalitions might provide access to training, mentoring, and capacity building; knowledge and information sharing between partners; access and ability to engage with the Government; or the potential to influence policy. For Government actors in particular, they may provide access to resources, knowledge, expertise or improved access to their constituencies that might be lacking.

For coalitions to create value, they need to understand members' needs and motivations. As with gaining Government buy-in, members should see that the work of the coalition is aligned with their own goals. This can be achieved by surveying local stakeholders to better understand the benefits they desire through membership, and gather their insight on these value propositions during the initial phases of program design, and then integrate them into the coalition structure and processes at the outset. This process ties closely with adaptation and should therefore continue over the life of the effort to ensure the coalition keeps delivering value to drive active participation. Some mechanisms to facilitate this input can include annual surveys, learning summits, annual feedback, and review workshops, which might effectively be led by an external facilitator or evaluator.

Effective CA approaches need to provide value through membership as both a contributing factor to – as well as a result of – effective collaboration. This feedback effect can help a coalition build and maintain momentum toward more impactful and sustainable outcomes.

# COMMITMENT TO ACTION

For the factors above to lead to effective collaboration, participants need to commit to putting their plans into action. This means that everyone involved has a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities; they consistently and meaningfully participate in the coalition; and then follow through on actions and decisions. Beyond ensuring effective functioning of the coalition, accountability also helps build a sense of ownership and members "pulling in the same direction." As commitment to action is closely linked to perceived value, accountability is both a contributing factor and a result of effective collaboration.

For a coalition to effectively function, there should be clear expectations for *all* members, not just those in leadership or decision-making positions. This might include attendance or contribution requirements, documented scopes of work, memorandums of understanding and statements of commitment.

Throughout the CA process, members need to be motivated to maintain their commitment to the effort, which can be reinforced through adaptation and complexity-aware monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) (See **Module 9**). Thoughtful MEL approaches also serve to improve a coalition's understanding of their impact and support an environment of knowledge sharing and adaptation. Facilitators should also analyze members' feedback and incorporate it into future performance, leadership and programming decisions. All of these tasks require a strong and capable leadership operating within transparent structures, such as a secretariat with a clear mandate. Much like perceived value, commitment to action should be viewed as both an outcome and a contributing factor of effective CA.

## WHAT IF ONE OR MORE FACTORS IS NOT VIABLE IN MY CONTEXT?

Effective CA is the result of a combination of the multi-dimensional and context-specific factors defined in this module. Based on LINC's research, case studies of effective CA all exhibited some level of emphasis on each of the factors outlined above. However, these seven factors are not necessarily exhaustive, nor is it a strict requirement to maximize all of the factors. USAID and implementers should expect that the degree of influence and importance of each of these factors will vary significantly across contexts, stakeholders, and issues, and some of these factors possess temporal components as well. Government buy-in and perceived value, for example, may need to be built over time, once members better understand the outputs and benefits of the coalition's work. Not every coalition will need to significantly adapt their approach if it is working well, or provide funding for activities if there are other means for achieving joint goals. Simply put, the key to CA lies in understanding the specific needs of the context and stakeholders, and planning an effective approach to respond.

## MODULE 5: KEY TAKEAWAYS

- LINC's research demonstrated that there are seven key factors that contribute to effective Collective Action, no matter the context or scope: Convening Power, Government Buy-In, Capable Leadership Structure, Funding for Activities, Adaptability, Perceived Value for Participants, and Commitment to Action.

- Not all of the factors are required for effective CA, but all have been shown to provide value to CA efforts. That said, the influence of a given factor may vary with time or depending on context.

- While each of the factors was found to be influential regardless of context, the strategies to achieve them may vary significantly by context. To maintain the "light touch" of USAID as suggested in **Module 3**, the hub and coalition should lead the definition of those strategies.

**MODULE**

# 6

# Drafting a Scope of Work (SOW) for Collective Action

**IN THIS MODULE:**

**Theory of Change for Collective Action**

**Objectives for Collective Action**

**Illustrative Activities for Collective Action**

After assessing the suitability of Collective Action (CA) (**Module 2**) and defining the broad parameters for collaboration and related objectives to be incorporated into the design (**Module 3**, **Module 4**, and **Module 5**), USAID can begin to document key decisions and parameters in a Scope of Work (SOW) or Program Description to incorporate into a solicitation. Of course, due to the iterative nature of design, drafting the SOW or Program Description may require revisiting those key decisions, including the suitability of CA.

> *A good scope of work will effectively capture both progress toward the technical objective, as well as improvements in stakeholder collaboration.*

One of the challenges in developing a clear and effective SOW or Program Description that incorporates CA is capturing both the needs and progress toward achieving group cohesion against the success toward technical objectives such as increased incomes, decreased corruption, improved air quality, or lower child mortality. A good SOW or Program Description will effectively capture both the progress toward the technical objective, as well as improvements in stakeholder collaboration and action that are stimulated.

This module addresses the key components to develop an SOW or Program Description to be used for a USAID solicitation focused on CA, or incorporating CA into the activity: first, developing a Theory of Change (ToC), then defining CA objectives, and lastly elaborating some potential illustrative CA activities. Although SOWs and Program Descriptions are not drafted for Projects, the guidance on ToC, objectives, and illustrative activities will still be helpful for thinking through the needs for scoping a Project if that is determined to be the most appropriate entry point (**Module 4**).

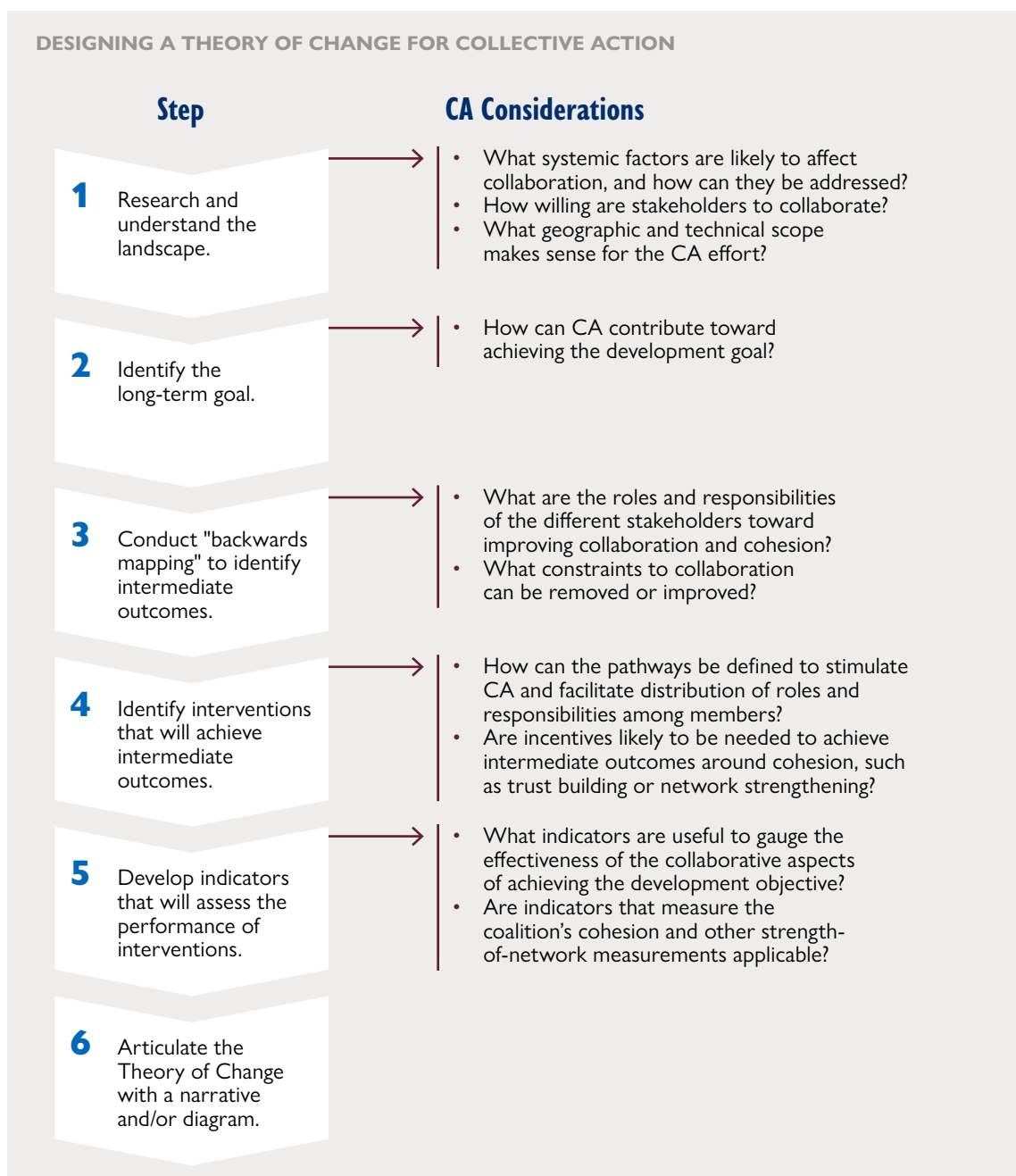## THEORY OF CHANGE FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION

USAID, along with some other donors, have shifted to a Theory of Change (ToC) paradigm for their development activities. A ToC provides in-depth causal analysis of issues based on a rigorous and evolving evidence base. ToC analysis is highly suitable and consistent with CA, as the ToC defines a common understanding among stakeholders around the actions needed to achieve change; it can thus serve as an effective way to engage local stakeholders in CA.

USAID's Theory of Change: A Facilitator's Guide and USAID Learning Lab's blog titled, What is this thing called 'Theory of Change'? are two resources that help guide effective ToCs that are plausible, feasible and testable; offer guidance on stakeholder mapping and analysis; and illustrate how the mapping

process can be used as a communication tool to gain stakeholder consensus, define success, and assign roles and responsibilities.

In line with the USAID guidance, developing a ToC follows a six-step process illustrated in the table/ diagram below, with specific considerations pertaining to CA elaborated on the right. While this module intends to provide guidance for USAID Missions in developing a Theory of Change, similar principles apply for implementers and CA coalitions to further elaborate and refine their own theories. In line with the light touch approach for USAID discussed in **Module 3**, the ToC is an opportunity for the CA facilitator and coalition to define the expected results and the mechanisms to achieve them.

**DESIGNING A THEORY OF CHANGE FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION**

| Step | CA Considerations |
|---|---|
| **1** Research and understand the landscape. | • What systemic factors are likely to affect collaboration, and how can they be addressed?<br>• How willing are stakeholders to collaborate?<br>• What geographic and technical scope makes sense for the CA effort? |
| **2** Identify the long-term goal. | • How can CA contribute toward achieving the development goal? |
| **3** Conduct "backwards mapping" to identify intermediate outcomes. | • What are the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders toward improving collaboration and cohesion?<br>• What constraints to collaboration can be removed or improved? |
| **4** Identify interventions that will achieve intermediate outcomes. | • How can the pathways be defined to stimulate CA and facilitate distribution of roles and responsibilities among members?<br>• Are incentives likely to be needed to achieve intermediate outcomes around cohesion, such as trust building or network strengthening? |
| **5** Develop indicators that will assess the performance of interventions. | • What indicators are useful to gauge the effectiveness of the collaborative aspects of achieving the development objective?<br>• Are indicators that measure the coalition's cohesion and other strength-of-network measurements applicable? |
| **6** Articulate the Theory of Change with a narrative and/or diagram. | |

Based on LINC's research, the following general ToC on collaborative approaches and action was developed for use and refinement by USAID Missions:

# A GENERAL COLLECTIVE ACTION THEORY OF CHANGE:

**IF** stakeholders to [*development problem*] convene around a shared goal in a Collective Action approach,

**AND IF** the CA coalition strengthens its capacity to collaborate (focusing on group cohesion and not just results, for example through [*Government buy-in, leadership structures, ability to adapt over time, funding for activities, and value proposition for participants*]),

**THEN** stakeholders' actions will be aligned and coordinated,

**AND THEN** the coalition will achieve improved, sustained, scaled, and locally owned impact toward [*elaborate development outcomes*].

Some of USAID's experiences with CA have included a solicitation with a more specific ToC for that activity, two of which are provided below. The first example, developed by USAID/Mexico in collaboration with the implementing partners, is for an activity that aims to undertake CA as an intervention supporting one of three objectives. The second example, developed by USAID/Vietnam, is for an activity employing CA to achieve a development objective, in this case reducing pollution.

### USAID/Mexico Multi-Stakeholder Strengthening Activity (MSA):

**IF** the activity strengthens specific capacities of institutions to focus on contributing to impact,

**AND IF** the activity supports multi-stakeholder collaboration around a shared vision,

**THEN** there will be increased trust, social capital, resource mobilization and effectiveness of activities among participants in the process.

**AND THEN** the sustainability of social development initiatives will increase.

### USAID/Vietnam Reducing Pollution Solicitation

**IF** USAID supports a collective impact approach to address targeted environmental pollution issues,

**THEN** this will result in policy change, policy implementation, and behavior change that contribute to reduced environmental pollution.

**!** **Decision Point:** What are the pathways that you envision CA will support the coalition to achieve and sustain the development objective?

# ACTIVITY OBJECTIVES FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION

Objectives related to CA can be considered under four broad categories, discussed in turn below with questions to guide development and some examples of each.

**Technical Objectives:** Incorporate CA aspects toward achieving the primary development objective.

- How can diverse stakeholders work together to achieve the technical objective?
- How do the different stakeholders define the problem and the root causes? Are their views consistent, and where do they differ?
- How do different stakeholders view desired progress and outcomes toward a common agenda?

> **Examples:** *Strengthened cooperation between CSO networks, government institutions and other stakeholders to constructively advocate for, deliver and monitor democratic reforms that strengthen government transparency, accountability and responsiveness.*
>
> *Improved business ecosystem for startups and innovative initiatives and stimulate a culture that embraces new opportunities of technology to advance sustainable economic growth.*

**Stakeholder & Network Cohesion Objectives:** Focus on improving collaboration, trust, confidence and action of coalition members.

- How are the stakeholders currently engaged with one another and where are improvements needed?
- How willing are the stakeholders to collaborate? Can specific obstacles be attributed to certain stakeholders, and what can be done to incentivize change?
- Who are the backbone leaders and how effective is their leadership? Can they effectively guide the overall vision, build collective will and mobilize resources? What is the desired change in these areas?
- What tools or forums can improve collaboration, and what is the corresponding desired and sustained impact?

> **Examples:** *Stakeholders strengthen their relationship and cooperation, demonstrating shared challenge, purpose, vision and approach to solving WASH constraints in rural communities.*
>
> *Multi-stakeholder dialogues create common agendas to address high-priority constraints and desired outcomes for natural resource management.*
>
> *Stakeholders can effectively and collectively devise and deliver reinforceable actions that contribute toward an improved business development ecosystem.*
>
> *Stakeholder coalition exhibits strong leadership by backbone actor(s) that guide vision and strategy for collective engagement, builds will, advances policy, and mobilizes resources for implementation.*

**Stakeholder & Network Capacity Objectives** that focus on building institutional capacity to collaborate effectively and capacity of the coalition as a whole.

- What capacities do stakeholders or the coalition need to develop or improve so that they can more effectively address the development issue?
- In what areas do different stakeholders need to develop their organizational capacities so that they can better collaborate toward outcomes that benefit stakeholders' constituents?
- How can stakeholders collaborate to develop a shared impact measurement system that objectively tracks their efforts, progress, effectiveness and ability to adapt?

> **Examples:** *Strengthened institutional, organizational and technical capacities allow CSO coalitions and networks to play stronger leadership roles to advance democracy and good governance.*
>
> *Market system actors possess and apply new and improved organizational and technical capacities to stimulate economic development and strengthen competitiveness in key sectors.*

**Resource Mobilization Objectives** that focus on coalition members engaging resources to support its administration and activities.

- How can stakeholders more effectively deliver and manage financial, material and human resources to more sustainably and equitably deliver their services?
- What resources can different stakeholder access that can achieve synergies and improve collaboration toward the goal? How can they most effectively be leveraged in terms of scope and timing?
- What resources will be needed going forward to sustain the coalition and contribute toward its activities and progress?

> **Examples:** *Strengthened capacity of stakeholders and networks to better access, leverage and manage increased financial resources sustainably.*
>
> *Increased public funding and improved investment toward cleaner, more efficient technologies in public services.*
>
> *Stakeholder coalition develops and executes a resource mobilization plan that will allow it to sustain its progress and impact beyond USAID funding.*

> **!** **Decision Point:** How does CA of stakeholders contribute to the development issue? How prominent should CA feature as a means to achieve the development objectives? What stakeholder relationships and capacities need to be improved to more effectively address the issue?

---

# ILLUSTRATIVE ACTIVITIES FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION

This section examines some illustrative activities that can be adapted for an SOW or Program Description, again aligned with the same four general types of objectives. Offerors or applicants of course need not be bound by these activities and should be encouraged to elaborate more specific interventions consistent with objectives and suited to the local landscape and stakeholders.

### Illustrative Activities toward Achieving Technical Objectives:

> *Stimulate collective action through a facilitative approach with the coalition of stakeholders to address priority areas of technical objectives.*
>
> *Collectively identify information gaps and conduct research or surveys around technical objectives, challenges, priorities, opportunities.*
>
> *Share learning and experience of practitioners with the broader coalition for discussion and adaptation.*

*Organize training, workshops, seminars and other forums to prioritize issues, inform policy and decision-making, and take collective action.*

*Provide (co-financed) sub-awards to support technical and collective action outcomes.*

### Illustrative Activities toward Achieving Stakeholder and Network Cohesion

*Conduct network mapping and analysis to identify the relevant stakeholders and their relationships, roles and responsibilities in the technical area.*

*Establish a coalition of stakeholders, or bolster existing networks, for collective action to identify and address priorities.*

*Organize study tours, cross-visits and social-professional exchanges to strengthen teambuilding and network cohesion.*

*Develop appropriate forums to actively engage Government, civil society, business and other stakeholders more effectively around priorities.*

*Facilitate "backbone" leaders to organize regular information-sharing and action-orientation meetings with coalition stakeholders and communities.*

*Facilitate coalition efforts to conduct public outreach to raise awareness and inform communities and constituents on cooperation and action.*

### Illustrative Activities toward Achieving Stakeholder and Network Capacity Building

*Provide training and technical assistance (TA) to address key organizational and network capacity gaps.*

*Introduce tools to enhance public engagement, information dissemination, monitoring and reporting.*

*Support stakeholder-led establishment and management of data, information and knowledge centers.*

*Support stakeholder-led design and implementation of advocacy campaigns and fundraising activities.*

*Support initial and ongoing collection of constituent feedback, drawn upon for activity design, implementation and monitoring.*

*Provide sub-grants to coalition stakeholders to build their capacity to deliver actions and advance issue-based reform agenda.*

*Identify, pursue and support opportunities to develop and apply mobile and internet technologies toward priorities.*

*Build coalition leadership around MEL, facilitating the documentation and sharing of achievements, lessons learned and best practices.*

### Illustrative Activities toward Mobilizing Resources

*Engage coalition stakeholders to identify financial, material and human resources that can be leveraged in collective action.*

*Support coalition to identify available and new funding streams, establish resource-sharing partnerships, and leverage resources to address priorities.*

*Provide matching funding to encourage resource mobilization by coalition members.*

**Example Illustrative Activities from the USAID/
Vietnam Reducing Pollution Solicitation**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Illustrative Activities toward Technical Objectives** | Identify environmental pollution challenges that have significant energy and commitment from local groups and actors.<br><br>Provide technical advisory services and research support related to the environmental pollution challenges being addressed by local actors. |
| **Illustrative Activities toward Stakeholder and Network Cohesion** | Support local actors in stakeholder and system mapping related to the environmental pollution challenge.<br><br>Identify and strengthen relationships among local champions. |
| **Illustrative Activities toward Stakeholder and Network Capacity** | Build capacity of credible social organizations in facilitating collective impact.<br><br>Facilitate the development of data management systems.<br><br>Provide sub-awards to social organizations to serve in the backbone function and facilitate collective impact among local actors. |
| **Illustrative Activities toward Mobilizing Resources** | Identify alternative/local funding streams and other opportunities to strengthen the longevity and success of the collective impact approach.<br><br>Establish a small sub-awards program to support local actors' leadership related to environmental pollution challenges. |

**!** **Decision Point:** What is the appropriate balance between addressing technical objectives versus strengthening coalition and stakeholder cohesion and capacities?

# MODULE 6: KEY TAKEAWAYS

- One of the challenges in developing a clear and effective SOW or Program Description for Collective Action is balancing the need to strengthen cohesion of the coalition with the need to make progress toward the technical objective.

- In keeping with the small role for USAID proposed in **Module 3**, the Theory of Change, CA objectives, and illustrative activities can be developed or refined directly by the coalition members rather than prescribed by USAID.

- Although SOWs or Program Descriptions are not drafted for USAID Projects, the same thinking to understand potential pathways to achieve CA and the technical objective is valuable for scoping a Project.

**MODULE**
# 7  Budgeting for Collective Action

Budget requirements for Collective Action (CA) should be considered together with developing the SOW or Program Description (**Module 6**). ). This module provides guidance on how Missions can determine an appropriate budget for a CA award considering the overall goal and proposed interventions. As discussed in **Module 6**, the CA objectives should be stated clearly in the SOW or Program Description and incorporated into the Theory of Change (ToC) and project indicators (**Module 9**). If done effectively, it should be straightforward to offerors or applicants what is expected to be described in their proposal and reflected in their budgets.

Despite having elaborated a ToC and objectives, budgeting for CA can still be challenging given the uncertain nature of the needs of the coalition or direction the CA effort might take. One common challenge is the potential need to revise a budget after the award is finalized. As CA resource needs may change over the course of implementation, USAID should, to the extent possible within applicable regulations, attempt to provide an efficient process for reallocating funds, adding funds for emerging opportunities, changing milestones, and/or other items specified in the agreement (see **Module 3**). Adaptive and flexible awards can be a key to CA effectiveness, and lack of flexibility can be a barrier.

## WHAT GOES INTO A COLLECTIVE ACTION BUDGET?

There are numerous factors that can affect the size of a CA budget, including the entry point, geographic scope, range of stakeholders engaged, time period (see **Module 4**), and the strategies to achieve the success factors (**Module 5**). The following list provides a guide for typical cost categories related to CA, noting that the applicability of each will depend on the design and whether CA is the main objective or a means to achieve a broader development objective.

- **Human Resources:** Appropriate levels of human resources, including staff, partners, consultants and others responsible for CA efforts. This includes implementing partner management and support, as well as any specific human resources for a coalition hub and facilitation.
- **Activities and Events:** Resources for proposed coalition mobilization activities and events, including venues, travel and lodging, participant reimbursements, organizer and other related expenses. These might include regular coalition meetings, special events for a larger audience, or events related to joint actions and priorities and to build trust and cohesion.
- **Training Expenses:** Training to improve the skills and knowledge of coalition members to build their organizational capacity; hub staff to improve their management, facilitation, communications, MEL and other functions; external participants as identified and prioritized by the coalition; and potentially staff and partner development.

- **Other Development Activities:** This category can be difficult to anticipate, but could be estimated as a pool of funds to support joint actions toward achieving the broader development objective.
- **MEL Expenses:** Any necessary expenses to support monitoring, evaluation and learning; for example, to conduct studies such as a Social Network Analysis that will measure and track CA impact and the effectiveness and cohesion of the network.
- **Other direct costs** that may be specifically related to CA, such as IT platforms for shared knowledge or fluid communications, publication of knowledge products, and appropriate visibility expenses. These may be important for the coalition to share knowledge internally and externally, as well as to continue to attract relevant stakeholders.

# CASE STUDY COST DATA FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION IN WASH SYSTEMS

USAID's Sustainable WASH Systems Learning Partnership (SWS) conducted an in-depth resource analysis for CA in the Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH) sector.[6] The study examined the actual financial and human resource levels for CA efforts implemented in eleven case studies in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda. While actual costs are of course region-specific to the region, a summary of their relative resource requirements for each activity (averaged across all eleven case studies) is useful.

**Human Resources:** The chart below shows the days of staff level of effort (LOE) for seven different CA activities implemented by SWS teams, caveating that not every case included all activities. Staff LOE consisted of local teams in the regions, national-level staff, and international advisors engaged by some SWS teams. In the cases shown, staff LOE was relatively consistent, ranging between 540 and 760 days over the five-year implementation period.
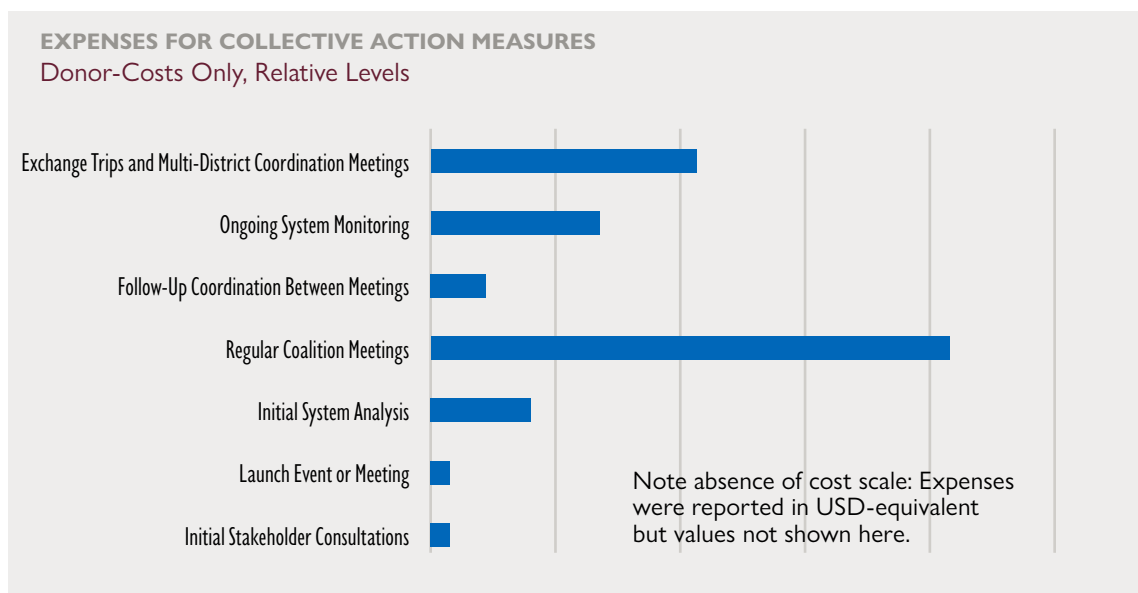
**HUMAN RESOURCE COMMITMENT FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION EFFORTS**
Sustainable WASH Systems - Eleven Case Studies



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6    Collective Action in WASH: Lessons and Findings from Eleven Collaborative Approaches (page 30).

While this is only one example - albeit combining eleven different CA initiatives - one can determine that by far the greatest commitment of staff resources revolved around coalition meetings - coordinating and helping organize the meetings and following up with members between meetings for purposes of coordination and tracking progress and activities. Initial systems analysis and MEL also contributed significantly; these activities included the application of fairly extensive systems monitoring tools such as Social Network Analysis conducted at baseline, mid-term and endline intervals.

Human resource requirements will surely vary depending on additional factors such as the self-leadership of coalition stakeholders, number of stakeholders in the coalition or network, frequency of meetings and organized events, rigor of monitoring and follow-up, the intensity of activities, and elements of capacity development transitioned to local teams by international partners.

**Non-Labor Expenses:** The chart below shows the relative expenses incurred by SWS teams in implementing the same CA activities as those above. Here it is important to note that the data reflects only the SWS (USAID) contribution, and excludes external funds provided by stakeholders, which were 18% greater than the SWS contribution. (There is no line item breakdown for the co-finance, but it is notably higher than the donor contribution). Note that the graph does not report actual cost figures, but rather relative levels between the CA efforts.

**EXPENSES FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION MEASURES**
Donor-Costs Only, Relative Levels



Note absence of cost scale: Expenses were reported in USD-equivalent but values not shown here.

As seen in the chart, organizing and facilitating the regular coalition meetings require the greatest financial commitment. (In most cases, meetings were quarterly, with COVID ultimately disrupting the schedule over the final year). The report notes that these expenses only include activities at the regional level, and do not include advocacy efforts at the national level and several research pieces. Again, this chart represents only the SWS case studies, but can provide some perspective on relative cost requirements for different CA interventions. These data might also provide a general resource for an independent USG cost estimate.

**Costs toward Technical Objectives versus Collective Action:** As a final point of reference, it is useful to quickly examine the expenses contributed toward facilitating CA, versus those contributed directly to technical objectives. In the case of SWS, coalitions implemented activities like WASH master

planning; asset and service monitoring; water supply upgrades; operation and maintenance systems; waste disposal sites and latrines; and demonstration pilots.

While there is no cause-effect relationship established between donor versus stakeholder investment, two statements are notable. First, every dollar of USAID investment leveraged $4.76 in stakeholder contributions, which included contributions toward both priority WASH initiatives and CA measures. Second, every dollar of investment into technical WASH priorities was backed by $0.61 of investment into CA measures, including the contributions of both SWS projects and stakeholders. Perhaps similar metrics could be proposed and measured to track the ability of USAID funds to leverage local resources into technical objectives and to help evaluate the cost-benefit for CA (see **Module 9** for more on MEL for CA).

> **!** **Decision Point:** What cost categories should be associated with the activity design? How prominently should CA measures be budgeted in comparison with technical interventions? How much staff time is reasonable to contribute toward facilitating CA?

## MODULE 7: KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Budgeting for Collective Action should be considered alongside the development of the SOW or Program Description (**Module 6**). However, even with a well thought out SOW, budgeting can be challenging due to the uncertain nature of the needs of a CA coalition or the direction that the CA effort might take.

- CA activities typically include investments in human resources, activities and events, training, and MEL activities. Additionally, the budget often includes support for activities or infrastructure that strengthens the capacity of the coalition to collaborate, and support for joint activities that the coalition prioritizes to achieve their technical objectives.

- A recent study of 11 WASH sector CA activities in East Africa identified follow up with stakeholders between regular coalition meetings as the most significant requirement for staff time. For non-labor expenses, the same study found that supporting regular coalition meetings was the largest category of expense, followed by funding for joint activities and coalition learning.

- The study also confirmed that significant resources were leveraged by participants to organize and facilitate the coalition and to conduct joint activities. Furthermore the study estimated that in these cases, just under two-thirds of resources were invested in actions toward technical WASH priorities and just over one-third into CA coalition cohesion.

- As CA resource needs may change over the course of implementation, USAID should, to the extent possible, attempt to provide an efficient process for reallocating funds, adding funds for emerging opportunities, changing milestones, and/or other items specified in the agreement.

**MODULE**
# 8

# Solicitation Process

This module provides some recommendations on how to prepare to include Collective Action (CA) in a solicitation. It also includes specific steps that might occur during implementation that should be anticipated and potentially built into the solicitation or award.

As covered in **Module 3** and **Module 6**, , it is important to include the CO/AO and Acquisition and Assistance (A&A) staff early in the activity design processes so that they understand the goals and desired outcomes and can work with the technical team to plan accordingly. This is perhaps even more true for solicitations that incorporate CA, as flexibility and adaptability are likely to feature prominently during implementation, and can be facilitated by the mechanism. In addition to their central role in selecting the agreement instrument, their input is needed to incorporate CA (and consequential Adaptive Management) language and requirements into the relevant sections of solicitation documents, including independent government cost estimates, evaluation criteria, instructions to offerors or applicants, and proposal submission requirements, as applicable.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE SOLICITATION PROCESS

- Develop a thorough understanding of local systems, contexts, stakeholders, and their roles and responsibilities. A non-competitive Co-Creation can be useful in this regard. It is a priority to begin work early with the CO/AO to articulate the needs and expectations for CA, anticipated interventions, stakeholder leadership and capacity building, coalition building, and adaptability. Seek out local research, including from other donors and local stakeholders, such as stakeholder mapping, network analysis and other applicable research.
- Consider allowing offerors or applicants to propose changes and refinements to the design in their proposal, based on additional data, information, and rationale to adapt the scope to local dynamics and CA objectives. To the extent practical, define parameters within which changes to the design are allowable.
- Support and stimulate creativity in offerors' or applicants' responses on how CA can be best achieved within the local context; and then during the technical evaluation, give full consideration to creative responses. Some local organizations perceive that donors often state they are seeking innovative approaches, but are hesitant to take the leap toward new ideas and concepts. Creative and innovative ideas in mobilizing and stimulating stakeholders might include new ways and forums to bring stakeholders together; creative stimuluses to encourage participation, such as fun rewards or stimulating competitions for good ideas and positivity; new facilitation methods; convening in new and interesting locations and venues that introduce cross-visit or study tour aspects; and integrating practical capacity building into agendas.

COLLECTIVE ACTION IN PROGRAMMING

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR USAID MISSIONS

- Encourage or mandate periodic (e.g., annual) reviews during implementation, and seek offerors' or applicants' input into how this can be done most effectively to provide pathways for stakeholders to participate directly and openly Pause & Reflect, After-Action Reviews, and 360-Degree Reviews adapted to projects can be effective tools. Clarify or seek recommendations as to how USAID should be involved in these reviews, and how implementers will ensure that stakeholder recommendations are documented and addressed going forward.
- Encourage offerors or applicants to be intentional about learning and adapting by elaborating learning pathways for stakeholders to share, document and disseminate lessons learned and best practices; stimulate research and discovery within coalitions to learn from other donors' best practices; and apply new, effective approaches to their coalition.
- Consider incorporating a higher degree of flexibility in proposals through an outcome-based solicitation: "Identify the what but not the how." Provide offerors or applicants with the opportunity to outline the means to deliver the technical and CA outcomes.

> **TOOL BOX**
>
> **After Action Review**
>
> is a process of group reflection used by a team to capture the lessons learned from past successes and setbacks around a particular activity with the goal of improving future performance.

# PERSONNEL SKILL SETS

As highlighted in several of these modules, in addition to traditional management and technical skills, the principles of CA require additional skill sets for project and activity personnel. Regardless of their individual roles, staff working on effective CA exhibit several key skills and behaviors.

- **Adaptability:** Experienced in adaptive and change management processes, with orientation toward continual improvement. Demonstrated success managing activities in diverse landscapes while adapting and refining approaches to suit the local environment and respond to challenges and opportunities. Open to input from others, is systematic in acquiring and using data and information to make decisions and adjustments. Demonstrated ability to innovate, be flexible and remain open to new ideas and their application.
- **Facilitation:** Experienced in facilitation and communication skills suited to different groups and environments. Ability to remain neutral and objective in building and strengthening relationships between stakeholders. Possesses facilitative skills to focus attention, frame issues, support transparent decision making and accountability, create a sense of urgency, and build consensus. Good organizational skills are also a plus.
- **Communication:** Possesses strong oral and written communication skills to support public outreach; productively communicate with coalition members, organizations and institutions; support coalition communications with constituencies; convene and lead meetings, including those with challenging dynamics; and document lessons learned. Strong local networks and knowledge of the landscape are also favorable.
- **Systems Thinking:** Depending on the role of the implementing partner in the CA effort, it may be beneficial to have a solid understanding of systems thinking. Systems thinking skills help to consider complexity and the interdependence of the coalition's priority actions, to identify root causes and leverage points for the shared issue, to react to changes and trends that the CA effort is impacting, or to articulate the holistic view of the situation for their audiences.

- **Other Skills:** Demonstrated commitment and passion for the topic and development in general. Willingness and ability to facilitate from the background. Possesses credibility and representation locally. Critical and reflective thinking, problem-solving skills, focus on continuous learning and improvement are positives.

USAID Learning Lab's publication, Help! I'm Hiring New Staff, and I Want Them to Work Adaptively provides additional guidance on identifying and evaluating Adaptive Management skills.

# PROPOSAL TECHNICAL EVALUATION

In **Module 5**, this Guide presented seven key factors for success in CA. These same factors can guide development of criteria to evaluate proposals. Following are some tips to develop and further elaborate technical evaluation criteria:

- **Capable Coalition Leadership:** Does the proposal demonstrate a sound knowledge of the landscape, stakeholders and other donors' efforts? Is there demonstrated knowledge of existing and new stakeholders, and their roles and relationships within the local landscape? Is there a strategy to build trust within the coalition? Is there a coherent approach to strengthen capacities of coalition members based on gaps and restraints for CA?

- **Government Buy-in:** Have the roles of Government offices and their levels of engagement been appropriately considered and addressed? Is there a coherent strategy to engage the Government that anticipates potential risks and challenges? What stimuluses might be necessary to support active engagement, and what are the impacts on sustainability?

- **Convening Power:** Does the proposed strategy consider the convening power of key stakeholders, and the implementer itself?

- **Financial Support for Collective Action:** Does the proposal provide a sound rationale for resources and levels to support the joint actions of the coalition? Is there a strategy to allocate resources, such as sub-grants and other tools and resources? Does the strategy enhance prospects toward long-term sustainability?

- **Adaptability:** How does the proposal demonstrate and build in a commitment to adaptability? What specific measures are put in place to review, revise, adapt and document new approaches based on stakeholder input?

- **Perceived Value to Participants:** Does the proposal present strategies to enhance value to participants? How are issues related to the perceived value of the CA identified and addressed? Does the proposal present strategies to maximize the voice of the women, youth, as well as other vulnerable and marginalized groups; or alternatively, a rationale for a more limited set of stakeholders?

- **Commitment and Action:** Does the proposal consider and propose methods to foster commitment and action within timelines and resource constraints?

- **Organization Experience:** What experience and capacities does the offeror or applicant demonstrate through past performances in facilitating CA and related efforts.

**Technical Evaluation Committee:** One final thought related to the technical evaluation committee is that Missions should try to ensure diversity on the committee in terms of gender, roles, backgrounds, skills, and perspectives. **Module 3** can be of further assistance in this regard.

> **!** **Decision Point:** What criteria are most important and desired for the activity, and how can they be objectively evaluated? Are all instructions and criteria clear to bidders so that the best responses are submitted?

## MODULE 8: KEY TAKEAWAYS

- As has been echoed throughout this Guide, it is crucial to plan for flexibility in a Collective Action activity.

- For CA, USAID should be careful not to be too prescriptive, and the solicitation and award process should be open to (or even reward) adaptation, creativity, and innovation from offerors or applicants.

- In seeking personnel for the organization and facilitation of the CA effort, several skill sets are valuable. Those include adaptive management skills, facilitation skills, communication skills, systems thinking skills, and other attitudes that fit with participatory and collaborative processes.

- When evaluating proposals, the seven key factors for success (as presented in **Module 5**) can guide review of proposed approaches.

**MODULE**

# 9

# Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL) for Collective Action

**IN THIS MODULE:**

**Complexity-Aware MEL**

**Focusing on Group Cohesion**

**Illustrative Cohesion Indicators**

> *International development practitioners tend to do what they measure rather than measure what they do.*

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) must be considered throughout the design of your Collective Action (CA) effort. MEL is a crucial component of effective CA, and this module is dedicated to the necessary considerations for MEL. In this module we will examine complexity-aware MEL, ways of measuring and evaluating group cohesion necessary for effective CA, and provide numerous references and pointers to improve MEL in these regards.

MEL is a key driving force in effective CA. International development practitioners tend to do what they measure rather than measure what they do. In other words, implementers are often more inclined to deliver interventions that achieve the established output indicators, rather than to define innovative activities and then establish indicators to measure the results. For CA, this matters because:

- The effort of bringing together multiple stakeholders around a shared development issue introduces additional complexity; and
- Long-term success toward improving the shared issue can be more dependent on cohesion of the coalition than on a drive to make progress toward technical results.

## COMPLEXITY-AWARE MEL

Complexity-Aware Monitoring is a useful tool to apply when results are difficult to predict; for instance when stakeholders bring diverse perspectives to the situation; contextual factors influence the problem and programming; a dynamic context introduces new challenges and opportunities; or the pace of change is unpredictable.

In these situations, performance monitoring has some blindspots that are common for CA, such as a broader range of outcomes than initially planned, including intended, unintended, positive and negative results. The coalition of stakeholders engaged in CA are empowered to define the shared problem and prioritize joint actions, and those may result in outcomes that were not initially anticipated. A second common blindspot relates to alternative avenues of change, such as multiple actions or stakeholders contributing to outcomes. In CA, joint actions by coalition members are specifically intended to achieve synergistic results that each action could not achieve independently.

USAID has continued to expand its use of a growing set of complexity aware MEL approaches. Traditional monitoring methodologies can be employed in accordance with complexity-aware principles

to derive effective tools to measure and learn from change in a complex situation. Similarly, the methods designed to monitor USAID strategies, projects and activities addressing complex challenges are only effective if used in accordance with complexity-aware principles.

USAID provides guidance on complexity-aware approaches to MEL in the Systems and Complexity White Paper and the MOMENTUM Guide to Complexity-Aware Monitoring Approaches, outlining a variety of tools and methods; among them, two notable tools include:

- Outcome Harvesting collects evidence of what major changes have occurred, and then working backwards determines whether and how an intervention has contributed to these changes.
- Most Significant Change is a narrative-based tool that generates stories from diverse frontline stakeholders on changes in their lives, organizations, and contexts, and makes each of their perspectives on that change explicit.

Additional guidance can be found through USAID's Office of Learning Evaluation and Research, USAID's Evaluation Policy and (draft) Evidence Framework.

> **!**  **Decision Point:** What complexity-aware MEL tools will be most beneficial for tracking change and learning with your CA effort?

**TOOL BOX**

**Outcome Harvesting**

is a complexity aware MEL tool that identifies major changes and emergent outcomes, and then determines how an intervention or activity contributed to those changes.

# FOCUSING ON GROUP COHESION

Several of the cases studied in LINC's research highlighted a perhaps counterintuitive finding that in order to achieve progress toward the shared development issue, the coalition needs to focus more on *cohesion* among the members than on progress *toward the issue*. While emphasizing results-oriented programming, USAID has frequently underinvested in group cohesion. A balance between group cohesion and technical results is still necessary, and can shift over time; however, to achieve sustained progress and to enable adaptation in an evolving context over the long-term, group dynamics and cohesion are critical. A deliberate focus on group cohesion represents a virtuous cycle that builds on itself over time; while it may take more time than a results-based approach, its outcomes are likely to be stronger and more sustainable over time.



VIRTUOUS CYCLE OF GROUP COHESION LEADING TO SUSTAINED RESULTS OVER TIME
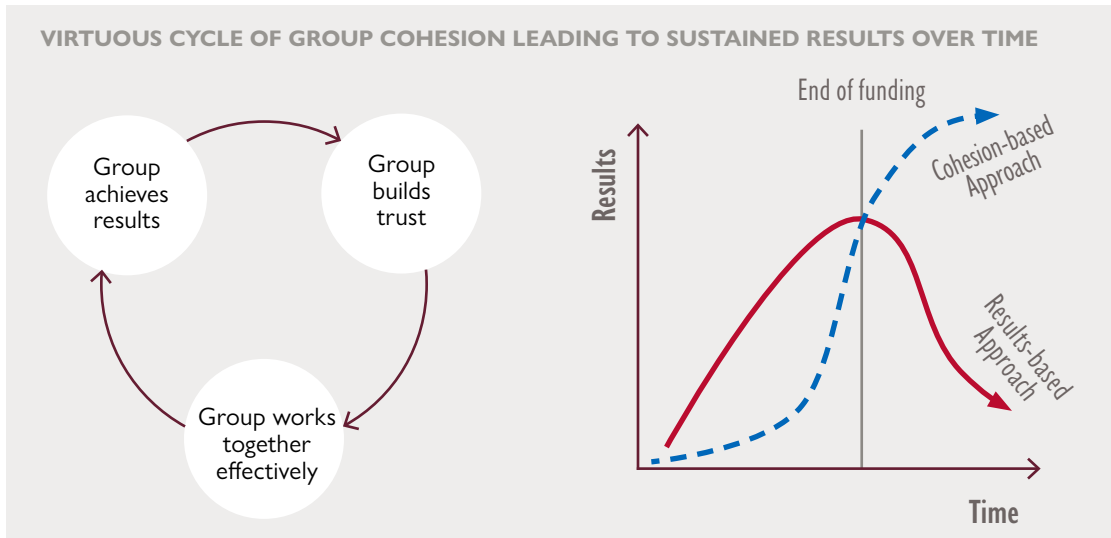
To maintain a focus on cohesion, it is important to establish cohesion-relevant performance indicators. For example, in the Strengthening Advocacy and Civic Engagement activity in Nigeria, initial indicators measured several variables related to cohesion around establishing the coalition and its processes and structures. Then, as the coalition began to plan and act together toward their technical objectives, the activity added additional indicators to measure their progress toward those results. Cohesion indicators can include perceived value of the coalition by members, network density and other measures of network strength, measures of social capital, and trust index scores. Some of the tools to help define and measure cohesion include:

- **Social Network Analysis** is a powerful tool to understand relationships among members of the coalition and measure change in the network dynamics over time.
- **Perception and Feedback Surveys** are used in CA to ensure that the hub is responsive to the needs of coalition members, and to improve effectiveness and cohesion of the group.
- **Social Capital Index** or similar tools are more targeted assessments of the capacity of the coalition to work effectively together.

Beyond establishing indicators and measures of progress towards the establishment and improvement of coalition cohesion, there is research, literature, and examples that demonstrate the value of participatory development of outcome indicators. Engaging coalition members in the process for defining outcomes and metrics will provide more appropriate indicators, further strengthen cohesion of the coalition, and improve alignment of member activities toward achieving those results.

For more information, there are good resources on participatory measurement, including:

- Participatory Process for Developing Locally Sensitive Commitment Measures;
- Guidance Note on Participatory Evaluations; and
- Participatory Impact Assessment Design Guide.

> **!** **Decision Point:** How will you ensure a focus on cohesion through indicators or other MEL tools and activities?

# ILLUSTRATIVE COHESION INDICATORS

| Example Cohesion Indicator | Potential Data Sources |
|---|---|
| **Output Indicators** | |
| • Number of coalition members consistently attending meetings, defined as a percentage of meetings attended | Meeting attendance lists |
| • Number of coalition members agreeing and signing a set of by-laws and procedures/processes for the coalition | Meeting notes, coalition files |
| • Number of joint action plans developed | Coalition reports |

| Example Cohesion Indicator | Potential Data Sources |
|---|---|
| • Number of joint actions completed | Coalition reports |
| • US dollar value of resources mobilized by the coalition for joint actions | Coalition reports |
| **Outcome Indicators** | |
| • Coalition member satisfaction with the CA effort and coalition | Regular survey of members |
| • Individual coalition members' reported likelihood that they will continue participating in the coalition, reported as average response | Regular survey of members |
| • Coalition member perception that the CA effort is making progress | Regular survey of members |
| • Coalition member perception that the CA effort is being managed well | Regular survey of members |
| • Coalition members' reported trust in other members | Regular survey of members |
| • Coalition network size and network density | Social Network Analysis |
| • Coalition power dynamic improvements measured by shifts in most connected or most central members | Social Network Analysis |
| • Changes in coalition social capital index as measured by partnerships, information sharing connections, regular participation in meetings, trust in one another, trust in the hub, resource contributions. | Social capital index or a combination of survey questions |
| • Emergent cohesion outcomes and actions for the coalition as a whole, or subsets of members of the coalition | Outcome Harvesting, Pause & Reflect |

# MODULE 9: KEY TAKEAWAYS

• Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) must be considered throughout the design and implementation of Collective Action.

• As CA efforts are driven by the coalition members, complexity-aware MEL and adaptive management are well-suited for capturing change, measuring impact, and learning for improvement.

• Long-term success against the shared problem or toward the shared objective can be more dependent on the cohesion of the coalition than on a short-term focus on technical results. For this reason, it is valuable to include indicators of cohesion and collective capacity of the coalition. It may also be valuable to wait to set technical objective indicators until the coalition has established some priority actions.

# MODULE 10

# Sustaining Collective Action

Planning for Collective Action (CA) sustainability should begin early during implementation, and incorporate significant input, feedback, and adaptation from coalition members. Formulating a plan at the outset can be beneficial, but is likely to change over time as the coalition advances its cooperation and begins to achieve its goals. The factors for effective CA introduced in **Module 5** can serve as a useful guide to plan, as these same factors that determine the effectiveness of CA at the outset will also largely govern sustainability as USAID support for the activity comes to an end.

While USAID may choose to continue its support beyond the initial programming cycle, other options for the coalition to continue are possible, and in many cases largely preferred. This module discusses how to determine if sustaining the coalition is necessary or desirable, when to begin sustainability planning, and what should be included in the sustainability plan.

## IS SUSTAINABILITY DESIRABLE?

As indicated in the Time Period section of **Module 4**, not all CA efforts need to continue forever. While CA can continue to provide value in maintaining progress - especially for many of the complex problems USAID addresses - there are cases where it may make sense to allow a coalition to dissolve its efforts. Two fairly common situations are: first, coalitions that were formed to address a relatively narrow scope; and second, to address issues where, after a time, other less structured forms of collaboration may be more valuable. These circumstances may not always be clear during the design and planning stages, but could emerge once CA has made some initial progress.

Guiding questions to determine if sustainability is desirable include:

- Is a one-off collaborative effort enough to make considerable progress on a narrowly defined complex problem?
- Is it possible to make enough progress so that the problem is considered "solved"?
- Has the CA coalition established laws, public policies, and/or a regulatory body that will continue to manage the problem beyond the life of the coalition?
- Has the coalition strengthened network ties and built sufficient trust among members so that coordination and collaboration will continue even without a formal coalition?
- Can the efforts of the coalition, if successful, be expanded to address other new initiatives outside the original objective?

**!** **Decision Point:** Is sustainability of the CA coalition and effort desirable? (*The response to this question may change over time, so revisit regularly.*)

# WHEN TO BEGIN SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING

If you determine that sustaining the CA effort is desirable, you will want to have a plan that maintains the value of the time, effort and resources already invested. The sooner sustainability planning can begin, the better are the likely outcomes, keeping in mind that coalition members may need time to build and strengthen relationships and confidence in the process before jumping into longer-term sustainability planning.

Sustainability planning requires coalition members to have a good understanding of the value of their CA work and network; the effort required to maintain the coalition; and the types of activities the coalition is taking on. This experience provides members with the confidence and knowledge to prioritize sustainability and make informed planning decisions. Once the coalition has sufficient experience as a group, planning for sustainability can begin, early enough so that plans can be put into action.

Guiding questions to determine if a coalition is ready for sustainability planning include:

- Does the coalition possess enough membership diversity for necessary voices to be heard?
- Are there processes and structures in place to allow the coalition to function effectively, at least at a basic level?
- Has the coalition made plans, and have members followed through with their responsibilities?
- Are coalition members expanding or strengthening their networks through collaboration?
- Is there trust among members and/or buy in on their work from key decision makers?
- Does the hub or coalition leadership have the necessary skills and resources to keep the coalition working together?
- Do other stakeholders need to be added (or dropped) to the coalition to help ensure sustainability going forward?

# COMPONENTS OF A SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

Planning for sustainability is a participatory effort that should largely be led by the coalition itself. As a first step in sustainability planning, coalition members should be surveyed to assess their support for continuation beyond USAID support. It is best not to assume that they do desire it, and in case they are not interested at present, their opinion may change over time.

The key components of CA coalition sustainability are:

- **Organizational Sustainability:** In many contexts, the coalition may need some form of formal registration or organization to maintain its work and receive future financial support (see below). There are numerous options for organizational structure, depending on local context and regulations; a local legal expert or other specialist - which might be available within the coalition - can help to understand the options, and pros and cons of different options. Some possible solutions include a newly registered legal entity, such as an NGO, CSO, CBO or association; merging into an existing legal entity of one of the types mentioned; becoming a Government or parastatal body, or merging into an existing Government office or institution; or staying informal,

albeit with an administrative representative that provides financial and legal structure, oftentimes rotating among members of the coalition.

- **Activity Sustainability.** Beyond the legal entity that maintains the CA, the coalition will want to formalize and continue to refine the processes, structures, planning, feedback mechanisms and accountability to continue operating. The sustainability plan should include objectives and steps to achieve these and possibly other functions. Activity sustainability and operational decision-making can also help to maintain the energy for continued participation.

- **Financial Sustainability.** Sustainability also requires resources. There are numerous ways that a coalition can mobilize the resources needed to sustain. The plan to mobilize these resources should be based on an understanding of the needs of the coalition and the contextual landscape. Financial sustainability strategies might include external funding sources such as fundraising, grant writing or Government support; internal sources such as membership fees, income generating activities, in-kind contributions or leveraged support from coalition members; or some combination of external and internal.

> **!** **Decision Point:** How will you encourage the coalition to develop a sustainability plan that fits its needs and interests?

## MODULE 10: KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Not all Collective Action efforts need to continue forever. The effort and/or the coalition may continue to be valuable beyond the period of USAID funding, but if an effort is no longer needed, for example by achieving its objective or establishing a framework for continued success without CA, it is best not to invest unnecessarily in sustainability.

- If sustainability is desirable, the sooner planning begins the better. However, giving the coalition time up front to build relationships and confidence in the process will result in better sustainability planning.

- A CA effort sustainability plan needs to consider the organizational or institutional sustainability such as formal registration, activity sustainability to maintain the processes and structures of CA, and financial sustainability to ensure the effort has the resources required to continue.

- The decision to continue or end a CA effort may change over time, so it is best to revisit the discussion occasionally.

# Acknowledgements

We are excited to offer this Guide to USAID Missions interested in incorporating and advancing Collective Action in their programming. The research, including ten Case Studies examined as part of this effort, provided valuable insight for this Guide and are referenced throughout. While most of the cases are perceived to have been generally successful by implementers, Mission staff, and stakeholders alike, we learned equally as much from those efforts that did not go as planned, and even more from those that adapted and refined their approaches over time.

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Looking forward, we hope that this Guide can both help to design and support Collective Action across USAID's portfolio of work, and that users will continue to share their inputs and experiences with the USAID iDesign team and others so that we can all collectively continue to learn and improve our efforts and impact.

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