

Addendum: Strengthening the Leader-Funder Interface

Funder Workshop Discussion November 2nd, 2018 - Highlights

At the BC Water Funders Workshop on November 2nd, participants discussed the opportunities for strengthening the leader-funder interface that were introduced during the breakout discussion at the Joint Leaders-Funders Workshop on November 1st. The following key themes emerged in funder discussions about the opportunities:

Opportunities to Strengthen Leader-Funder Interface

Convening & Connecting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Building structures/spaces to advance information-sharing and facilitated discussion between leaders and funders ● Fieldtrips, site visits, connect Board with “on the ground” initiatives ● Opportunities and invitation for leaders to speak to interested funders about a proposal before applying.
Aligning Strategic Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop mechanisms and spaces to support leaders to coordinate between organizations and develop strategic priorities to help inform funder programs (“strategies should come from the leaders”) ● Development of collective strategic priorities ● “Setting investment targets together” - Appropriate balance of investing in established leaders and supporting new and emerging leader organizations. How to foster multi-year funding and trusted relationships between established leaders and funders, while not wanting to create the sense of an inner circle that prevents other groups from gaining access.
Evaluation of Collective Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collective evaluation (including what isn’t working) to foster adaptive learning, scale up what is working and adapt to changing circumstances ● Desire to understand how activities have contributed to outcomes that you believe will have a desired impact but not focus too much on numbers. ● Need to start from a vision that indicates what we’re trying to achieve. ● Consider how involved funders should be in conversations about outcomes, indicators etc given their knowledge, resources in this area.
Improving Processes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Applications: simplified processes for smaller grants; schedule of aligned deadlines

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reporting: template from multiple funders for some reporting, aligning reporting deadline. Joint reporting is easier to do on a project-specific basis. Leaders need to know if it's an option. ● Feedback opportunities: leaders able to give feedback on application/reporting processes such as through funders sending surveys after completing applications/reporting
Fostering Funder Flexibility:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cultivating flexibility in funding and administration wherever possible

Proposed Next Steps

1. **Share Feedback:** Prepare a stand-alone Brief of background, e-survey methodology, highlights, breakout discussion results and opportunities to strengthen the leader-funder interface. Make Brief available to all workshop participants and Collaborative members and explore potential to share with funders outside of Collaborative.
2. **Create Database of Funder Priorities:** Develop and share database of funder priorities and deadlines to share with water leaders.
3. **Support Future Leader-Funder Events:** Recognized value of creating shared workshops, social and field trips to continue to foster relationship building and information-exchange.
4. **Invite Leaders to Engage & Enquire:** Invite leaders to reach out to funders in advance of submitting an application to ensure there is a good fit. Encourage leaders to provide feedback to funders on application/reporting processes.
5. **Facilitate Aligned/Efficient Reporting:** Where multiple funders are supporting the same project, facilitate shared reporting opportunities. Invite leaders to contact Collaborative staff to help coordinate possible alignment of reporting between multiple funders.
6. **Explore Opportunities to Align Applications:** Explore the coordination and streamlining of applications processes for grantees where multiple funders involved. Review member applications and consider alignment of applications on a case by case basis.
7. **Explore Development of Collective Indicators & Evaluation:** Develop mechanisms and structures to support and learn from leader organizations regarding priority indicators in key thematic areas and evaluation of impact.

* Staff is undertaking to share feedback and create a database of funder priorities as an immediate follow-up to this workshop. Several of the other proposed activities will require additional time and capacity of Collaborative staff to undertake. Feedback from the survey and workshop will inform development of the water leaders support strategy in the Collaborative's 2019 WorkPlan and Budget.