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GETTING THINGS DONE TOGETHER

A Workbook for Achieving Goals Regionally



William R. Barnes | Kathryn A. Foster | Lara Malakoff

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PART 1: HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

Introduction

Many of the problems and opportunities confronting local areas don't respect city or county lines. In this situation, solving problems and seizing opportunities require people, organizations, and government entities to work together across sectors and jurisdictional boundaries to get things done. If you are facing a challenge like this in your area, this workbook can help you.

The workbook offers a new and better way to think and plan for action to get things done regionally. It was created for people who are ready and willing to work toward accomplishing an important goal for their communities and neighboring areas: from the local government official or civic leader who wants to increase affordable housing in the area, to the residents who seek to protect a river from pollution, to the business group that believes the local economy needs a smarter plan for attracting high-tech employers.

Working regionally simply means working with more than one governmental entity and various private-sector organizations or civic groups to accomplish a goal.

The pages that follow guide you through an exploration of the capacities and capabilities you will need in order to achieve the goal you've set. The workbook includes questions, discussion, and tables to fill out that will help you make decisions about how to move from having an idea to actually getting something done.

All of this will take some time. The workbook process will help you resist the impulse to jump to quick answers or to find shortcuts, choices that are almost always a mistake. The exercises in the following pages will help you frame a coherent agenda for your work, decide who should be involved, and identify what resources, information and intergovernmental connections you will need to succeed in your effort. At the end of your work, you will have a thorough grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of your initiative, as well as a plan for moving forward to strengthen your capacity to achieve your goals.

The Capacity and Purpose Framework

Often, when people talk or write about “working regionally” or about “regional governance,” they focus on governmental forms — that is, how governments can or should create structures to work across political and jurisdictional lines. This workbook proposes instead a focus that is less about structure and more about the goals to be achieved and the capacity needed to accomplish those goals. By “capacity,” we mean the ability of people and institutions to organize, figure out what will work, accumulate the necessary resources, and act on a specific problem or issue.

“Regional governance” simply refers to how people and institutions work together to achieve goals in multi-jurisdictional and multi-sectoral environments. *Governance is not itself the goal: the goal is solving problems and seizing opportunities.* In other words, this is not about “making nice” or about one group or jurisdiction surrendering interests to others. It's about interacting with one another to weigh alternative courses of action and to navigate differences in order to address a problem or opportunity.

Different places will do this work in different ways at different times, and a given place will use very different governance approaches depending on the issue or the goal. Similarly, the geographic scope of the region also will vary by place, time and goal. There's no ready-made “region” and no default institution that is in charge. How many square miles or how many governmental entities need to be involved depends on what you are aiming to achieve.

The framework used in this workbook illustrates the potential for translation of ideas from scholarship to practice and vice versa. It is laid out in *Regional Problem Solving: A Fresh Look at What it Takes*.¹ That report, in turn, is based on the ideas in “Reframing Regional Governance for Research and Practice,” which was published in *Urban Affairs Review* in March 2012. The framework consists of five dimensions of regional governance capacity:

- **Agenda**—the purpose and goals of the effort.
- **Actor Group**—the individuals and organizations that will work together to achieve success on the agenda.
- **Internal Capacity**—the ability to secure in-region resources to support success.
- **External Capacity**—the ability to secure resources from outside the region to support success.
- **Implementation Experience**— experience operating at the regional level to solve problems.

Each of these five dimensions consists of several contributing factors. In the pages that follow, you will assess the strengths and weaknesses of your effort on each of those factors. The dimensions and factors are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Achieving Goals Regionally: Contributing Factors for Success

<p>AGENDA</p> <p>1) Agenda Framing: Clarifying Your Vision, Goals, and Priorities 2) Agenda Assessment: Weighing Support for and Opposition to Your Agenda 3) Comprehension of the Agenda: Assessing How Much People Know About Your Goals and Issues</p>
<p>ACTOR GROUP</p> <p>4) Actor Group Composition: Deciding Who Will Be at the Table 5) Leadership Roles: Identifying Who Does What ... and When 6) Actor Group Commitment: Assessing People’s Passion and Sense of Purpose</p>
<p>INTERNAL CAPACITY</p> <p>7) Money and Related Resources: Developing a Budget of Financial, In-Kind Needs 8) Information and Expertise: Gaining the Knowledge You Need to Succeed 9) Authority and Legitimacy: Assessing the Actor Group’s Standing in the Region</p>
<p>EXTERNAL CAPACITY</p> <p>10) Connectedness Inside the Region: Assessing the Group’s Regional Links 11) Connectedness Outside the Region: Assessing the Group’s External Links 12) State-Level Influence: Securing Help from State Government 13) Federal-Level Influence: Securing Help from the Federal Government</p>
<p>IMPLEMENTATION EXPERIENCE</p> <p>14) Overall Region-Scale Activity: Weighing the History of Collaborative Problem-Solving in Your Area 15) Region-Scale Activity on Goal: Learning from Previous Efforts Like Yours</p>

¹ <http://www.nlc.org/File%20Library/Find%20City%20Solutions/Research%20Innovation/Governance-Civic/regional-problem-solving-decl1.pdf>

Doing the Workbook

There are no right or wrong answers to the questions and exercises in these pages, and there are no set rules about who should be involved in your effort, what the goals should be, or what core capacities you need in order to succeed. *The answers, rules, goals, and capacities depend upon the place, time, and goal you have selected.* The exercises and questions are designed to prompt you to think critically, strategically, and realistically about your initiative and how best to ensure its success.

Doing the work described in these pages may best involve a group of people rather than just one heroic individual; the sooner you make this a collaborative enterprise, the better. Consider gathering a few colleagues and allies to think through the issues together and to complete the exercises so that all of you have a better idea of the next steps to take. (Though one or more members may serve in both, this “ally” group is not the same as the “Actor Group,” which is one of the five dimensions of capacity.)

LIST HERE A FEW PEOPLE WHOM YOU MIGHT ENGAGE IN THE PROCESS OF DOING THIS WORKBOOK:

-
-
-
-
-
-

Before you dive into the exercises in the rest of the workbook, you and your colleagues might also find it useful to seek general advice and information from a few people who are knowledgeable about the issues you are working on and/or about previous experiences with regional efforts in your area.

LIST HERE SOME POTENTIAL SOURCES OF GENERAL ADVICE AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

-
-
-
-
-
-

The Workbook proceeds in several sections as follows:

Part 1: How to Use This Workbook is the section you are reading now.

Part 2: Getting Started asks you to think briefly about what you want to achieve. This initial set of questions is designed to help you make a preliminary assessment of your effort's purpose, geographical scope, stage, and potential for success.

Part 3: Getting to Work—The 15 Factors presents 15 sections—one for each of the “contributing factors for success” identified above in Figure 1. The section takes you through considerations and questions designed to prompt you to explore each of the factors as they relate to your particular goal. Each section is organized as follows:

- **Overview**—definitions and relevant information about the factor and what you can expect to achieve by completing the analysis in each section.
- **Suggestions and Instructions**—a series of considerations, questions, and instructions for completing your analysis of each factor.
- **Worksheet**—a figure or table you can use to document your information and thinking on each factor.
- **Wrap-Up**—a place to record summary notes and a preliminary rating of your effort's capacity for each factor.

Note that you may need more space than the worksheets provide; please do not feel limited by the space in this workbook and feel free to use other means for recording your information and thinking.

As you work on the factor sections, you will find that you will not want to consider each factor in isolation. Rather, your analysis of each factor will have an impact on other factors. For example, your assessment of your effort's access (or lack thereof) to money and in-kind resources might prompt you to reconsider whom to include in your actor group. When you bring these analyses together, you will be able to craft a strategy that will help you identify (and prioritize) the additional capacity you need to accomplish your goal.

To support your examination of the relationships among the factors, the workbook features a special section, **INTEGRATING THE FACTORS: The “Dynamic Core.”** This section asks you to consider the interactions between factors associated with the agenda and the actor group. The Dynamic Core integrates the what (the purpose or goal) of your effort with the who (the people who will work to achieve the goal). The exercise helps you analyze your Dynamic Core factors and consider the implications of your analysis for other factors and for the overall effort.

Part 4: Bringing It All Together—Deciding What to Do Next is the closing section of the workbook. Here you will assess the strengths and weaknesses of your initiative's overall capacity and decide where to invest additional effort as you develop the strategies and tactics to achieve your goal.

PART 2: GETTING STARTED

Before you begin to analyze the capacity of your effort, it's important to be clear about what you are seeking to accomplish. In this section, you will provide brief answers to some preliminary questions about several key topics:

- (1) The purpose or policy goal of your effort;
- (2) The geographic and jurisdictional scope of the effort;
- (3) The stage the effort has reached; and
- (4) A preliminary assessment of your effort's potential for success.

Record notes in response to the following four questions in the corresponding boxes in Figure 2, on page 6.

(1) What is the purpose or goal?

Consider carefully what exactly you aim to achieve. In Part 3 of the workbook under “Agenda Framing,” you will work through the various aspects of your goal; here the point is to articulate it briefly and as thoughtfully as you can.

Regional efforts are doomed from the start to the extent that their organizers and leaders do not clearly articulate the problem they intend to address, outline a measurable goal, and get agreement among the people who are signing on to make it happen.

The challenge is not one of word-smithing; it is to make sure your goal is relevant to the situation, is feasible, and can attract the needed support. If the goal is too loose or nebulous (e.g., “reduce traffic congestion”), then miscommunication, mission creep, or hidden agendas can take over. If the goal is too narrow or is not a problem but rather the preferred solution (e.g., “build a bridge over the river”), then options are limited and so is the constituency that might back the effort. Similarly, you may think there is broad agreement on what the problem is, but as you talk to people you may realize that there hasn't been an effective discussion of the problem and realistic options for addressing it. As a result, you might change your description from “reduce traffic congestion” to “promote public and policy discussion of options for enhancing mobility.”

There's no “right” answer about goal statements, but asking hard questions up front about what you aim to achieve is never the wrong thing to do. Throughout the pages that follow, you will have opportunities to refine and revise your goal.

Enter information about the purpose of your effort in the box labeled “Purpose/Goal” in Figure 2.

(2) What is the geographic and jurisdictional scope of your effort or initiative?

The relevant scope depends on the problem you intend to address. A water supply problem, for example, will likely involve a huge geographic area whose boundaries do not coincide with any county, city, or perhaps even the water supply special district. The “jurisdictional scope” would be all of the governmental entities affected. You should be careful, on the one hand, not to default to a standardized scope (e.g., the Metropolitan Statistical Area) or generalization (“our region”). At the same time, you should ask whether the goal involves impacts on neighboring areas or jurisdictions that will want a voice in the process.

Here again, some hard thinking up front can prevent headaches further along. You may later want to revise your answer here, as you think through some of the factors that will contribute to or inhibit your success.

Enter information about the scope of your effort in the box labeled “Geographic and Jurisdictional Scope” in Figure 2.

(3) At what stage is your regional governance effort?

How far along you are in developing or implementing your effort may shape how you use this workbook. For the most part, the workbook is geared to an effort that is just beginning. However, if your effort is already in process, you may want to focus your analysis on one or more specific capacity areas where you are running into trouble (for example, agenda framing or state-level influence). If you are in the final stages of your effort or if you have completed your work, the workbook provides a means for going back and determining why you succeeded or came up short of your goal, and then capturing that analysis so you can apply it to future work. Questions to consider:

- Is the regional effort in the initial stages of planning and thinking?
- Has the regional effort begun but is it still in its early stages?
- Is the regional effort in process and you are seeking to assess your progress?
- Has the regional effort been completed or is it almost completed?

In the box labeled “Stage in the Process” in Figure 2, enter your answer to the above questions. If none of these questions fits, enter an answer that more correctly describes the stage of your effort.

(4) What is your preliminary assessment of your effort’s potential for success?

Taking into account the stage of your effort, make a preliminary assessment of its potential for successfully achieving the goal you’ve set. This is a reality-test or brainstorming task. Throughout this workbook, you will find opportunities to assess potential obstacles and to think about how to overcome them by strengthening your capacity in certain areas. In Part 4, you will make some further judgments about the likelihood of success and the next steps to take. For now, the goal is simply to make an early note of the chances that your effort can succeed.

Make a preliminary assessment of the likelihood of success for your effort (e.g., from highly likely to highly unlikely) and enter your response in the box labeled “Preliminary Assessment of Potential for Success” in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Key Preliminary Questions

Purpose/Goal:	
Geographic and Jurisdictional Scope:	
Stage in the Process:	
Preliminary Assessment of Potential for Success:	

PART 3: GETTING TO WORK—THE 15 FACTORS

Factor #1

AGENDA FRAMING: Clarifying Your Vision, Goals, and Priorities

Overview

Agenda framing refers to the formulation of the vision, goals, duration, and priorities for various aspects of the overall agenda. There is no formula for framing the agenda for your effort. The agenda may be broad (e.g., “All children in our area need to enter school ‘ready to learn’ within five years”) or it may be narrow (e.g., “We need to reduce traffic crashes on the main road linking Town A and Town B”).

Regardless of what you are seeking to achieve, it is important to be purposeful in formulating the agenda. It is also important to frame your agenda in a way that communicates the urgency of the problem you are working to solve, as well as key aspects of the aimed-for outcome. Imagine yourself in an elevator with an influential decision-maker from the area. When she asks what you are up to, you have a very short time to convey the goal of your effort. You need a compelling 10-second sound bite, and when she asks for specifics right before you get to your floor, you need to be able to, first, decide to stay on the elevator with her to finish the conversation and, second, drill down very briefly to some of the specific aspects of the agenda that might be of most interest to her. She doesn’t want to know about the process steps; she wants to hear about the desired outcomes. That is what this exercise is about; it will help you articulate the overall agenda as well as its key aspects in a way that will hopefully gain you support and allies for your cause.

Note that as your effort evolves over time, the agenda may change. For example, the scope of the agenda may narrow (for example, as the “ready to learn” effort decides to focus primarily on providing training for day-care providers). In addition, vague details may become more specific as the work continues (for example, as it becomes clear that most of the traffic crashes between Town A and Town B are occurring at a difficult bend in the road). Therefore, it is important to revisit the work of agenda framing throughout the effort so the agenda is up to date and so everyone understands what you are working to achieve.

Figure 3, on page 9, helps you list and analyze the aspects of the agenda; this simply means that you should break the agenda into parts. The figure asks you to identify the aspects of the agenda, learn a little more about the aspects, and assign a level of priority to each.

Suggestions and Instructions

- **Revisit the purpose of your effort.** *At the top of Figure 3 under the heading “Purpose/Goal,” rewrite or restate the purpose of your effort (which you described in Part 2). Questions to consider:*
 - Does your description adequately convey the agenda, vision, duration, and goal of your effort and what you want to achieve?
 - Does the purpose statement get at the underlying problem you are aiming to resolve (e.g., reducing long commute times for residents of a defined area) rather than describing specific agenda aspects or strategies (e.g., adding HOV lanes)?

- **Break down the agenda into various aspects or components.** *In the column in Figure 3 labeled “Aspects of the Agenda,” enter the parts, or aspects, of the agenda that can be assessed separately, with one aspect listed in each cell.* Questions to consider:

- Can you divide your overall goal or purpose (e.g., reducing commute times) into component parts (e.g., increased telecommuting, HOV lane(s), etc.) that require their own set of activities, business outreach, neighborhood organizing, etc.?
- Does your list of aspects appear to be an adequate statement of what you want to accomplish? In other words, do the aspects cover the universe of objectives that “add up” to the overall purpose or goal?

- **Take a deeper look at the aspects of the agenda you identified.** *In the column in Figure 3 labeled “Comments,” record more detailed information about each agenda aspect.* Questions to consider:

- Is the aspect of the agenda adequately framed to convey it as a problem to be solved or an opportunity to be seized (rather than a process step to be taken)?
- Have you described the aspect of the agenda in a way that gives you a sense of how long it might take to complete this work, and whether this will be a short-term or long-term effort? For example, can you achieve your goals in the next 1-2 years through existing institutions and authorities, or do you need to set up a new authority/organization to oversee this work over a longer period of time?
- How well does this aspect reflect the interests/values of the people and organizations you will need to work on this effort? Is it closely tied to their interests/values, loosely tied to their interests/values, etc.?
- Is the aspect of the agenda stated in such a way that it is too broad or too narrow to make success likely (too broad, appropriately stated, too narrow)?
- Is the aspect stated in such a way that it is too detailed or not detailed enough to make success likely (too detailed, appropriate level of detail, not detailed enough)?
- Are any of the aspect items closely related (for example, if the overall purpose is about reducing commuting times, do two or more aspect items deal with the issue of public transit improvements)? If so, should those aspects be combined, or should they remain separate because they require their own activities/strategies/allies/etc.?
- Are there too many aspects to be conveyed simply and succinctly?

- **Assign a priority level to each aspect of the agenda.** *Enter your priority rating in the column in Figure 3 labeled “Priority Level.”* Questions to consider:

- What level of priority (e.g., low, medium, high) does each aspect hold for your overall effort?
- Are there too many high-priority items?
- Do any of the aspects conflict with others? If so, which are more of a priority vs. others?

Figure 3: Clarifying Your Vision, Goals, and Priorities

Purpose/Goal:		
Aspects of the Agenda	Comments	Priority Level
Aspect 1:		
Aspect 2:		
Aspect 3:		
Aspect 4:		
Aspect 5:		
Etc.:		

AGENDA FRAMING WRAP UP

Notes about issues you need to think more about within this section.

Notes about the strengths and/or weaknesses of your effort on this factor.

Preliminary score (e.g., 1-5, low-medium-high) indicating the strength of your effort on this factor. You will enter this score in the figure in Part 4 of the workbook as part of your overall assessment of your effort.

Factor #2

AGENDA ASSESSMENT:

Weighing Support for and Opposition to Your Agenda

Overview

Agenda assessment refers to analysis of potential sources of support for and opposition to the aspects of the agenda. Depending on the sources and the nature of support or opposition, you may revise some of the agenda aspects or even reconsider the feasibility of the initiative. Figure 4, on page 12, will help you identify opposition to and support for the various aspects of the agenda, assess the reasons why there is support/opposition, and consider the degree to which this will affect your ability to achieve your goal.

Suggestions and Instructions

- **Revisit the various aspects of your agenda.** *In the column labeled “Aspects of the Agenda” in Figure 4, record the aspects that make up your agenda that you listed in Figure 3.*
- **Identify sources of potential opposition to and/or support for each agenda aspect.** *In the columns labeled “Who Supports?” and “Who Opposes?” in Figure 4, list individuals, organizations, or entities that may support or be opposed to each aspect of the agenda. Questions to consider:*
 - Are there some individuals, organizations, and/or entities that already oppose/support the agenda?
 - What evidence do you have to back up your thinking about potential sources of opposition/support? Have you actually reached out and spoken to some of these individuals and organizations to confirm what you think?
 - What is the history, if any, of regional efforts similar to yours? Who were the principal supporters of these efforts? Who stood in opposition to these efforts, and to what extent did this opposition pose a problem?
 - As the agenda becomes publicly known and understood, from whom might additional opposition or support arise?
- **Note why people or groups might support or be opposed to the agenda aspects.** *In the columns labeled “Why Do They Support?” and “Why Do They Oppose?” in Figure 4, list potential reasons why the individuals/entities might support or oppose this aspect of the agenda. Questions to consider:*
 - What are the specific interests of the sources of opposition/support?
 - What evidence do you have to back up your thinking about potential sources of opposition/support? Have you actually reached out and spoken to some of these individuals and organizations to confirm what you think?
 - For the potential supporters, are there messages you can convey or actions you can take to ensure/maximize their support?
 - For the potential opponents, can you go beyond their surface position (e.g., “NIMBY”) and identify deeper concerns? How might your effort address these concerns?

- **Consider the strength of the opposition and support for each agenda aspect.** *In the columns labeled “Strength of Support” and “Strength of Opposition” in Figure 4, make an assessment of how strongly external individuals, organizations, or entities are opposed to or support each aspect of the agenda. Questions to consider:*
 - To what extent is support for or opposition to the agenda from the sources you have identified likely to be effective? Will it influence others, or are these just stated views that will not have effects?
 - Does the level of support/opposition suggest that the agenda cannot be achieved, that there is some probability of achieving the agenda, or that there is a high probability of achieving the agenda?

Figure 4: Source, Nature, and Strength of Support/Opposition to Agenda Aspects

Aspects of the Agenda	Who Supports?	Why Do They Support?	Strength of Support	Who Opposes?	Why Do They Oppose?	Strength of Opposition
Aspect 1:						
Aspect 2:						
Aspect 3:						
Aspect 4:						
Aspect 5:						
Etc.						

AGENDA ASSESSMENT WRAP UP

Notes about issues you need to think more about within this section.

Notes about the strengths and/or weaknesses of your effort on this factor.

Preliminary score (e.g., 1-5, low-medium-high) indicating the strength of your effort on this factor. You will enter this score in the figure in Part 4 of the workbook as part of your overall assessment of your effort.

Factor #3

COMPREHENSION OF THE AGENDA: Assessing How Much People Know About Your Goals and Issues

Overview

Comprehension of the agenda refers to the degree to which individuals or groups outside of the people and organizations directly involved in your effort understand your goals and what you want to achieve. In Factor #4, you will work to identify the key people and organizations (the actor group) involved in your effort. If you find it more helpful, you can work on that task now, and return to this factor afterward.

Comprehension is not related to an individual or group's support of your agenda; it is simply the level of understanding that various people have of the agenda and the issues and problems you are wanting to address. Everybody in a given community or area doesn't need to fully understand what you want to achieve; the level of comprehension needed by a particular individual, organization, group, or the general public will vary depending on the goal and the scope of your effort.

Figure 5, on page 15, provides a place for you to identify those audiences that can contribute to the success of your effort to the degree that they understand your goals and the issues at the heart of your work. With this information in hand, you can later develop an outreach strategy aimed at providing key audiences with information about the effort. The figure asks you to identify the individuals, organizations, or groups for whom comprehension of the agenda is important. These groups include those that might not be directly involved in the effort but that have a stake in its outcome. (Remember to include those that might be opposed.) Among the groups you should consider as you conduct this exercise is the general public. To what degree is broader community understanding of your effort important?

The figure asks you to make an assessment (low to high) of the level of comprehension that various individuals, organizations, and groups have *now* about the agenda, and to determine whether that level of comprehension is sufficient to contribute to the success of your effort.

Suggestions and Instructions

- **Consider who (beyond those who are directly involved in your effort) needs to understand what you want to achieve (and why) in order for you to be successful.** *In the column in Figure 5 labeled "Who Needs to Understand What You Are Doing?" enter the appropriate individuals and groups.* Questions to consider:
 - What individuals, organizations, or groups (for example, neighborhood organizations, media and bloggers, or companies) need to comprehend the issue and its regional nature?
 - Does the broader public need to understand what you are working to achieve (and why or why not)?
- **Think about the degree to which the individuals, organizations and groups you have identified currently comprehend the issue(s) you are working to address.** *In the column in Figure 5 labeled "Current Level of Understanding," make an assessment (low to high) of the level of comprehension that each individual or group brings to the issue.* Questions to consider:
 - What evidence do you have (from surveys, news reports, letters to the editor, emails, or other sources) that demonstrates that these individuals and groups do or don't understand the issue(s) you are working to address?

- **Assess whether each individual or group’s current level of comprehension is sufficient.** *In the column in Figure 5 labeled “Sufficient Level of Understanding?” write “Yes” or “No,” based on whether you think the level of comprehension is sufficient to contribute to the success of your effort.* Questions to consider:
 - If you determine the level of comprehension is not sufficient for a specific set of individuals/groups, what steps can you and others take to approach them and increase their comprehension of the agenda (e.g., education, outreach, public hearings, etc.)?
 - At what point in the process will it be important for these individuals and groups to have a sufficient level of comprehension?

Figure 5: Comprehension of the Agenda

Who Needs to Understand What You Are Doing?	Current Level of Understanding (low to high)	Sufficient Level of Understanding? (yes/no)
Individual, Organization, or Group 1:		
Individual, Organization, or Group 2:		
Individual, Organization, or Group 3:		
Individual, Organization, or Group 4:		
Individual, Organization, or Group 5:		
The Broader Public		
Etc.		

COMPREHENSION OF THE AGENDA WRAP UP	
Notes about issues you need to think more about within this section.	
Notes about the strengths and/or weaknesses of your effort on this factor.	
Preliminary score (e.g., 1-5, low-high) indicating the strength of your effort on this factor. You will enter this score in the figure in Part 4 of the workbook as part of your overall assessment of your effort.	

Factor #4

ACTOR GROUP COMPOSITION: Deciding Who Will Be at the Table

Overview

Actor group composition refers to identifying and assembling those individuals and organizations that will collaborate to work toward the goal you have established. Actors aren't the same as stakeholders. While the universe of stakeholders includes all people and groups that might be affected by your work, actors are active participants in the work. This means they are sitting at the table with you and others, making decisions, and taking action to help achieve the goal. That said, the actor group does not have to include everyone whose actions and decisions will affect your success. For example, achieving your goal might require action by elected leaders or civic or business group executives, but it will be up to you to determine if those people need to be part of the formal collaborative.

There is no formula for identifying the members of an actor group; you and your partners will need to decide for yourselves who the necessary and useful collaborators will be. The keys to composing an effective actor group are: identifying all potential members; analyzing what strengths/weaknesses they bring to the effort; and crosschecking this list throughout the analysis of your work in case you need to make changes to the actor group as you go along.

Figure 6, on page 18, will help you develop a preliminary list of who needs to be at the table in order for your effort to have a good chance of succeeding. The figure asks you to identify the potential members of the actor group, record some information about each actor, and decide whether to include them in the effort.

Suggestions and Instructions

- **Consider the universe of people and entities that might be included in the actor group.** *In the column in Figure 6 labeled "Actors," enter the names, titles, and/or roles of individuals or groups that you might want to include in the group, with one potential actor listed in each cell.* Questions to consider:
 - Who are the key people and organizations involved in this issue from across sectors (public, private, civic, academic); jurisdictions (municipalities, counties, special-purpose governments, state, etc.); functions (transportation, housing, environmental protection, economic development); and levels (local, regional, state, federal, international, global)?
 - Upon reviewing your list of potential actors to include, is there anyone you are leaving out? What additional individuals or groups might be able to help you achieve success on this issue by joining you at the table?
- **Take a deeper look at the potential actors you identified.** *In the second column in Figure 6 labeled "Comments," enter details for each potential actor.* Questions to consider:
 - What interests does the potential actor have in the effort? For example, will the effort provide the actor with financial benefits? Will it relieve a problem the actor is facing? Or, is the actor involved in the issue because of a desire to support the public good?
 - What is the nature of the actor's involvement in the issue? Is the actor a policy decision maker? An activist? An issue expert? A business or community leader whose decisions will affect your goal?
 - What kind of power does the potential actor hold that will help achieve success?
 - What credibility/influence would the actor bring to the effort, and what evidence do you have to demonstrate this?
 - Does the potential actor have sufficient comprehension of your agenda to help you achieve success? (Please see Factor #3: Comprehension of the Agenda for more.)

• **Decide whom to include and whom not to include.** For each potential actor, record “Yes” or “Maybe” or “No” in the third column in Figure 6, depending on whether you decide that the actor should or should not be included in the actor group. Questions to consider:

- Are there specific groups or individuals without whose support the effort cannot succeed?
- What are your key considerations when deciding whom to include and whom not to include? In other words, what makes an individual or group a good vs. a not-so-good candidate for the group?
- Are there reasons why specific groups or individuals should *not* be included even despite their interest and/or experience working on this topic — for example, because their aims and purposes on this effort are contrary to the rest of the actor group?
- Are too many people or groups at the table? Too few?

If you are not fully satisfied with your list or can’t decide right now exactly whom to include or not, it may be helpful at this point to list some actors as “Maybes” and come back to this exercise after you have addressed some of the other factors in the workbook.

Figure 6: Potential Members of the Actor Group

Actors	Comments	Include? (Y/M/N)
Actor 1:		
Actor 2:		
Actor 3:		
Actor 4:		
Actor 5:		
Actor 6:		
Etc.		

COMPOSITION OF THE ACTOR GROUP WRAP UP

Notes about issues you need to think more about within this section.

Notes about the strengths and/or weaknesses of your effort on this factor.

Preliminary score (e.g., 1-5, low-high) indicating the strength of your effort on this factor. You will enter this score in the figure in Part 4 of the workbook as part of your overall assessment of your effort.

Factor #5

LEADERSHIP ROLES: Identifying Who Does What ... and When

Overview

Leadership roles refers to the functions people might have within your effort and to the individual(s) or organization(s) that may hold these positions as the actor group works to achieve its goals. The necessary leadership functions depend on the nature and scope of your effort and can include everything from a strong chairperson to a community outreach leader to someone who handles the actor group's relationships with elected officials in your area or at the state level. Leadership roles may be held by one or more individuals or organizations that make up the actor group.

Over time, the leadership needs for your effort may change, resulting in changes in the people assigned to different leadership roles. In assigning leadership roles, the group may choose to follow a strict hierarchy with clear lines of authority. On the other hand, because of the inherently voluntary and collaborative nature of the enterprise, the group may decide that leadership roles should be held by a loose network of individuals and organizations.

Figure 7, on page 21, helps you analyze what kinds of leadership functions your regional effort requires and who within the actor group can serve in these functions. The figure asks you to identify your effort's leadership needs and to assign leaders to each need, and then to record some details about your effort's potential leaders and their roles.

Suggestions and Instructions

- **Identify the leadership functions that will support your effort's success.** *In the column in Figure 7 labeled "Leadership Roles," enter the roles that the effort needs, with one role listed in each cell.* Questions to consider:
 - What leadership roles will support the establishment and convening of the actor group and ensure effective oversight of its ongoing work (for example, an authoritative chairperson, a "taskmaster" to track participants' commitments, etc.)?
 - What roles will help ensure effective oversight of the group's finances (if appropriate), its communications and marketing, its relations with civic groups and governmental entities, etc.?
 - Will the group ultimately need to create a distinct governmental entity, nonprofit organization, or other board-managed structure to sustain its work over time?
- **Assign a leader or leaders to each leadership function.** *In the column in Figure 7 labeled "Leaders," assign a name or title of a leader who will serve in each leadership role.* Questions to consider:
 - What are the key capacities and skills required to carry out the leadership roles you have identified?
 - Which members of your actor group are a good fit for the various roles, based on the skills and capacities they possess?
 - Are there alternative leaders who can fill various roles in the event that your first choice does not have the time or is not interested in doing the work?
 - Is it possible that some leaders may serve in multiple leadership roles, or that some roles may be held by multiple leaders?
- **Take a closer look at the leaders and the leadership roles they will hold.** *In the column in Figure 7 labeled "Comments," record details about the leaders you've identified and their leadership roles.* Questions to consider:

- What are the strengths this leader brings to this leadership role?
- What challenges might this leader face in serving in this leadership role? Would this leader need to develop additional skills or capacities to do this work effectively?
- What are the downsides of having this leader serve in this leadership role?
- What are the specific duties this leader will perform while serving in this leadership role?

Figure 7: Leadership Roles in the Actor Group

Leadership Roles	Leaders	Comments
Role 1:	Leader 1:	
Role 2:	Leader 2:	
Role 3:	Leader 3:	
Role 4:	Leader 4:	
Role 5:	Leader 5:	
Role 6:	Leader 6:	
Etc.	Etc.	

LEADERSHIP ROLES WRAP UP	
Notes about issues you need to think more about within this section.	
Notes about the strengths and/or weaknesses of your regional governance effort on this factor.	
Preliminary score (e.g., 1-5, low-high) indicating whether your regional governance effort is strong or weak on this factor. You will enter this score in the figure in Part 4 of the workbook as part of your overall assessment of your regional governance effort.	

Factor #6

ACTOR GROUP COMMITMENT: Assessing People’s Passion and Sense of Purpose

Overview

Actor group commitment refers to a shared belief among the actor group in the importance of working together toward a purpose and staying at the table despite differences. A group can demonstrate a common commitment to work together in a variety of ways. Perhaps the participants have collaborated at some point in the past, or perhaps they have come to see that their individual efforts are not sufficient to achieve their goals, and they understand the importance of working with others. The effectiveness of the group will rely on a considerable level of trust among its members. This trust will allow the group to withstand internal and external pressures. A high level of trust also will enable the group to move ahead with its work even when members “agree to disagree” on certain issues.

Figure 8, on page 24, helps you analyze commitment to your group and purpose among the members of your actor group. The figure asks you to think about the actors that make up the actor group and to consider which actors have a strong commitment to the overall group and purpose, which have a weaker commitment, and what actions you can take to increase participants’ commitment as needed.

Suggestions and Instructions

- **Revisit the actors that make up your actor group.** *In the column labeled “Actors” in Figure 8, record the actors that make up your actor group that you listed in Figure 6.*
- **Assess each actor’s commitment to the overall group and purpose.** *In the column labeled “Strength of Commitment” in Figure 8, make an assessment about how strong or weak each actor’s commitment is to the group and purpose (strong, medium, weak). Questions to consider:*
 - What are you thinking about as you make these assessments? Are you merely making assumptions about the actor’s commitment, or do you have solid evidence that they would approach the group’s work with a specific mindset?
 - Are there other people (including the actors themselves) whom you should talk to in order to confirm your thinking about their commitment to the group’s work?
- **Take a closer look at each actor’s commitment to group and purpose.** *In the column in Figure 8 labeled “Comments,” record details about each actor’s commitment to the group or purpose. Questions to consider:*
 - What aspects of the agenda might influence the strength/weakness of the actor’s commitment? (*Refer to the aspects you listed in Figure 3.*)
 - Should the agenda be adjusted to overcome weak commitment on the part of the actor? (For example, can a specific agenda aspect be restated or removed from consideration, and is this something you want to do?)
 - Are there other actions you can take to build commitment among some of your actors – for example, by broadening your agenda?
 - Do some actors need to be removed from consideration because of their lack of commitment?
 - Is there a mechanism in place for managing or mediating conflict in the event that actors have competing interests/priorities?

Figure 8: Assessment of Commitment to Group and Purpose

Actors	Strength of Commitment	Comments
Actor 1:		
Actor 2:		
Actor 3:		
Actor 4:		
Actor 5:		
Actor 6:		
Etc.		

ACTOR GROUP COMMITMENT WRAP UP

Notes about issues you need to think more about within this section.

Notes about the strengths and/or weaknesses of your effort on this factor.

Preliminary score (e.g., 1-5, low-high) indicating the strength of your effort on this factor. You will enter this score in the figure in Part 4 of the workbook as part of your overall assessment of your effort.

Integrating the Factors: The “Dynamic Core”

Overview

The success or failure of most efforts to work regionally depends on interactions among the dimensions and factors described in this workbook. The most significant of these interactions is between the two sets of factors that you have just analyzed: those that contribute to the agenda and the actor group. This is the “Dynamic Core” of regional governance. This core integrates the *what* (the purpose or goal) of your effort with the *who* (the people who will work to achieve the goal).

Figure 9, on page 29, helps you to examine the interdependence of the what and the who and, if necessary, to make adjustments to your decisions about both. More specifically, the figure asks you to bring together your analyses of Agenda Framing (Factor #1, above) and Actor Group Composition (Factor #4, above) and to use this assessment in your consideration of the other factors in the workbook.

The primary purpose of this exercise is to consider how much each actor group member is connected to each of the agenda aspects, and also how much each agenda aspect is connected to each of the actor group members. The results of this analysis may suggest changes in your actor group and/or your agenda to bring them more in sync.

Suggestions and Instructions

- **Revisit the aspects of the agenda and the members of the actor group.** *In the column headings of Figure 9, record each aspect of the agenda (or an abbreviated note corresponding to each agenda aspect) that you listed in Figure 3 in Factor #1. In the row headings of Figure 9, record each actor (or an abbreviated note corresponding to each actor) that you listed in Figure 6 in Factor #4.*
- **Characterize the nature and strength of the relationship between each actor in the actor group and each aspect of the agenda.** *Use the cells in Figure 9 to enter S (strong) or W (weak) to indicate the strength of the relationship between the cell's corresponding actor and agenda aspect. In each cell, also enter a plus sign (+), an N (neutral), or minus sign (-) to indicate whether the relationship between the corresponding actor and agenda aspect is positive, neutral, or negative for the success of your effort. Include notes if desired to remind yourself of the logic behind your assessment of each relationship.* Questions to consider:
 - What is the relationship between the actor and the aspect of the agenda?
 - What is the strength of each actor/aspect relationship?
 - Is the relationship between the actor and the aspect of the agenda positive, neutral, or negative for the functioning of the regional governance effort?
- **Assess the pattern of strengths and weaknesses of your effort based on the connections between actors and agenda items in order to gain a good estimate of the capacity for your effort.** *In the column labeled “Actor Summaries” in Figure 9, record S (strong), N (neutral), or W (weak) along with your comments about the strength of each actor across all of the agenda aspects. In the row labeled “Agenda Aspect Summaries” in Figure 9, record S (strong), N (neutral), or W (weak) along with your comments about the strength of each agenda aspect across all of the actors.* Questions to consider:
 - Are there actors who are particularly strong or weak across several agenda aspects?
 - Are there agenda aspects that are particularly strong or weak across several actors?
 - If there are lots of “neutrals” in a row, a column, or overall, how will that affect your effort?

Going Forward

Now that you have addressed the questions of *what* and *who*, the following sections of this workbook look at three more dimensions of working regionally (Internal Capacity, External Capacity, and Implementation Experience) and contributing factors that address the question of *how*. As you progress through the following sections, you can periodically cross-check your answers against your assessment of the Dynamic Core items and vice versa. The result may be some surprising and helpful insights that will enhance your effort.

For example, as you work through the factors in the Implementation Experience section, you may make note of an institution in the region that is external to the actor group but that was created specifically to address one of the agenda aspects you've identified. Consequently, you may need to return to the dimensions that make up the dynamic core and add this institution to your actor group. You can then assess the strengths and weaknesses of the relevant agenda item based on that institution's involvement by returning to Figure 9.

In any complex situation or effort, everything relates to everything else. So, you can create additional tables like Figure 9 for any two of the factors in the workbook. In order to make sure your effort has access to needed funds, for example, you can check Money and Related Resources (Factor 7) against Actor Group Composition (Factor 4). If the political situation is uncertain, you might want to check Authority and Legitimacy (Factor 9) against State Level Influence (Factor 12). And so on. The interactions you want to look at will depend on the goal you seek and the situation you face. You can also return to this challenge in Part 4, "Bringing It All Together."

Figure 9: Strengths and Weaknesses of Dynamic Core Elements

	Agenda Aspect 1:	Agenda Aspect 2:	Agenda Aspect 3:	Agenda Aspect 4:	Agenda Aspect 5:	ETC.:	Actor Summaries
Actor 1:							
Actor 2:							
Actor 3:							
Actor 4:							
Actor 5:							
Etc.:							
Agenda Aspect Summaries							

Factor #7

MONEY AND RELATED RESOURCES: Developing a Budget of Financial, In-Kind Needs

Overview

Money and related resources refers to the financial and in-kind resources (e.g., space, staff, equipment, etc.) that will enable you to achieve your goal. The types of resources you will need will vary depending on the nature and scope of the effort. It is important to identify: 1) *what types* of resources you will need; and 2) *how much* — i.e., how much money, how many staff members, how much space, what particular pieces of equipment. It is also important to consider your ability to obtain the necessary funding and in-kind support. The results of this exercise may prompt some additional thinking about who should be “at the table” in the actor group to help you get the resources you need (See Factor # 4: Actor Group Composition).

Figure 10, on page 31, helps you consider the types of money and related resources you will need. The figure asks you to make a list of these resources and to identify potential ways to obtain them.

Suggestions and Instructions

- **Think about the types and level of resources you need to achieve your goals.** *In Figure 10 in the column labeled “What We Need,” record a calculation or estimate of the resources needed.* Questions to consider:
 - Will you need money to achieve your goal? How much?
 - Will you need staff? How many? What kind of skills do they need?
 - Will you need office space and equipment? What kinds?
 - What additional resources will you need?
- **Identify potential sources of money and other resources, as well as your ability to obtain what you need.** *In Figure 10 in the column labeled “Potential Sources/Ability to Obtain,” record individuals or entities, either within or outside the actor group, who can or might provide the resources you need.* Questions to consider:
 - From whom can the group obtain the financial and in-kind resources required to achieve its goal (an individual or organization that is part of the actor group, an individual or organization outside the actor group)?
 - Is there any reason why the group might *not* want to approach/work with the potential sources of these resources?

Figure 10: Money and Related Resources

What We Need	Potential Sources/Ability to Obtain

MONEY AND RELATED RESOURCES WRAP UP	
Notes about issues you need to think more about within this section.	
Notes about the strengths and/or weaknesses of your effort on this factor.	
Preliminary score (e.g., 1-5, low-high) indicating the strength of your effort on this factor. You will enter this score in the figure in Part 4 of the workbook as part of your overall assessment of your effort.	

Factor #8

INFORMATION AND EXPERTISE:

Gaining the Knowledge You Need to Succeed

Overview

Information and expertise refers to valuable contributions of insight, advice, and wisdom from those within and beyond the actor group that can support its work. Perhaps the group needs to know more about the issue or issues it aims to address (for example, housing or emergency services). Alternatively, it might be important to learn more about ancillary topics (environmental regulations or city fiscal conditions) and/or about process issues (such as how best to engage a community in a deliberative process).

The information and expertise you will need to achieve success on your goal will vary. It is important to identify both *what* you need to know, and *where* you can find the knowledge you need.

Figure 11 helps you consider the information and expertise your effort will need. The figure asks you to list the types of knowledge required and to identify potential ways to obtain it.

Suggestions and Instructions

- **Think about what information and expertise you need to achieve your goals.** *In Figure 11 in the column labeled “What We Need,” record what types of information and expertise you need. Questions to consider:*
 - What information and/or expertise do you need about the issues at the heart of your agenda (for example, housing or emergency services)?
 - What information/expertise do you need about ancillary issues that are nonetheless crucial to achieving your goals (for example, government regulations)?
 - If you already have some information/expertise on these issues, how much more do you need?
- **Identify potential sources of information and expertise, as well as your ability to obtain what you need.** *In Figure 11 in the column labeled “Potential Sources/Ability to Obtain,” record individuals or entities, either within or outside the actor group, that can or might provide the information and expertise you need. Questions to consider:*
 - Can an individual or organization that is part of the actor group provide the necessary and sufficient information and expertise?
 - What individuals or organizations outside the actor group can provide the necessary and sufficient information and expertise? Do these individuals or organizations need to be brought into the actor group?
 - Is there any reason why the group might *not* want to approach/work with the potential sources of information/expertise?

Figure 11: Information and Expertise

What We Need	Potential Sources/Ability to Obtain

INFORMATION AND EXPERTISE WRAP UP	
Notes about issues you need to think more about within this section.	
Notes about elements of this item on which your effort may need more capacity.	
Preliminary score (e.g., 1-5, low-high) indicating the strength of your effort on this item. You will enter this score in the figure in Part 4 of the workbook as part of your overall assessment of your effort.	

Factor #9

AUTHORITY AND LEGITIMACY:

Assessing the Actor Group's Standing in the Region

Overview

Authority and legitimacy refers to the standing of the actors in your actor group, individually and collectively, in the region. Members of your group may have *authority* because of their official powers (for example, an elected or appointed office) or because they are affiliated in some way with individuals (family members, bosses, etc.) who have these powers.

Legitimacy, on the other hand, has to do with the credibility and status of the group's members to work toward their shared goal, as perceived by other group members and by people in the community. For example, a member of your group may not have official powers to make things happen, but he or she might have legitimacy in the community because of a long history of effective work on the problems you want to solve.

The authority and legitimacy needed in order to achieve success on your goal depends on the nature and the scope of your effort. For example, if success on your goal will require government action on a certain issue, then it's likely you will need people in the group who have authority or access to it.

Figure 12 asks you to list the types of authority and legitimacy that you require. To the extent that you need it, the figure also asks you to consider your ability to obtain additional authority and legitimacy for the group and its work.

Suggestions and Instructions

- **Think about the types and level of authority and legitimacy you need to achieve your goals.** *In Figure 12 in the column labeled "What We Need," record what types of authority and legitimacy you need.* Questions to consider:
 - What types of authority and legitimacy will be most important as the group sets out to achieve its goal?
 - Does the group need to have policy authority to secure changes in government rules and regulations? Does it need legal authority to engage in certain activities/actions?
 - Does the group need to have legitimacy in the minds of specific individuals or groups whose support or endorsement will help increase its chances of success?
- **Identify potential sources of additional authority and legitimacy, as well as your ability to connect with these sources.** *In Figure 12 in the column labeled "Potential Sources/Ability to Obtain," record potential sources of authority and legitimacy.* Questions to consider:
 - Does the group have a means for establishing connections with authorized decision-makers to achieve success on the issue? If not, how can the group make the necessary connections?
 - Does the group have the standing to engage with relevant groups and/or the broader public so it can build support for its agenda? If not, how can the group make the necessary connections?
 - Is there any reason why the group might *not* want to approach/work with the potential sources of authority and legitimacy?

Figure 12: Authority and Legitimacy

What We Need	Potential Sources/Ability to Obtain

AUTHORITY AND LEGITIMACY WRAP UP	
Notes about issues you need to think more about within this section.	
Notes about the strengths and/or weaknesses of your effort on this factor.	
Preliminary score (e.g., 1-5, low-high) indicating the strength of your effort on this factor. You will enter this score in the figure in Part 4 of the workbook as part of your overall assessment of your effort.	

Factor #10

CONNECTEDNESS INSIDE THE REGION: Assessing the Group's Regional Links

Overview

Connectedness inside the region refers to the actor group's ability to work effectively with relevant organizations and coalitions external to the group but internal to the region. The degree to which you need to connect with organizations, coalitions and government entities outside the group will depend on the nature and scope of your effort.

Figure 13 helps you think strategically about which organizations, coalitions, government entities, and individuals within your region might be important to the success of your effort. The figure asks you to list the connections you will need to form and to identify potential ways to build these relationships.

Suggestions and Instructions

- **Think about the regional connections you need to achieve your goals.** *In Figure 13 in the column labeled "Connections We Need/Could Benefit From," record what types connections you need inside your region.* Questions to consider:
 - Beyond the actor group, what organizations, coalitions, government entities, and individuals in the region can help support success on your goal?
 - What connections, if any, do you need to establish with municipal and county governments, special districts, and regional governmental organizations?
 - What funders, civic and community groups, and other entities within the region will add credibility, good reputation, and operational capacity to the effort?
- **Assess your ability to make the connections you need.** *In Figure 13 in the column labeled "Ability to Make Connections," note how hard or easy it will be for the group to make the needed connections.* Questions to consider:
 - Does the group already have relationships that will help cement the connections it needs?
 - How hard or easy will it be for the group to make the necessary connections to support success on the goal?
 - What tools and strategies can the group use to connect with the necessary individuals and groups — for example, targeted outreach, social media, convenings, etc.?

Figure 13: Connectedness Inside the Region

Connections We Need/Could Benefit From	Ability to Make Connections

CONNECTEDNESS INSIDE THE REGION WRAP UP	
Notes about issues you need to think more about within this section.	
Notes about the strengths and/or weaknesses of your effort on this factor.	
Preliminary score (e.g., 1-5, low-high) indicating the strength of your effort on this factor. You will enter this score in the figure in Part 4 of the workbook as part of your overall assessment of your effort.	

Factor #11

CONNECTEDNESS OUTSIDE THE REGION: Assessing the Group's External Links

Overview

Connectedness outside the region refers to the group's relationships to relevant organizations and coalitions external to the region, such as: similar efforts in other regions; national associations, think tanks, and interest groups; or individuals such as scholars and other experts who have a distinctive voice and perspective on the topic. (Note that connections with state and federal governments are treated separately in Factors 12 and 13.)

Figure 14 helps you think strategically about which organizations, coalitions, and individuals outside of your region might be important to the success of your regional effort. The figure asks you to list the connections you will need and to identify potential ways to build these relationships.

Suggestions and Instructions

- **Think about the connections outside the region that can help you achieve your goals.** *In Figure 14 in the column labeled "Connections We Need/Could Benefit From," record what types connections you need beyond your region. Questions to consider:*
 - What experts, coalitions, and national and international organizations can help support success on your goal?
 - Are there similar efforts taking place in other regions that can be a source of legitimacy/prestige/expertise/experience to support your work?
- **Assess your ability to make the connections you need.** *In Figure 14 in the column labeled "Ability to Make Connections," note how hard or easy it will be for the group to make the needed connections. Questions to consider:*
 - Does the group have (or is it able to build) relationships with relevant experts, coalitions, organizations, and peer regions that will support success on the goal? How hard or easy will it be to make the necessary connections?
 - What tools and strategies can the group use to connect with the necessary individuals, regions and groups — for example, targeted outreach, social media, convenings, etc.?

Figure 14: Connectedness Outside the Region

Connections We Need/Could Benefit From	Ability to Make Connections

CONNECTEDNESS OUTSIDE THE REGION WRAP UP	
Notes about issues you need to think more about within this section.	
Notes about the strengths and/or weaknesses of your effort on this factor.	
Preliminary score (e.g., 1-5, low-high) indicating the strength of your effort on this factor. You will enter this score in the figure in Part 4 of the workbook as part of your overall assessment of your effort.	

Factor #12

STATE-LEVEL INFLUENCE: Securing Help from State Government

Overview

State-level influence refers to the group's capacity to obtain support and resources from the state government. You may want to secure an endorsement of the group's efforts from state lawmakers. Alternatively, you may want the legislative delegation representing your area to remain neutral and noncommittal about your work. Or perhaps you want funding through a state program, or new legislation that provides the legal basis for the group's goals to be carried out.

Whatever the case, it is important to identify exactly what the group will need from the state in order to achieve success. It is also important to develop an understanding of how you can form the connections that will help you get what you need.

Figure 15 helps you consider what state actions will be important to the success of your effort, as well as how the actor group might effectively engage with the state. The figure asks you to list the state-level connections you will need and to identify potential ways to build these relationships.

Suggestions and Instructions

- **Think about state-level actions/resources/agencies that can help you achieve your goals.** *In Figure 15 in the column labeled "What You Need from the State," record what you need the state to do (or not do).* Questions to consider:
 - What state-level resources (e.g., money, legal authority, or political support) can help support success on your goal?
 - Are statewide policies in place to support success on the goal?
 - Are there instances in which it would be better for the state government or state officials to stay neutral or *not* to act on an issue related to the goal?
 - Does your state allow localities to form regional collaborations on this topic without permission from the state legislature?
- **Assess your ability to make the state-level connections you need.** *In Figure 15 in the column labeled "Ability to Obtain," note how hard or easy it will be for the group to get what you need from state government.* Questions to consider:
 - Does the actor group have (or is it able to attain) the relationships, skills, and reach required to secure relevant state-level resources or support?
 - Does the group have influence with relevant people/entities in the governor's office, state legislature, state agencies, etc.?
 - Does the state delegation representing your area support the group's agenda?
 - Does the state delegation representing your area have the power, seniority, and experience to secure relevant state (and federal) resources to help the group achieve its goal?

Figure 15: State-Level Influence

What You Need from the State	Ability to Obtain

STATE-LEVEL INFLUENCE WRAP UP	
Notes about issues you need to think more about within this section.	
Notes about the strengths and/or weaknesses of your effort on this factor.	
Preliminary score (e.g., 1-5, low-high) indicating the strength of your effort on this factor. You will enter this score in the figure in Part 4 of the workbook as part of your overall assessment of your effort.	

Factor #13

FEDERAL-LEVEL INFLUENCE: Securing Help from the Federal Government

Overview

Federal-level influence refers to the group's capacity to obtain needed support and resources from the federal government. You may want to secure an endorsement of the group's efforts from members of the local or regional congressional delegation. Alternatively, you may want your representatives in Congress to remain neutral and noncommittal about your work. Or perhaps you want funding through a federal program, or new federal legislation that provides the legal basis for the group's goals to be carried out.

Whatever the case, it is important to identify exactly what the group will need from the federal government in order to achieve success. It is also important to develop an understanding of how you will form the connections that will help you get what you need.

Figure 16 helps you consider what federal actions will be important to the success of your effort, as well as how the actor group might effectively engage with the federal government. The figure asks you to list the federal-level connections you will need and to identify potential ways to build these relationships.

Suggestions and Instructions

- **Think about the federal-level actions/resources/agencies that can help you achieve your goals.** *In Figure 16 in the column labeled "What You Need from the Feds," record what you need the federal government to do (or not do).* Questions to consider:
 - What federal resources (e.g., money, legal authority or political support) can help support success on your goal?
 - Are federal policies in place to support success on the goal?
 - Are there instances in which it would be better for the federal government or federal officials to stay neutral or *not* to act on an issue related to the goal?
- **Assess your ability to make the federal-level connections you need.** *In Figure 16 in the column labeled "Ability to Obtain," note how hard or easy it will be for the group to get what you need from federal government.* Questions to consider:
 - Does the group have (or is it able to attain) the relationships, skills, and reach required to secure relevant federal resources or support?
 - Does the group have influence with relevant people/offices in the administration, Congress, federal agencies, etc.?
 - Does the federal delegation representing your area support the group's agenda?
 - Does the federal delegation representing your area have the power, seniority, and experience to secure relevant federal resources to help the group achieve its goal?

Figure 16: Federal-Level Influence

What You Need from The Feds	Ability to Obtain

FEDERAL-LEVEL INFLUENCE WRAP UP

Notes about issues you need to think more about within this section.

Notes about the strengths and/or weaknesses of your effort on this factor.

Preliminary score (e.g., 1-5, low-high) indicating the strength of your effort on this factor. You will enter this score in the figure in Part 4 of the workbook as part of your overall assessment of your effort.

Factor #14

OVERALL REGION-SCALE ACTIVITY: Weighing the History of Collaborative Problem-Solving in Your Area

Overview

Overall region-scale activity refers to previous and current experience with working across jurisdictional and sectoral boundaries in your area. While inter-local or regional action has increased significantly in recent decades, it is still not the norm. No matter the topic or goal, the degree to which people and organizations have worked together on regional priorities may have some effect on the success of your effort. Understanding the history of this kind of work in your area is important so you can learn from past experience and, where possible, build on it.

Figure 17 helps you identify how people and institutions in your area have come together to address regional goals generally, as well as what they have learned in the process. (In the next section of the workbook, you will assess region-scale activity related to the specific goal of your effort.) The figure asks you to list key instances in which people have collaborated across jurisdictional and sectoral lines on problem-solving efforts. In addition, the figure asks you to consider the lessons from this work, and to identify the institutional infrastructure available to support this work, including any relevant organizations, policies, and processes in place to support cross-jurisdictional and cross-sectoral collaboration.

Suggestions and Instructions

- **Identify important collaborative efforts aimed at solving regional problems.** *In Figure 17 in the column labeled “Region-Scale Activity – General,” list some of the key cross-jurisdictional and cross-sectoral collaboratives that have been launched in your area.* Questions to consider:
 - In what instances have people and organizations in your area come together to work on region-scale activities?
- **Consider what kind of culture and history the region has for pursuing regional goals generally.** *In Figure 17 in the column labeled “Lessons from Region-Scale Activity,” record notes about and lessons from past and current region-scale activity.* Questions to consider:
 - To what extent were the efforts listed in the first column successful? Did these efforts result in people viewing region-scale activity favorably or unfavorably — or did the larger community not really notice or care?
 - To the extent that previous regional efforts either worked or didn’t work, what reasons were cited for their success or failure? Was there any deeper analysis done of these efforts and what they were or were not able to achieve?
- **Identify the infrastructure and institutions that support regional problem solving in your area.** *In Figure 17 in the column labeled “Supporting Infrastructure and Institutions,” record information about the organizations, policies, and processes that support efforts to pursue regional goals generally.* Questions to consider:
 - Are there local groups (e.g., regional coalitions, special-purpose governments, regional governments, or private or civic organizations) collaborating to pursue regional goals generally?
 - Are there policies or laws in place (at the local or state level) to allow for and support regional action generally?
 - Would there be any downside (e.g., political difficulties, bureaucratic hurdles) associated your effort’s use of the infrastructure and institutions you have identified?
 - Should your effort make use of the infrastructure and institutions you have identified? How?

Figure 17: Overall Region-Scale Activity

Region-Scale Activity – General	Lessons from Region-Scale Activity	Supporting Infrastructure and Institutions

OVERALL REGION-SCALE ACTIVITY WRAP UP

Notes about issues you need to think more about within this section.

Notes about the strengths and/or weaknesses of your effort on this factor.

Preliminary score (e.g., 1-5, low-high) indicating the strength of your effort on this factor. You will enter this score in the figure in Part 4 of the workbook as part of your overall assessment of your effort.

Factor #15

REGION-SCALE ACTIVITY ON GOAL: Learning from Previous Efforts Like Yours

Overview

Region-scale activity on goal refers to other efforts in the region (past and present) to achieve goals similar to yours. The degree to which people and organizations have worked together on the issues at the heart of your group's work can have an important effect on the success of your effort. Understanding the history of this kind of work in your area is important so you can learn from past experience and, where possible, build on it.

Figure 18 helps you identify how people and institutions in your area have come together to address issues related to the goal you seek to achieve, as well as what they learned in the process. (In the previous section of the workbook, you assessed overall region-scale activity in your area on all issues.) The figure asks you to list key instances in which people have collaborated across jurisdictional and sectoral lines on the issues you are working on. In addition, the figure asks you to consider the lessons from this work, and to identify the region's institutional infrastructure available to support this work, including any relevant organizations, policies, and processes in place to support cross-jurisdictional and cross-sectoral collaboration on your issues.

Suggestions and Instructions

- **Identify important collaborative efforts aimed at addressing the issues you are working on.** *In Figure 18 in the column labeled "Region-Scale Activity on Goal," list some of the key cross-jurisdictional and cross-sectoral collaboratives that have been launched in your area on your issues.* Questions to consider:
 - In what instances have people and organizations in your area come together to work on these issues?
- **Consider what kind of culture and history the region has for addressing your goal.** *In Figure 18 in the column labeled "Lessons from Region-Scale Activity on Goal," record notes about (and lessons from) past and current work on your goal.* Questions to consider:
 - To what extent were the efforts listed in the first column successful? Did these efforts result in people viewing region-scale activity on your issues favorably or unfavorably — or did the larger community not really notice or care?
 - To the extent that previous regional efforts on your issues either worked or didn't work, what reasons were cited for their success or failure? Was there any deeper analysis done of these efforts and what they were or were not able to achieve?
- **Identify the infrastructure and institutions in the region that support problem solving on your goal.** *In Figure 18 in the column labeled "Supporting Infrastructure and Institutions," record information about the organizations, policies, and processes that support efforts to pursue your goal.* Questions to consider:
 - Are there local groups (e.g., regional coalitions, special-purpose governments, regional governments, or private or civic organizations) collaborating to pursue region-scale progress on this goal?
 - Are there policies or laws in place (at the local or state level) to allow for and support region-scale progress on this goal?
 - Are there processes and practices in place in your area to support region-scale progress on this goal?

- Would there be any downside (e.g., political difficulties, bureaucratic hurdles) associated with your effort's use of the infrastructure and institutions you have identified?
- Should your effort make use of the infrastructure and institutions you have identified? How?

Figure 18: Region-Scale Activity on Goal

Region-Scale Activity on Goal	Lessons from Region-Scale Activity on Goal	Supporting Infrastructure and Institutions

REGION-SCALE ACTIVITY ON GOAL WRAP UP	
Notes about issues you need to think more about within this section.	
Notes about the strengths and/or weaknesses of your effort on this factor.	
Preliminary score (e.g., 1-5, low-high) indicating the strength of your effort on this factor. You will enter this score in the figure in Part 4 of the workbook as part of your overall assessment of your effort.	

PART 4: BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER – DECIDING WHAT TO DO NEXT

Overview

In the previous pages, you have worked on the individual factors that will contribute to the success of your effort. Now it's time to bring all of those pieces together into the larger picture, to consider the forest as well as the trees, and to develop and implement strategies to build the capacity you need to succeed.

Figure 19, on page 51, can help you draw lessons from the thinking you've done in this workbook so you can see where your strengths and weaknesses are as you work toward your goal. The strength ratings you noted for each of the factor areas aren't the final word, however. The reason: The factors are not of equal weight, or importance, when it comes to the potential success of your effort. Depending on your goal and the nature of the problem you are aiming to address, some strengths may be more important than other strengths, and some weaknesses may be more important than other weaknesses.

When you see the overall picture, you can identify which factors aren't contributing what they could or should to the success of your effort and decide where you may need to invest additional work — for example, by “fixing” key weaknesses or building further on key strengths. This exercise also will allow you to do a better job assessing the overall likelihood of success for your effort and, in turn, judging whether to go ahead. Figure 20, on page 53, provides a place to record your decisions.

Suggestions and Instructions

- **Review your factor ratings and your comments.** Figure 19 lists all 15 factors, arranged under their respective five dimensions. The figure provides space for you to enter the ratings that you made for each factor in the final “wrap-up” tables in each of the prior sections of the workbook. (You can also now consider revising them, as needed.) In the “Comments and Next Steps” column, you can bring together your most important insights from those sections.
- **Assess your overall capacity.** Just as there's no single or best way to achieve a regional goal, there's no single or best way to assess the capacity of your effort or to decide what strategy to follow to increase your likelihood of success.
 - If you are quantitatively oriented, you can tally the factor ratings from each section. Let's say you used a rating scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 as strongest). If you rated all 15 of the factors as a 5, then the total score would be 75, the highest total possible. If you rated them all as a 1, the total score would 15, the lowest possible. Your total is likely somewhere in between.
 - If you don't like using numbers for this sort of thinking, you can make this judgment about each of the factors: “How strong is my capacity on this factor for the goal I want to achieve?” You might indicate your answer here by using the following shorthand: very strong, strong, so-so, weak, or very weak.
 - Your assessment of the strength of the individual factors is not as important as the pattern of the ratings and what it says about the capacity to achieve the goals of your effort. Your total score might be 61, for example, but if the score on Actor Group Composition is 1 (because none of the key people on the topic will join up), then the high total score may mask the reality that your goal is in jeopardy.

- **Give each factor a “weight.”** This is where you decide how important each factor is to the success of your effort, when compared to the other factors. The operative question here: Regardless of the rating you have given to each factor, how important is it for your effort to have strong capacity in this area?
 - If you are committed to the numbers approach, you can measure the weight of each factor on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 as the maximum weight indicating a high level of importance for the factor). Next, you can multiply the factor’s rating by the weight for the factor. If you do this, the range of totals (rating times weight) for each factor will be from 1 (1 X 1) to 25 (5 X 5). Again, you cannot simply look at the totals, though they will give you another indication of the implication of your assessment. You have to look at the pattern as well.
 - If you don’t need or want numbers, you can make your judgment about each factor’s weight on a scale from “very important” to “not important,” compare this to your assessment of the factor’s rating (from “very strong” to “very weak”) and make your judgments based on that. For example, a factor that rates as “very weak” but with a weighting of “very important” is surely going to be something you will need to work on.
 - As part of this assessment, you can make further use of the “Dynamic Core” that you created in Figure 9. It provides the base to check each of your other factor analyses against the Dynamic Core so that an overall strategy can emerge. For example, if you have given a low rating to Region-Level Activity on Goal, there’s no way to change that history; but you can adjust the ambition of your Agenda Framing and/or add people or groups to the Actor Group Composition that enhance the capacity for addressing that lack of experience.
- **Decide where additional capacity building is needed and outline your strategy and tactics for developing the capacity you need.**

Figure 20 simply provides the space for you to identify five priorities for enhancing your capacity for attaining the goal you have identified. Which factors need what kind of work? As this workbook has emphasized throughout, what you will need to do — what capacity you will need to have — depends on the purpose you aim to achieve. There’s no magic about having five priorities: fewer is fine, but too many more than that may suggest that you want to slow down because there’s not enough capacity in your effort to make success likely.

The important outcome, of course, lies in deciding where to put your effort, and then developing and implementing plans for moving forward. Which factors do you need to work on the most? Which factors can you control, and which are beyond your control? Are there factors where you are strong that might “cancel out” those where you are weak? Working your way through these types of questions will help you frame a strategy for moving forward.

Figure 19: Bringing It All Together

	RATING	WEIGHT	COMMENTS AND NEXT STEPS
AGENDA			
Agenda Framing			
Agenda Assessment			
Agenda Comprehension			
ACTOR GROUP			
Actor Group Composition			
Leadership Roles			
Actor Group Commitment			
INTERNAL CAPACITY			
Money and Related Resources			
Information and Expertise			
Authority and Legitimacy			

	RATING	WEIGHT	COMMENTS AND NEXT STEPS
EXTERNAL CAPACITY			
Connectedness Inside the Region			
Connectedness Outside the Region			
State-Level Influence			
Federal-Level Influence			
IMPLEMENTATION EXPERIENCE			
Overall Region-Scale Activity			
Region-Scale Activity on Goal			

Figure 20

PRIORITIES FOR ENHANCING CAPACITY

Which factors need what kind of work? and next steps on each:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Congratulations on completing your analysis. Now you are ready to take action to build your capacity to achieve the goal of your effort. Remember to revisit the exercises and the questions in this workbook throughout the course of your work, and to revise your plans accordingly. To the extent that your effort is guided by clear thinking and a solid understanding of what it is going to take to achieve your goal, you'll be in a better position to succeed.

About This Publication

The National League of Cities (NLC) is dedicated to helping city leaders build better communities. NLC is a resource and advocate for its member cities and the 49 state municipal leagues, representing 19,000 cities and towns and more than 218 million Americans.

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About the Authors

William R. Barnes is Director for Emerging Issues at the National League of Cities. His “Emerging Issues” columns, addressing a wide range of urban affairs topics, have appeared monthly in NLC’s newspaper and are regularly re-printed elsewhere. He earned a Ph.D. from the Maxwell School at Syracuse University, and was elected a Fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration in 2005. His publications include “Governing Cities in the Coming Decade” (*Public Administration Review* 2010); “Beyond Federal Urban Policy” (*Urban Affairs Review* 2005); and *The New Regional Economies* (SAGE 1998.)

Kathryn A. Foster, Ph.D., is President of the University of Maine at Farmington. Prior to assuming this position in 2012, she was a Visiting Fellow at the Brookings Institution and Director of the University at Buffalo Regional Institute, an applied research and policy center of the State University of New York. An expert in regions and governance, Foster is the author of *The Political Economy of Special-Purpose Government* (1997), *Regionalism on Purpose* (2001) and numerous articles, book chapters, and reports on regional decision making. She appreciates the broad application of *Getting Things Done Together* to problem solving settings beyond regions and is now putting its guidance into practice at a university campus.

Lara Malakoff was Senior Associate for Outreach in NLC’s Center for Research and Innovation from 2009 to 2012. She is currently an Associate for Housing and Community Development at ICF International in Fairfax, Virginia, where her work focuses on housing and broadband implementation and adoption issues. Ms. Malakoff earned her Master’s degree in urban and regional planning from Virginia Tech and her Bachelor’s degree from The George Washington University.

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