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What is a collective action approach and what makes it effective? - a desk review

Paper for the WASH systems symposium

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Water and sanitation service delivery is complex and cannot be sustained by any one single actor. Recognising this prompts the need for approaches that integrate the diverse perspectives of the many actors involved in delivering services, align incentives, and strengthen collaboration. Countless methods and models for collaborative, action-based approaches exist — many tout success but ultimately reveal failure. As governments, donors, and implementers plan for the next generation of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programming, this study reviews frameworks for "collective action approaches" across sectors in the US and elsewhere. The study identifies a set of common conditions that have led to success of collective action efforts not related to water and sanitation service delivery and proposes future work to ground these conditions in WASH sector experiences. The desk review intends to inform conversations and advise decision-makers on standard approaches for enabling groups of actors working on complex WASH problems to take collective action.

Introduction

The water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) sector recognises that water supply and sanitation service delivery systems are managed and governed by an array of actors that each play key roles in providing that service to the public. These actors are diverse: they operate at different administrative levels within a variety of sectors outside of water and sanitation, while satisfying diverse governmental and organisational mandates (Schouten & Smits, 2015). In some contexts, these actors find ways to overcome differences, align incentives, and coordinate activities to effectively deliver and safely manage services. In other contexts, water supply and sanitation service levels are astoundingly low, meaning new forms of management and governance are needed to provide and sustain these services. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Bank, the UN and others recognise that strengthening local systems by bolstering coordination among actors is an important approach to learn about as it has the potential to facilitate actors to piece together these complex problems and collectively develop sustainable solutions (USAID, 2014; Mumssen et al., 2018; UNGC, 2013). For example, the USAID 2018 Acquisition and Assistance Strategy recognises that "Advancing self-reliance in our partner countries requires a holistic approach and the expansion of partnerships and partnering modalities" (2018b, p.4), while the USAID Local

Systems Framework notes that a local system needs a set of interconnected actors "whose collective actions produce a particular development outcome" (2014, p. 4). Similarly, some organisations consider coordination alongside maintenance, finance, and policy as one of the key 'building blocks' necessary for sustainable water and sanitation services globally (Huston & Moriarty, 2018).

Fostering a group of local actors to take collective actions that achieve development outcomes is increasingly called a 'collective action approach', yet many terms are used to describe the same concept **and there is little agreement in the WASH sector as to what this approach entails.** *Collaborative management, collaborative governance, platforms for partnership, learning alliances, collective impact, and collective action* all describe approaches that seek to gather a diversity of all relevant actors; reach consensus on a common agenda; and implement coordinated actions to address a complex problem that could not be solved by the individual members alone (Ansell and Gash, 2007; Emerson et al., 2012; Gray, 1989; Margerum, 2011). For this review, we will refer to all of these as 'collective action approaches', for which we pose a working definition of: *A structured approach to strengthening the coordination and partnership of local actors to engage in mutually reinforcing collective actions toward achieving a development outcome.* The increasing use of collective action concepts for WASH systems strengthening has led to various guidance and ideas on how a collective action approach can be convened, facilitated, sustained, and monitored. However, these have not been collated, compared, or evaluated systematically. Collective action approaches are a priority area of learning for the USAID Sustainable WASH Systems Learning Partnership (SWS), which seeks to learn about new approaches and tools that can overcome barriers for improving WASH service sustainability and strengthen the local system (USAID, 2018a). Elements of collective action are present to some extent in all SWS activities across Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Cambodia. These approaches all aim to better understand and strengthen how groups of local actors coordinate, learn, and act collectively to sustain water or sanitation services, and by doing so strengthen the local service delivery system as a whole. However, SWS is not alone: WaterAid, Agenda for Change, Millennium Water Alliance and others use similar approaches to strengthen local-level systems.

Objectives of this study

In this conference paper, we review existing publicly available frameworks for achieving collective action in social sectors, to document elements of collective action approaches and determine how these conditions are or can be measured. However, this only provides a starting

point as few of the frameworks consider cases in WASH and many are based on Eurocentric and US-centric experiences. Further work is needed to identify which conditions are relevant to the WASH context and how they can be evaluated in short-term and long-term (i.e. post-programme) timelines. In future work, we plan to determine which conditions combine to enable success, evaluated as changes in behaviours (relationships, activities) within the coalition; the ability for the coalition to sustain itself; and the ability of the group to take actions. This will enable us to also understand if all conditions must be present for success or to even be considered a 'collective action approach', or if there are subsets of conditions that, when combined, are 'enough' to reliably lead to the desired outcome.

Method and approach

This desk review synthesises conditions for success from seven frameworks using 16 individual documents, which together incorporate learning from over 250 case studies. We sought out 'frameworks' that reflect on and synthesise *multiple* case studies, rather than comparing many individual case studies ourselves. We started by only using search terms "collective action", a term increasingly used in the WASH sector, paired with "water" or "sanitation" in an attempt to find central frameworks that informed this use of language in the WASH sector. Due to limited results, we expanded our search terms to include "collaborative action" and found frameworks referring to "collaborative governance" or "collaborative management", among others. Sources were gathered from Google and Google Scholar, and we solicited additional articles recommended by WASH development practitioners. Thus, we included frameworks that did not specifically say "collective action" but still aligned with the type of approach that reflects our understanding of collective action approaches.

We excluded frameworks that looked solely at global or trans-national partnerships or partnerships between donors and national governments. At the other end of the spectrum, we also did not include frameworks that focused only on a single type of actor, such as "individual citizens" present in studies of community-based management. These were excluded because we were interested in local systems, defined by USAID as "those interconnected sets of actors —governments, civil society the private sector, universities, individual citizens and others —that jointly produce a particular development outcome", where "the 'local' in a local system refers to actors in a partner country…. national, provincial or community-wide in scope" (USAID, 2014, p. 4).

Ultimately, only the UN Global Compact framework was directly about water and only the IRC Learning Alliance framework involved WASH service delivery. Most frameworks focused on initiatives in the US and the European Union; as these represented almost all case studies, these were included in our search. Though these are important cases to learn from, the resulting conditions may be Eurocentric and US-centric and findings will need to be validated with local research.

Once frameworks were gathered, we searched for multiple documents about the framework to ensure we captured changes made to the framework over time. For example, the Collective Impact framework was first published in 2011 by Kania and Kramer of FSG and has had two articles that relate to applying this framework to international contexts from 2014 and 2017, as well as one in-depth impact assessment for 20 case studies in the US in 2018 (Kajenthira & Sion, 2017; Lyn et al., 2018; Patscheke et al., 2014). These all were included in our assessment of conditions from the framework (Box 1).

Across these frameworks we seek to answer the questions: *What conditions do frameworks tout as being important contributors for collective action success? How do these compare between frameworks? How are these measured?*

Collective action 'theory' versus collective action 'approach'

Though the terminology has evolved far beyond the original theory, it is worth explaining the original "collective action theory". The original theory from 1965 poses a theoretical problem where individuals who are acting rationally produce an undesired outcome collectively, while to produce a desired, mutually-beneficial outcome collectively, individuals have to act against their better judgement. One type of collective action problem is the more widely-known "tragedy of the commons" problem developed by Hardin in 1968, in which groups of people use up a shared resource such as water or land to the point of depletion. In the original collective action theory, Olson argues that "rational, self-interested individuals will not act to achieve their common or group interests" because, as the benefits are shared by the entire group, an individual can choose to not act and still reap the benefits from others acting; the burden accrued by their failure to act is shared by the entire group (1965, p. 2).

In a simplified example from WASH, we can see collective action problems in payment for rural water services, where if everyone were to consistently pay a proportional share of the cost then the operator could properly upkeep a handpump and sustain the service (the desired, mutually-beneficial outcome) but the rational choice for an individual is to not pay for water when they can get it for free from a surface water body. Without rules or social pressure, it is easy

for an individual to 'defect' and not pay, instead gathering water from another source. If all other individuals continue to pay, the handpump can keep running and the 'defector' could still access the handpump and benefit from the desired outcome without having to contribute themselves.

However, decades of research led by Ostrom (1990, 1995, 2000) has shown that individuals can, in fact, collectively take action for cases where they all mutually rely on a public good or service. The type of group that could take collective actions was considered able to 'overcome the collective action problem'. Ostrom created a framework based on studying where groups of common-pool resources users came together to sustainably manage their resource, outlining key 'design principles' to overcome these collective action problems. This realm of research largely learned from groups of individual citizens that all used a single, finite resource – such as land, groundwater, or the atmosphere. This original theory applies well to problems such as payment for water and open-defecation-free movements for sanitation. However, **this theory does not fully reflect the evolved terminology of a 'collective action approach' as it focuses on a single type of actor (individual citizens) and it does not expand to encompass the processes of groups of local actors, including public and private organisations, that come together to jointly sustain a water or sanitation service.** Thus, we included some of the core "design principles" from Ostrom's work in the desk review but cannot fully rely on this theoretical basis and must turn to other forms of practical knowledge and experience in collaborative management and governance for public services.

Results

The complete results table is found in the annex, while a summary of results is presented below. Conditions were collated from each framework, then organised into groups based on overlapping or similar ideas to produce common conditions. Gaps emerged during this synthesis, including different considerations of 'success' for collective action, little consideration of how multiple conditions might work in combination to produce results, and little consideration of the importance of different conditions at different phases of a collective action approach.

Conditions synthesis

Many conditions have been outlined as 'necessary' for collective action to be successful. Similar to the concept of 'building blocks' for sustainable WASH services (Huston & Moriarty, 2018), the presence or absence of these conditions are claimed to influence the strength of the collective action initiative. Our review of seven frameworks resulted in a total of 78 conditions, many of which overlapped or represented similar ideas, but each provided a unique perspective. We organised and grouped these into 11 'common conditions' based on similar concepts and ideas (Box 2).

BOX 2. COMMON CONDITIONS

The 11 common conditions that the seven frameworks claimed are necessary for successful collective action are:

- Legitimate, capable, diverse leadership[1,3,4,5,6,7]: Effective leadership with skills and knowledge to manage the group. Leadership can be externally or internally driven but should be representative of the stakeholders. It takes the form of many roles which are taken on by members over time. Roles include guiding activities into a cohesive process, and mediating communication, coordination, and decision-making.

- Interaction and response [2,3,4,5,6]:
  - o Internal: Members interact with and are responsive to each other. Members are transparent and accountable, making actions easily known to all. Dialogue is effective and tailored to preferred communication avenues.
  - o External: Includes externally-facing communication to a wider audience. The initiative is a trusted source of information.

- Internal rules and reporting [1,2,5,6,7]: Internal rules and methods for tracking compliance with rules. Agreed-upon scope, roles, decision processes, and time and resource commitments of the engagement.

- Common agenda [3,4,5,6,7]: Shared understanding of problem definition, theory of change, and strategy for accomplishing goals. Agreed-upon scope, roles, decision processes, and time and resource commitments of the engagement.

- Credibility, Trust, Social Capital [2,4,5,6]: Established foundations of trust and credibility within the network of members, shared acceptance of diverse perspectives.

- Incentives or motivation to engage [4,5,6,7]:
  - o Convening: Members have incentives (motivations, pressures) to join (existing power-resource-knowledge asymmetries, prehistory of cooperation or conflict, external pressures, no other venues for accomplishing goals). Power asymmetries pose a risk of powerful actors not participating so as to not lose power.
  - o Sustaining: Ongoing commitment to and shared ownership of the process. Incentives to continue to engage (external pressures, known value-add of membership, mutually reinforcing activities, relative power symmetry/balance).

- Knowledge, data, learning [3,5,6,7]: Access to precise and comprehensive data, which the group can collectively use to support learning and decision making. Capturing results from an action taken and determining any corrective action. Generation of new, shared knowledge. At initial stages, having knowledge asymmetries can lead to more knowledge sharing.

- Membership and government involvement [3,4,5,7]: Active involvement of a range of diverse actors and perspectives, but with the ability to manage conflicting interests. Early and frequent engagement with the government. Participation is stable over time, with little turnover.

- Adaptation [2,5,6]: Ability to adapt as the problem or the group or the context changes.

- Resources [5,6,7]: Adequate budget support and time commitment to support processes.

- Early Wins [3,5]: Intermediate outcomes, small wins, early capacity building.

See Table 1 for the sub-conditions for each.

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[1] Collective action, the original theory: Olson (1965) and Ostrom (1990, 1995, 2000)

[2] Collective action: UN Global Compact (2013)

[3] Collective iImpact: Kania and Kramer (2011), Lyn et al. (2018), Patscheke et al. (2014), and Kajenthira & Sion (2017)

[4] Collaborative management and planning: Margerum (2011)

[5] Collaborative governance: Ansell & Gash (2007, 2018), Langridge & Ansell (2018), Emerson (2012, 2015), Ulibarri (2015, 2017)

[6] Platforms for Partnerships – Reid et al. (2014)

[7] IRC Learning Alliance –- Moriarty et al. (2007)

This preliminary set of common conditions has yet to be validated by WASH practitioners to understand the role these conditions play in WASH collective action approaches. There may also be aspects unique to the WASH area that direct the conditions necessary for success.

Table 1 in the Annex provides a list of each condition that was combined into each common condition and cites the framework each is from.

During this process of identifying and consolidating conditions, four gaps emerged that should be considered in future work:

- **Disagreements:** disagreements exist between some individual conditions. For example, the Collective Impact framework argues that a strong common agenda is necessary; however, Ansell and Gash (2007) specifically warn that if a group determines a common agenda too early, actors will diverge from the group and act unilaterally rather than collectively, thus some divergence of perspectives are necessary.

- **Combinations of conditions:** some frameworks claimed that certain conditions were more influential than others while other frameworks discussed how some conditions may be necessary but only sufficient in combination with others to achieve a successful outcome.

- **Defining success:** 'success' was defined and measured in different ways, and sometimes not at all. This is discussed in more detail below.

- **Phasing:** some conditions apply to different phases of setup, maturing, and sustaining of a collective action group. Only two frameworks distinguish between "start-up" conditions and "sustaining" conditions, while all others assume all conditions to be necessary throughout. This is discussed in more detail below.

"Success"

Frameworks considered success or failure in many different forms, and sometimes not at all because the cases they compared did not measure success or failure. A "result" ranged from the actions taken by the coalition, to the immediate outputs of those actions, to the wider impact or outcomes of those outputs, the latter being the hardest to measure and attribute to the original actions in the first place (Ansell and Gash 2007). Few sources included any measurement of success, although some cited the need for the local actors to determine what success looks like and to set and measure their own results (Kajenthira and Sion, 2017; Kania and Kramer, 2011; Patscheke et al., 2014). A few sources somewhat circularly consider 'success' to be the successful functioning of the group, for example, "The ultimate success of almost any collective action will include full ownership and a strong capacity to execute responsibilities on the part of all engaged parties" (UN GC, 2013, p. 35). Future work will include identifying the most feasible and relevant measures for success for both short-term and long-term (i.e. post-programme) timelines, including options such as changes in behaviours (relationships, activities) within the coalition, the ability for the coalition to sustain itself, and the ability of the group to take actions.

Phases of collective action

Collective action groups have different starting points and evolve to take different forms. Thus, as a collective action group convenes, matures, and sustains itself the presence of some conditions may be more important than others. For example, as a group of local actors moves beyond only sharing information to coordinate actions toward a common agenda, they may need more resources and consensus (UN GC, 2013). Building on an existing platform and morphing it into a collective action coalition may look entirely different than creating a platform where one did not exist before. As these processes and outputs may look different, they also may require different measurement and timelines. Currently, all frameworks posed conditions claimed to contribute to success when convening a collective action coalition. Margerum's book on collaborative management and planning provided guidance on conditions claimed to contribute to successful sustaining of a coalition (2011). The concept of separating out the different phases of collective action can inform both the implementation approach and assessment of impact.

Conclusion and learning

As the WASH sector shifts toward supporting partnerships and interconnected actors "whose collective actions produce a particular development outcome" (USAID, 2014, p. 4), many organisations and programmes will continue to seek to bring diverse actors together to form action agendas and strengthen the coordination needed to put the agendas into action – a collective action approach. We synthesised 78 conditions into 11 overarching conditions that have been found to enable the success of collective action approaches using seven frameworks comprised of over 250 case studies from fields of sustainable development and collaborative governance and management. Further work will seek to understand how these conditions influence collective action for sustaining WASH services, including the role of engaging local and national governments and best practices for how to transition a collective action initiative to sustained action. There is also a need to understand how these conditions work together to produce a desired outcome, including finding particular 'leverage points' in key conditions that are necessary for success.

Key learning points to take away from this desk review:

- Many terms exist to describe the process by which diverse groups of actors come together to take collective actions, and the terminology has evolved since the original 'theory' behind collective action.
- The 11 common conditions that overlapped in multiple frameworks include: Legitimate, capable, diverse leadership; Interaction and response; Internal rules and reporting; Common agenda; Social capital; Incentives or motivation to engage; Adaptation; Resources; Knowledge, data, learning; Membership and government involvement; and Early Wins.
- The setup, maturing, and sustaining phases of a collective action group may require different conditions for success.
- Outcomes in the reviewed resources were focused on whether the collective accomplished actions, the immediate results or outputs of those actions, and the wider impacts or outcomes that resulted from the outputs. None looked at the ability for the collective to sustain itself, or when the approach is 'complete'.
- Further development is needed to determine a comprehensive set of assessment measures for conditions of collective action that are adapted for the WASH context.

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Keywords

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Table 1. Eleven common conditions hypothesized to lead to successful collective action, including sub-conditions from referenced frameworks.

Common Condition	Working Definition	Sub-condition, from framework	Framework[a]
Legitimate, capable, diverse Leadership	Effective leadership with skills and knowledge to manage the group. Leadership can be externally or internally driven but should be representative of the stakeholders. It takes the form of many roles, which, are taken on by members over time. Roles include guiding activities into a cohesive process, and mediating communication, coordination, and decision-making.	Needs facilitated leadership	5 - Collaborative Governance
		Different leadership roles: organizer, funder, weaver, facilitator, coordinator, coach, steward. Gradually a network may differentiate between these roles and then assign them to be handled by specific people with specific skills.	Netgains Handbook (not a framework but included for this sub-condition)
		Leadership is representative of the basin users and other stakeholders, and that reduces the possibility of capture by elites, such as whether management is elected or appointed and whether management is local or contracted out	5 - Collaborative Governance
		Leadership can be externally driven or internally driven. Many leadership roles exist: sponsor, convener, facilitator	5 - Collaborative Governance
		Those managing the platform must be accountable to all stakeholders within a clear system of rules. Do not rush into too-rigid governance structures in the early development stages while the platform is engaging its core group of partners and co- developing its activities and approaches.	6 - Platforms for Partnerships
		Operational management structure: appropriate and effective management structure to implement the platform's tasks and produce its stated outputs	6 - Platforms for Partnerships
		Core competences: knowledge and skills required to directly support partnerships, skills around membership management, financial management, and fundraising.	6 - Platforms for Partnerships
		Effective leadership, skills, capacity, information, data, scientific capacity	4 - Collaborative management and planning
		Backbone Organization For global CI, nested multi-level backbone	3 - Collective Impact
		Process facilitation consists of two elements: 1) guiding different strategies and activities into a flexible and contextual learning process and, 2) mediating communication, coordination and decision-making processes between stakeholders within and between levels [also contains 3+ pages on facilitation of learning alliances]	7 - IRC Learning Alliance
		Nested enterprises (i.e. global/national//local) if large)	1 - Collective action, original theory

Common Condition	Working Definition	Sub-condition, from framework	Framework[a]
Interaction and response	Internal: Members interact with and are responsive to each other. Members are transparent and accountable, making actions easily known to all. Dialogue is effective and tailored to preferred communication avenues. Face-to-face dialogue is not necessary when conflict is low and consensus is reached quickly. External: Includes externally-facing communication to a wider audience. The coalition is a trusted source of information.	Constant Communication	3 - Collective Impact
		Support interaction and responsiveness - Effective, engaged dialogue among participants, tailored to preferred communication.	2 - Collective action
		Transparency and accountability - collective action activities are easily known to all directly engaged parties and general community members. Information is used and produced by collective action participants available in a timely manner.	2 - Collective action
		Face-to-face dialogue	5 - Collaborative Governance
		Concentrated interactions with less overall involvement, but connections are reciprocated with two-way communication, less tendency for a few actors to dominate	5 - Collaborative Governance
		Communication between technical and 'lay' actors - no silos	4 - Collaborative management and planning
		Clear agreements need to be made on activities, responsibilities, resources and the contributions of partners to the process etc., to set the rules of the game.	7 - IRC Learning Alliance
		Although face-to-face dialogue is advantageous at the outset, it is not always essential, particularly when conflict may be low and shared values and objectives quickly surface	5 - Collaborative Governance
		Internal information-sharing and trust-building, also promotion of the platform's vision and purpose to the wider audience of interested parties and potential partners	6 - Platforms for Partnerships
Internal rules for operating	Internal shared measurement systems and rules. Agreed-upon scope, roles, decision processes, and time and resource commitments of the engagement.	Shared Measurement	3 - Collective Impact
		Rule compliance including reporting systems and the ability to sanction non-compliance	5 - Collaborative Governance
		Graduated sanctions for determining non-compliance and conflict resolution mechanisms when noncompliance occurs	1 - Collective action, original theory
		institutional design factors such as charters, by-laws, rules, and regulations	5 - Collaborative Governance
		Clarity - Ensuring that all parties involved clearly understand and agree to scope, goals, roles, decision processes, and time and resource commitments of the engagement	2 - Collective action
		Monitor the platform itself	6 - Platforms for Partnerships
		Rules for operating, but not so strict that it would allow some to control others	5 - Collaborative Governance

Common Condition	Working Definition	Sub-condition, from framework	Framework[a]
Common Agenda	Shared understanding of problem definition, theory of change, and strategy for accomplishing goals. Agreed-upon scope, roles, decision processes, and time and resource commitments of the engagement.	Common Agenda	3 - Collective Impact
		develop a shared theory of change, which is, in essence, a strategy for accomplishing the collective purpose and target goals	5 - Collaborative Governance
		Similar problem definition	4 - Collaborative management and planning
		Similar cultures & beliefs	4 - Collaborative management and planning
		shared understanding (common problem definition, find the common values, have a clear mission)	5 - Collaborative Governance
		Can't have too much consensus on values at the onset - or else actors would act unilaterally not collectively	5 - Collaborative Governance
		Shared partnership culture: Just as with any partnership, a complex, multi-stakeholder platform requires a strong overall vision around which diverse sectors can mobilize	6 - Platforms for Partnerships
		Problem identification…a broad topic or problem is identified (often by the initiator), after which stakeholders are identified and mobilized, and they identify the problem further. Problem identification.... seeks to involve all actors to varying degrees in framing the learning issue, by defining the problem or opportunity, in the subsequent development of innovations or technologies.	7 - IRC Learning Alliance
		Multiple stakeholders have different, often divergent interests, yet share a common interest around a particular topic. To stimulate their focus and action, a clear objective, or even a vision and mission of the alliance is needed….this may require negotiation on the basis of the organizations' practices, needs and interests.	
		If there is no commonly agreed objective or focus, there is a risk that a platform will lose members.	
		High-level, open-ended goals that allow partners to develop their own approaches as long as they follow the framework (seems contradictory to a group taking coordinated actions)	5 - Collaborative Governance

Common Condition	Working Definition	Sub-condition, from framework	Framework[a]
Credibility, Trust, Social Capital	Established foundations of trust and credibility within the network of members, shared acceptance of diverse perspectives.	Membership engagement: long-term collaboration based on trust, an understanding of a shared movement towards a vision, and an appreciation of received value	6 - Platforms for Partnerships
		Solid foundation of trust and credibility among members (pg 30)	2 - Collective action
		Established social networks	4 - Collaborative management and planning
		Strong social capital	4 - Collaborative management and planning
		Can't have too much trust at onset - or else would act unilaterally	5 - Collaborative Governance
		Trust-building	5 - Collaborative Governance
		Shared motivation "social capital", consists of all: trust, mutual understanding of perspectives (not agreement), internal legitimacy, and shared commitment	5 - Collaborative Governance
Incentives or motivations to engage	**Convening:** Members have incentives (motivations, pressures) to join (existing power-resource-knowledge asymmetries, prehistory of cooperation or conflict, external pressures, no other venues for accomplishing goals). Power asymmetries pose a risk of powerful actors not participating to not lose power. **Sustaining:** Ongoing commitment to and shared ownership of the process. Incentives to continue to engage (external pressures, known value-add of membership, mutually reinforcing activities, relative power symmetry/ balance)	Forum is attractive compared to other venues (no other options)	4 - Collaborative management and planning
		Ongoing commitment	4 - Collaborative management and planning
		External pressures to engage	4 - Collaborative management and planning
		Relative power symmetry	4 - Collaborative management and planning
		commitment to and shared ownership of the process	5 - Collaborative Governance
		Power- resource- knowledge asymmetries and/or prehistory of cooperation or conflict	5 - Collaborative Governance
		Value added services: Platforms must offer well-defined and relevant services that provide significant value to members	6 - Platforms for Partnerships
		Risk - Powerful stakeholders may dominate the debate, while less empowered stakeholder voices may not be heard. In other cases, powerful stakeholders may not even want to participate, or may drop out along the way, as they stand only to lose	7 - IRC Learning Alliance
		Power can also be viewed as a resource and, like other resources, is almost always distributed unevenly across participants	5 - Collaborative Governance

Common Condition	Working Definition	Sub-condition, from framework	Framework[a]
Adaption	Ability to adapt as the problem or the group or the context changes	Adaptation opportunities that provide procedures to alter strategies after analysis of available data and information;	5 - Collaborative Governance
		Ability to adapt - Expectations for the need for flexibility are established at the outset	2 - Collective action
		It is also essential that governance structures can adapt and change as the platform itself adapts and iterates its approach when it begins to implement in earnest.	6 - Platforms for Partnerships
		Stable, structured framework that allows dynamic and adaptable processes to evolve.	5 - Collaborative Governance
Resources	Adequate budget support and time commitment to support processes.	Adequate budget support, funding, time, technical and logistical support; administrative and organizational assistance; requisite skills for analysis or implementation; and expertise	5 - Collaborative Governance
		Financial resources that are perceived to be fair by users and are sufficient to manage the service or resource.	5 - Collaborative Governance
		Resources required for facilitation	7 - IRC Learning Alliance
		Sustainable business model: how the platform is going to access and generate sufficient funding both to support its core operation and to enable it to broker and support innovative new partnership	6 - Platforms for Partnerships
Knowledge, data, learning	Access to precise and comprehensive data, which the group can collectively use to support learning and decision making. Capturing results from an action taken and determining any corrective action.	Learning - aggregation, separation, and reassembly of data and information, as well as the generation of new, shared knowledge.	5 - Collaborative Governance
		Precise and comprehensive monitoring data of the resource or service	5 - Collaborative Governance
		Adaptive management - all stakeholders are involved in analyzing problems, planning actions and reflection. This helps to develop skills and capacities, especially connections and networks and the social capital needed to tackle similar problems.	7 - IRC Learning Alliance
	Generation of new, shared knowledge. At initial stages, having knowledge asymmetries can lead to more knowledge sharing.	Process monitoring and documentation contributes to a learning alliance process by capturing and analyzing in a systematic way what happened in a change process, how it happened, and why it happened, pointing to corrective action, if possible, organizing and disseminating findings for future experiences.	7 - IRC Learning Alliance
		Well-integrated review mechanisms will not only support learning and decision-making for the platform	6 - Platforms for Partnerships
		Monitoring data on the platform, the partnerships it supports, and the overall contribution to business and development goals.	6 - Platforms for Partnerships

Common Condition	Working Definition	Sub-condition, from framework	Framework[a]
Membership and government engagement	Active involvement of a range of diverse actors and perspectives, but with the ability to manage conflicting interests. Early and often engagement with the government. Participation is stable over time, with little turnover.	Engage often with government	3 - Collective Impact
		One key stakeholder that can hardly ever be left out is government.	7 - IRC Learning Alliance
		Management of conflicting interests - As a learning alliance explicitly aims to bring together stakeholders from different backgrounds, who by definition are not like-minded, conflicts of interest may ultimately emerge. This is not necessarily a bad thing in itself; it is often needed to bring about change. The main issue is how conflicting interests are managed	7 - IRC Learning Alliance
		Range of actors at the table	4 - Collaborative management and planning
		Stakeholder engagement opportunities and incentives to facilitate the active involvement of diverse social, cultural, and economic elements of the population in decision making	5 - Collaborative Governance
Early Wins	Intermediate outcomes, small wins, early capacity building	"Early capacity building"	3 - Collective Impact
		intermediate outcomes ("small wins", joint fact-findings)	5 - Collaborative Governance
Ungrouped	Ungrouped	Mutually Reinforcing Activities	3 - Collective Impact
		Barriers to change - the process of learning brings an inherent need to create change in the way stakeholders think about and act on an issue. Stakeholders may need to unlearn practices to which they were used... Often these changes do not happen easily, or without resistance, as people may feel threatened by loss of prestige	7 - IRC Learning Alliance
		Recognition of right to organize	1 - Collective action, original theory
		Clearly-defined boundaries	1 - Collective action, original theory