

A photograph of two people working in a forest. On the left, a woman with blonde hair tied back, wearing a green t-shirt and black pants, is holding a large, light green vertical pipe. On the right, a man with dark hair, wearing a tan hoodie and green pants, is leaning over and examining a tree trunk. The background is filled with green foliage and trees. The text "DO MORE, BETTER, TOGETHER" is overlaid in large white letters at the top.

# DO MORE, BETTER, TOGETHER

## Investing in Collaborative Work to Make a Difference

*Introducing the Collaborative Capacity Impact Model*

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# ABSTRACT

Collaborative approaches are often applied to today's most complex challenges and emergent opportunities. This is certainly true for the field of landscape stewardship, the practice of conserving, restoring, and stewarding landscapes and seascapes at scale. Those working in this field recognize the value of collaboration, and while pressing questions persist, the discussion has shifted. Rather than question the value of collaboration, it is more likely to be about why and how to invest in collaborative models.

The purpose of this article is to contribute to the larger conversation by introducing the *Collaborative Capacity Impact Model™*, a data-driven framework based on an interdependent, scalable system of 15 impacts and the process of scaling up, accelerating, and sustaining those impacts. The concept of collaboratives as a special type of organizational model is discussed, along with five key collaborative design elements.

The *Collaborative Capacity Impact Model* is a practical framework that can be employed by individual collaboratives and their partners, networks, and funders to describe, assess, and demonstrate their impacts. This model was recently used to evaluate two grant programs that fund collaborative capacity—the [National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grant Program](#) and the [Network for Landscape Conservation's Catalyst Fund](#). Findings from these evaluations build a strong case for the ways capacity investments strengthen collaborative processes and functioning and result in on-the-ground impacts, among other positive outcomes. This article also shares practical implications and lessons learned on how to optimize capacity investments and maximize the potential of collaborative models.

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**Cover photo credit:** Chesapeake Bay Program

# INTRODUCTION

Well-resourced collaboratives produce greater and more durable outcomes and impacts than a single organization can achieve on its own.

The landscape stewardship field is one of many that turns to collaboration as a way to tackle some of its most complex challenges and embrace emergent opportunities. Due to the scale and complexity of working across landscapes and seascapes, collaboratives as organizational entities have become one of the more common pathways for collective action. They are increasingly used to fill governance gaps, resolve conflicts, build trust, and co-create inclusive processes that deliver multibenefit solutions (Baxter & Land, 2023; Land et al., 2025). Indeed, the vast majority of the 250 recently surveyed landscape collaboratives have been formed within the last 25 years—a trend that peaked in the previous decade (Thomsen & McDevitt, 2025).

The stewardship field as a whole recognizes the value of collaboration. Conversations and energy have shifted from *why collaborate* to *how best to collaborate* and *why invest in collaborative models*.

Nevertheless, pressing questions about collaborative models remain.

- o What are collaboratives, and how do they differ?
- o How do they generate impact?
- o What do they need to optimize performance?
- o What can they accomplish?
- o What types of impact can they generate?
- o How are impacts scaled up, accelerated, and sustained?
- o Is investing in collaborative approaches worth it?

This article addresses these questions by introducing the *Collaborative Capacity Impact Model*—a data-driven framework based on an interdependent, scalable system of 15 impacts and the process of scaling up, accelerating, and sustaining those impacts.<sup>1</sup>

Our findings demonstrate that a collaborative's performance and desired outcomes both improve with capacity investments.

We recently used this model to evaluate two grant programs—the [National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grant Program](#) (NFWF's INSR Grant Program) and the [Network for Landscape Conservation's Catalyst Fund](#) (NLC's Catalyst Fund). Combined, these programs provide capacity to support more than 125 different collaboratives across the United States that are conserving, restoring, and/or stewarding large landscapes and seascapes.

# PERSISTENT & PRESSING QUESTIONS

## *What Are Collaboratives & How Do They Differ?*

### COLLABORATIVES AS ORGANIZATIONAL MODELS

**Collaboratives are a special type of organizational model.** They meet the well-accepted textbook definition of an organization as “a consciously coordinated social unit, comprised of [sic] two or more people, that functions on a relatively coordinated basis to achieve a common goal or set of goals” (Robbins & Judge, 2024).

“Collaboratives” is an umbrella term representing a suite of organizations engaged in collective action to achieve shared goals—for example, partnerships, coalitions, alliances, and networks.

Organizations are often categorized as formal or informal, but well-resourced collaboratives share characteristics of both. Usually relying on authority-based chains of command and clearly defined roles, formal organizations tend to be more structured and durable. They are found in both the public and private sectors and include for-profits and nonprofits across many industries.

On the other hand, informal organizations are less structured and rely on shared authority; relationships are more personal than role-related, and unwritten norms are followed. Informal organizations are found across a wide range of sectors and industries as loosely knit groups or networks.

**Well-resourced collaboratives are unique; they embody the adaptable and responsive nature of informal organizations alongside the enduring stability of formal ones.** Often emerging in response to a perceived need or opportunity and spanning physical, political, and cultural boundaries, they are uniquely positioned to address today’s most complex challenges. Their enduring strength lies in their ability to adapt and respond effectively to changing circumstances, ensuring lasting impact and relevance.

### COLLABORATIVE DESIGN

Although a range of collaborative models and approaches exist, there is no definitive framework or agreed-upon nomenclature for differentiating among them. In addition, their names often include terms such as coalition, partnership, network, collaborative, joint powers authority, alliance, association, initiative, or project,

based on considerations other than a strict definition of the term. An alternative approach is to use key elements of a collaborative's governance structure (Johnson et al., 2021) and other factors (e.g., geographic scale or project focus) that better illustrate their differences and similarities. These include:

**PURPOSE:** Why the collaborative exists, typically based on a shared understanding of the opportunity, problem, and/or challenge it seeks to address.

**FUNCTION:** The specific roles performed by the collaborative to fulfill its purpose (e.g., information sharing; planning and implementation; capacity building; advisory, policy, or advocacy; science and research; catalyzing change). A collaborative may choose to perform multiple functions or focus on one.

**STRUCTURE:** How the partners organize, manage, and coordinate to achieve their purpose. For example, a multiparty collaborative may use an adaptable, network-based structure with a broad, emergent scope, while another with a more focused purview may choose a centralized model.

**COMPOSITION:** Who participates in the collaborative, which may vary. For example, depending on how it can best fulfill its collective purpose, a collaborative may choose to have members, core participants, affiliate partners, and/or project-based participants. These may also evolve over time.

**PROCESSES:** How the collaborative communicates, works together, and makes decisions (e.g., systems, methods, governance agreements, strategies).

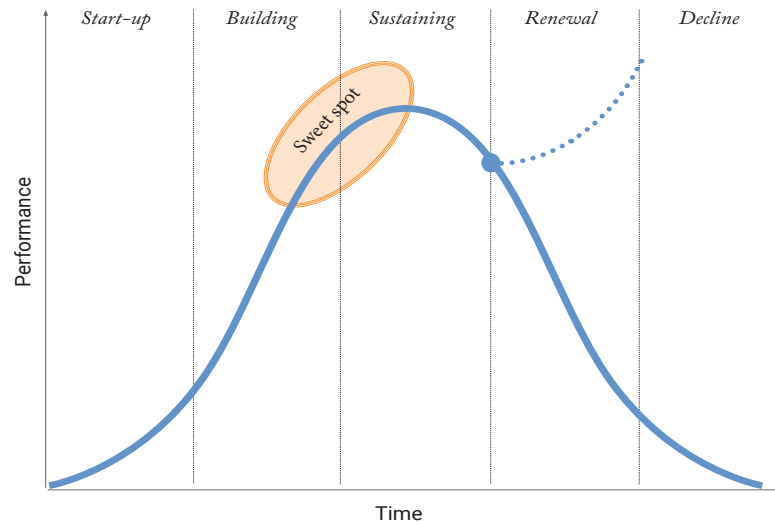
Together, these five design elements provide a lens into understanding how and why the collaborative operates as well as which elements must be sustained (or adapted) to achieve its goals.

## **COLLABORATIVE LIFE CYCLES**

Like any organization, a collaborative's life cycle progresses from start-up through building and sustaining stages (see Figure 1). Also like other organizations, it generally performs best from the end of its building stage through its sustaining stage—a “sweet spot” that can last for decades in a well-resourced group. It is worth noting that at some point, collaboratives may move into the decline stage while others experience renewal by reinventing themselves, as represented by the dotted line in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Collaborative Life Cycle

A collaborative's life cycle "sweet spot" is achieved when it is performing at optimal levels.



## How Do They Generate Impact?

Collaboration is about the process of people working together toward a shared vision, purpose, or goal(s). The simple model in Figure 2 illustrates the way in which generating collaborative impacts also follows a process. (This model is based on the premise that collaborative capacity needs have been met.)

Figure 2. Generating Collaborative Impacts™

Collaborative capacity enables the activities and outcomes that generate collective impacts.



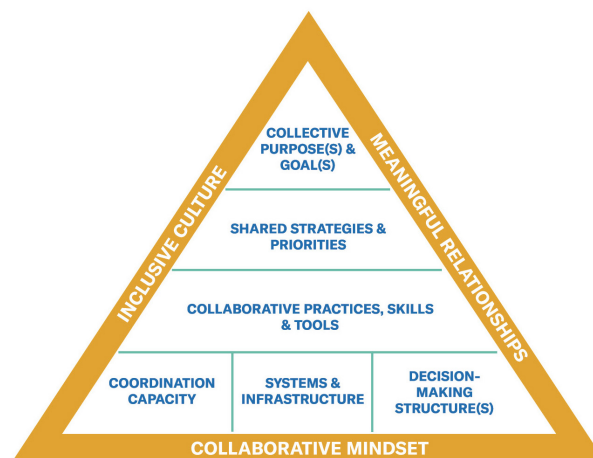
# What Do Collaboratives Need to Optimize Performance?

In simple terms, organizational capacity refers to an organization's ability to perform, and the same definition applies to collaboratives. To optimize the adaptable and durable qualities of collaboratives, they must be well resourced to meet their capacity needs.

The *Collaborative Capacity Framework*<sup>2</sup> (deSilva et al., 2022) provides a useful model, one that identifies key elements that can optimize a group's performance. It is the product of more than 25 interviews with state leaders, surveys with regional network practitioners in California, analyses of recent publications (including peer-reviewed research), and multiple forums held with national organizations.

Figure 3. Collaborative Capacity Framework

The triangle comprises six fundable, structural elements of collaborative capacity (often referred to as collaborative infrastructure) enclosed by three binding elements.



**COORDINATION CAPACITY:** facilitation, meeting management, communications, engagement, progress tracking, administrative needs, collective project coordination, and more.

**SYSTEMS AND INFRASTRUCTURE:** communications, reporting, and data-sharing systems for the collaborative's activities; intracollaborative resources; facilities and equipment; and more.

**GOVERNANCE AND DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURES:** the collaborative's organization (e.g., leadership teams, steering committees, working groups) and associated decision-making processes that help steer its vision and support accountability.

**COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES, SKILLS, AND TOOLS:** training opportunities, resources, peer-to-peer exchanges, etc., to build key collaborative skills, abilities, and culture.



**SHARED STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES:** frameworks that encompass and translate the group's vision and desired goals to strategies, work plans, and activities, and provide a shared understanding of partner roles and capacities.

**COLLECTIVE PURPOSE AND GOALS:** agreements (e.g., MOUs, charters) and other mechanisms that outline and codify a partnership's vision, purpose and values, and the collective and individual authorities and roles necessary to achieve those.

*Collaborative function and on-the-ground performance (e.g., accelerated scale, pace of project implementation, program delivery) are intertwined. To remain in its sweet spot, a high-performing collaborative must have adequate resources.*



Photo credit: California Landscape Stewardship Network



# What Can Collaboratives Accomplish?

Collaborative activities and outcomes are best described as the direct and more immediate results enabled by increased capacity.

Research suggests that investing in the elements presented in the *Collaborative Capacity Framework* makes critical partnership activities and their outcomes possible (Baxter & Land, 2023; Land et al., 2025). These include, but are not limited to, the following: public engagement, meeting and convening, relationship building, identifying shared purpose, landscape conservation and stewardship actions, communicating across partners, resource sharing, evaluation, and training and mentoring.

We found that capacity investments make it possible for collaboratives to engage in a wider range of activities in two specific categories: collaborative development/functioning and collaborative projects and programs.

## COLLABORATIVE DEVELOPMENT & FUNCTIONING

### Assessments and Continuous Improvement Practices

Conducting research, surveys, interviews, and so forth to appraise both collaborative and individual partner performance. Building collaborative skills and practices. Sharing new approaches to broaden partner perspectives and foster innovation.

### Coordination and Convening

Facilitating meetings, planning events, coordinating and tracking activities, and enabling other essential processes that allow a group to work together. Typically supported by professional facilitators, partnership coordinators, development directors, communications staff, and/or natural resource specialists.

### Fundraising and Fiscal Administration

Managing funder relationships, grant applications, accounting requirements, and deliverables. Leveraging funding to accelerate the collaborative's ability to meet its goals.

### Partner Outreach, Relationship Building, and Collaborative Expansion

Building new and/or deepening existing interpersonal relationships. Developing a cohesive group identity and trust through shared learning, power, leadership, and action.

### Problem and Barrier Identification with Multibenefit Solutions

Identifying problems that limit a collaborative's ability to reach its goals. Developing, testing, adapting, and implementing solutions to those problems, often to achieve multiple benefits.

### Resource Generation and Sharing

Developing, pooling, and distributing a wide range of information and tools (e.g., contract templates, participant directories, weed-management techniques, equipment). Facilitating internal and external pathways to effectively connect people and share key assets.

### Strategy-Setting, Governance, and Collective Planning

Creating and applying clear goals and strategies to guide the collaborative's direction, investments, accountability, and structure (e.g., steering committees, working groups).

### Systems and Infrastructure Development

Providing internal communications, data, financial, and other platforms to efficiently share information. Supporting staff hiring and management as well as physical assets (e.g., hardware and software, meeting spaces, supplies) needed to do the work.

## COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS & PROGRAMS

### Applied Research

Conducting research to inform on-the-ground work.

### Convening, Information Sharing, and Exchange

Connecting practitioners, landowners, and peers to discuss the benefits and challenges of their work; learn new techniques; and identify strategies for designing, implementing, and transferring best practices.

### Data Acquisition, Management, and Analysis

Providing, analyzing, and managing a data repository; utilizing prioritization processes, generating maps, spatial tools, infographics, and other data-driven support for effective implementation.

### Fundraising, Grant Contracts, and Budget Management

Constructing and implementing project- and program-specific funding sources and budget requirements. Administering grant and contract compliance with federal, state, and regional guidelines. Overseeing project and program budgets and tracking deliverables.

### Priority Identification, Mapping, and Planning

Creating prioritization processes and decision-making approaches to help guide collective strategy development, inform project/program sequencing, and support planning efforts.

### Project/Program Innovations, Assessments, Improvements, and Adaptations

Fostering creativity, generative thinking, and embracing failure as a learning opportunity. Identifying shared obstacles that limit effective implementation. Assessing project/program effectiveness and durability, adapting techniques and practices, promoting new approaches (often multibenefit), and celebrating and marketing novel ideas.

### Project/Program Planning, Design, Implementation, Maintenance, and Monitoring

Managing projects and programs from initiation to closure, including planning, design, compliance, contractor and construction oversight, and implementation, among other activities.

### Public Awareness, Engagement, and Education

Conducting outreach and education to build public awareness, generate support, and foster stewardship actions and community wellbeing.

### Targeted Outreach, Relationship Building, and Engagement

Conducting audience-specific outreach to foster relationship building, increase trust and credibility, and encourage engagement and implementation of mutually beneficial projects and programs.

### Technical Assistance

Providing services and resources to fill critical gaps in project delivery, primarily in the fields of engineering, landscape architecture, data management, geospatial analysis, facilitation, environmental compliance, and permitting.

### Workforce Development, Training, and Mentoring

Assessing workforce needs and gaps and developing programs to address those gaps. Supporting professional development and training through internships, early-career mentoring, accredited technical certifications, and peer learning and exchange.

**The funding of the collaboratives has provided many NGOs with the ability to perform the critical activities of coordinating meetings and events where important information exchange happens. Without dedicated funds to pay for a person's time, that level of coordination is almost impossible. So, the administrative and staff time covered by NFWF's INSR Grants has been just as important as the funds that are dedicated to funding on-the-ground projects.**

*NFWF INSR GRANTEE*

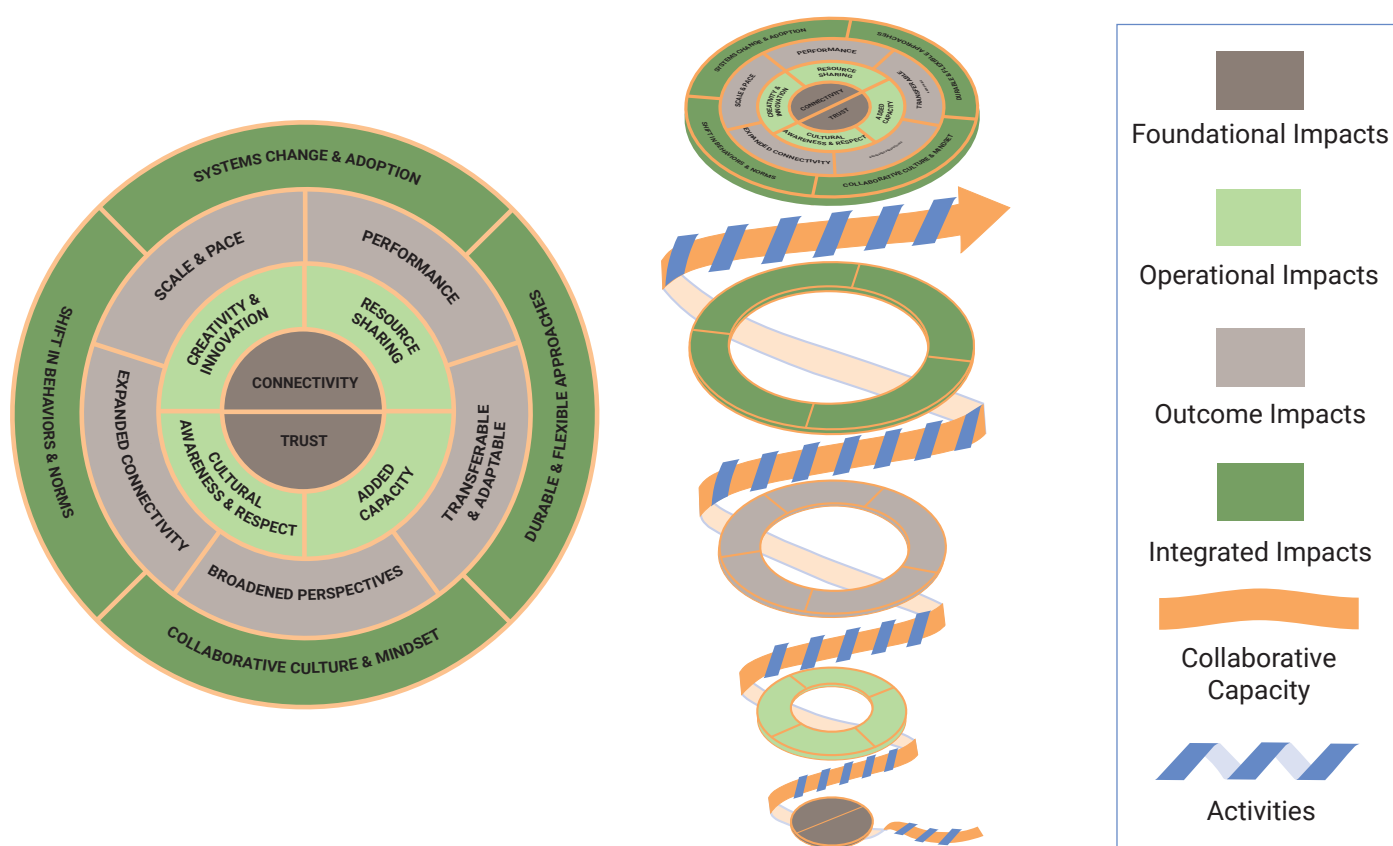


# What Types of Impacts Can Collaboratives Generate?

Introduced here, the *Collaborative Capacity Impact Model<sup>β</sup>* is a data-driven framework, a system of 15 interconnected impacts and the process of scaling up, accelerating, and sustaining those impacts (Figure 4). Previously mentioned, we applied this framework to the evaluation of two grant programs affiliated with more than 125 unique collaboratives across the United States. NFWF's INSR Grant Program and NLC's Catalyst Fund both invest in capacity support for collaborative models working toward conserving, restoring, and/or stewarding large landscapes and seascapes at scale.

Figure 4. Collaborative Capacity Impact Model<sup>TM</sup>

## COLLABORATIVE CAPACITY IMPACT MODEL<sup>TM</sup>



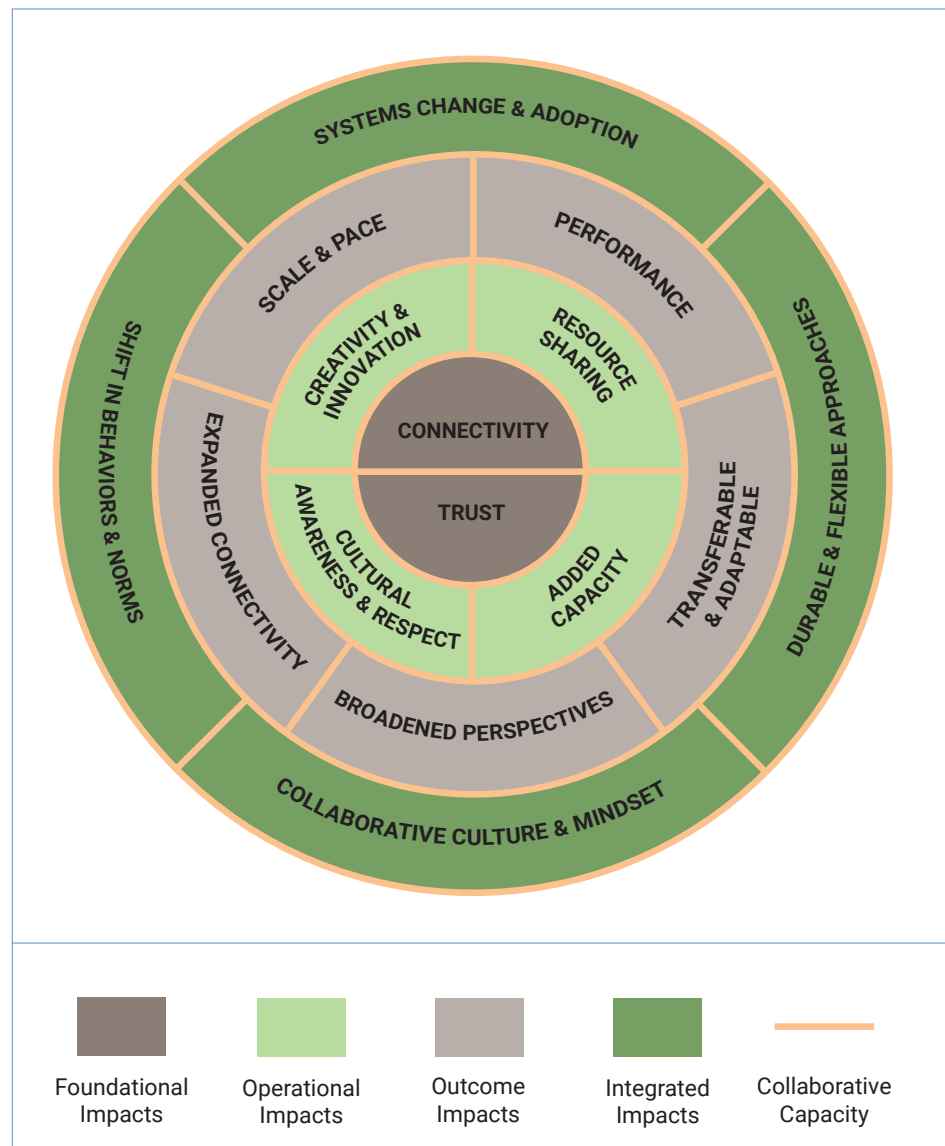
Increased and ongoing capacity investments made it possible for collaboratives to generate 15 impact types that cluster into four classifications.

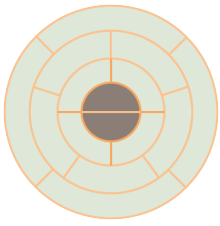
The Collaborative Capacity Impact Model is an interdependent, scalable system of 15 impacts. These impacts cluster into four classifications: foundational, operational, outcome, and integrated (Figure 5).

- o **FOUNDATIONAL:** Related to enhanced relationships and increased connections.
- o **OPERATIONAL:** Positive changes that allow collaboratives and their partners to function more effectively.
- o **OUTCOME:** Shifts that move collaboratives toward fulfilling their core purpose or raison d'être.
- o **INTEGRATED:** Long-term effects stemming from institutionalized approaches.

**Impacts differ from activities and outcomes because they indicate change over time.**

Figure 5. 15 Collaborative Impacts™



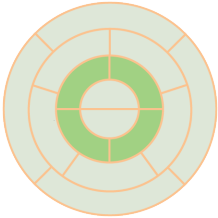


## FOUNDATIONAL IMPACTS

**Connectivity:** Enhancing the quality and quantity of connections for collaborative members, partner organizations, local communities, and a collaborative's extended network.

**Trust:** Increasing trust within a collaborative and among its extended network members, which enables deeper engagement and sustained action.

## OPERATIONAL IMPACTS



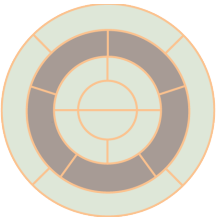
**Creativity & innovation:** Forming and implementing inventive processes, practices, programs, and solutions.

**Resource sharing:** Sharing human capital, knowledge and expertise, systems and physical infrastructure, data, and funding.

**Added capacity:** Increasing collaborative functions, generating and leveraging funding; and amplifying partners' existing systems, relationships and expertise.

**Cultural awareness & respect:** Helping collaborative and extended network members understand, respect, and leverage their differences.

## OUTCOME IMPACTS



**Scale & pace:** Increasing collaborative development and functioning as well as project and program implementation.

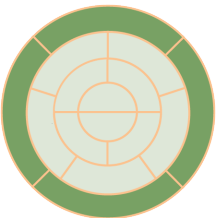
**Performance:** Producing high-quality outputs through enhanced performance at the collaborative, partner, and individual levels.

**Transferable & adaptable models:** Developing, implementing, and refining models and tools that can be applied and adapted across organizations and geographies.

**Broadened perspectives:** Enabling collaborative and extended network members to recognize alternate possibilities, understand a broader context, and engage in expansive thinking.

**Expanded connectivity:** Growing and linking regional networks by serving as conveners, regional activity hubs, and centralized information portals.

## INTEGRATED IMPACTS



**Systems change & adoption:** Initiating and integrating proven methods and techniques at a systems level, which can produce paradigm shifts.

**Durable & flexible approaches:** Integrating sustainable approaches at a scale that can be adapted and refined to accommodate complexity, evolving situations, and different contexts.

**Collaborative culture & mindset:** Normalizing collaboration as a valued and effective way to address complex problems and foster meaningful, enduring relationships.

**Shift in behaviors & norms:** Changing actions and expectations across local and regional communities, expanded geographies, and fields of practice.



Scaling up, accelerating, and sustaining on-the-ground project and program implementation are intertwined with how well a collaborative is functioning. This relationship is symbiotic, reciprocal, and interdependent.

## *How Are Impacts Scaled Up, Accelerated, & Sustained?*

The process of scaling up, accelerating, and sustaining impacts is an aspect of the *Collaborative Capacity Impact Model*. Figure 6 illustrates the dynamic nature of this process, as well as how these impacts are inherently interconnected with collaborative capacity.

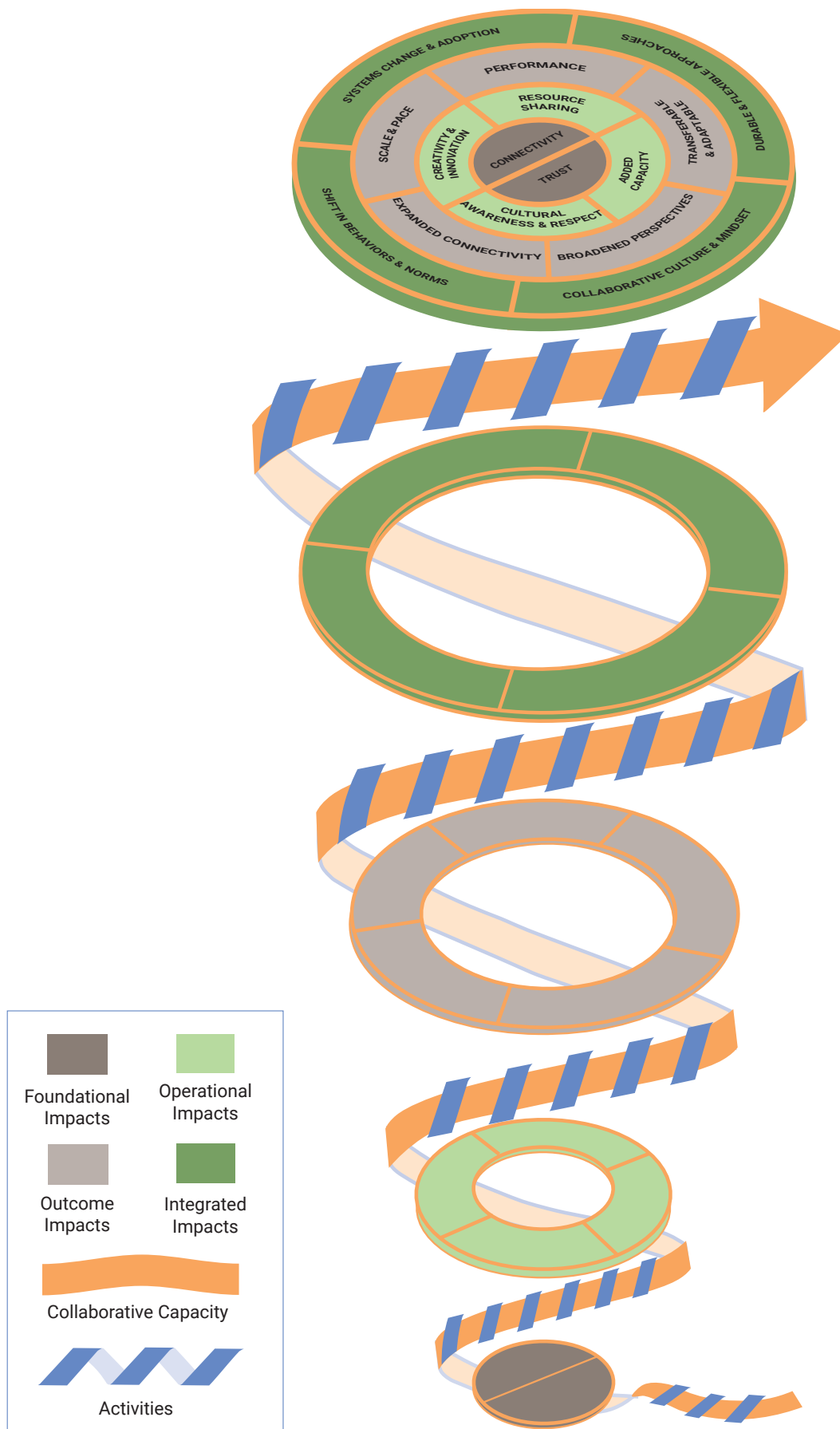
Collaborative capacity (represented in orange) serves an ongoing and vital role in scaling up, accelerating, and sustaining impacts over time. It enables activities and outcomes (represented in blue) that generate foundational, operational, outcome, and integrated impacts.

*Note to reader: This framework was applied in the aforementioned grant evaluations to illustrate how processes of scaling up and acceleration unfolded in collaboratives that received funding for collaborative capacity. Specific examples can be found in [NFWF's INSR Grant Program Evaluation](#) (Mickel & Farrell, 2025) and [NLC's Catalyst Fund Evaluation](#) (Mickel, 2025).*



Photo credit: Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy

Figure 6. The Process of Scaling Up, Accelerating, and Sustaining Impacts™



# Is Investing in Collaborative Approaches Worth It?

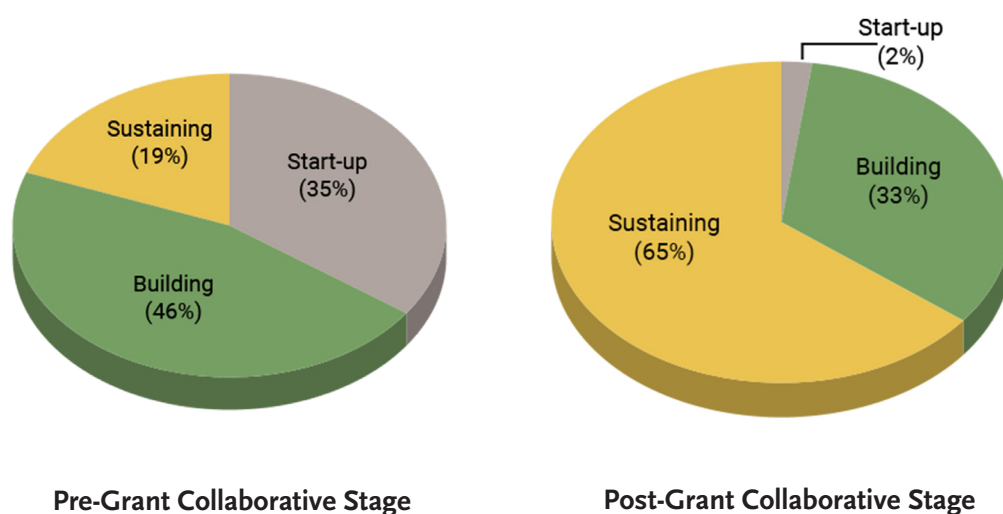
While it takes time to reach optimal performance, it is worth investing in collaborative approaches to meet today's most complex challenges and emergent opportunities.

With sufficient capacity, an adaptive design, right-sized collaborative infrastructure, effective operations, and healthy partner relationships, many collaboratives are performing at high levels—including creating on-the-ground impacts—over long periods of time.

**Findings from our evaluations of NFWF's INSR Grant Program and NLC's Catalyst Fund show that capacity investments advance collaboratives' development and functioning, producing notable increases in work performance, trusted relationships, durable approaches, and other desired outcomes.**

For both program evaluations, grantees were asked about the developmental stages of their respective collaboratives pre- and post-grant awards. As illustrated in Figure 7, the overwhelming majority of the 93 capacity-funded collaboratives have been able to transition to their next life-cycle stage(s). For example, **prior to capacity investments, 19% reported being in the sustaining stage. This increased to 65% post-grant funding.**

Figure 7. Advancing Collaborative Development through Capacity Investments



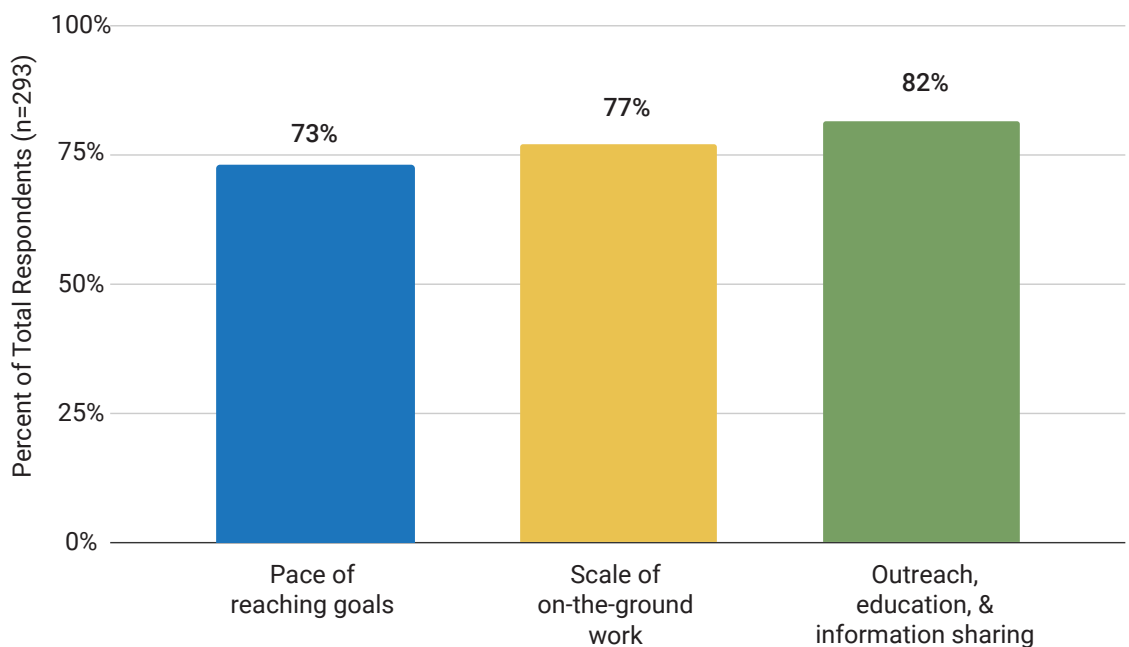
It is expected that as collaboratives evolve and move further along in their life cycles, their effectiveness will also increase. Evidence suggests that this is certainly true for the majority of collaboratives receiving capacity funding from NFWF and NLC.



For both evaluations, surveys of grantees (collaborative leads and partners) and non-grantees familiar with the work (funders, government leaders, network affiliates, contractors, consultants, academics) included questions focused on increases. “Since the collaborative received funds for capacity, what changes have you observed related to the following collaborative activities?: Pace of reaching stewardship and conservation goals (faster, more efficiently); scale of on-the-ground work (increase in acres, miles, feet); and outreach, education, and information-sharing programs and practices.”

Two hundred and ninety-three individuals responded to this question; **55% were grantees and 45% were non-grantees**. As depicted in Figure 8, a large majority reported increases in the pace of reaching goals; scale of on-the-ground work; and outreach, education, and information-sharing.

Figure 8. Observed Increases by Grantees and Non-Grantees



**Funding collaborative capacity has accelerated the success of regional-scale efforts on all levels, leveraging more funding and opportunities, increasing care and reciprocity, and achieving social and ecological goals. It is vital to our work.**

*CATALYST FUND GRANTEE*

**Findings from these evaluations show that investing in collaborative approaches does make a difference.**

# LESSONS LEARNED & IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Capacity investments strengthen collaborative processes and functioning, leading to numerous positive impacts.

**LANDSCAPE-SCALE CONSERVATION, RESTORATION, AND STEWARDSHIP TYPICALLY REQUIRE COLLABORATION.** Addressing complex environmental challenges such as biodiversity loss and climate change necessitates the range of expertise, perspectives, and financial and human capacity that cross-sector, multiparty collaboratives can bring. Continued investments in collaborative capacity are critical for accelerating on-the-ground work to address these challenges.

**COLLABORATIVES ARE A SPECIAL TYPE OF ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL.** While they can differ in design elements, collaboratives share adaptability—a quality essential for responding to needs or opportunities that span physical, political, and cultural boundaries.

**IT IS IMPORTANT TO INVEST IN THE RIGHT COLLABORATIVE LIFE-CYCLE NEEDS.** Like any organization, collaboratives go through development stages (e.g., start-up, building, sustaining) that require different things to optimize their performance. While there is no one-size-fits-all approach, each of these stages has commonalities that can be targeted for strategic investment.

**INVESTMENTS IN COLLABORATIVE CAPACITY, ESPECIALLY FOR COORDINATION, ARE NEEDED THROUGHOUT LIFE CYCLES.** Given the scales at which they work, stewardship collaboratives often struggle to sustain themselves during the time it takes to show on-the-ground results. Building collaborative capacity is not a one-time investment, it is an ongoing need, the importance of which cannot be overstated.

**COLLABORATIVE CAPACITY INVESTMENT WORKS, BUT IT TAKES TIME.** It takes time to start and build collaboratives for long-term success, and for investments in this kind of relationship- and trust-based work to yield their full potential. Collaboratives that invest time in relationships, strategies, and structures are better able to implement, scale, and accelerate on-the-ground work.

**THE QUALITY OF COLLABORATIVE FUNCTIONING AND PERFORMANCE ARE INEXORABLY LINKED.** For collaboratives to operate effectively, critical capacity needs must be met, and high-functioning groups get more work done on the ground. Understanding this interdependence across multiple factors—life-cycle stage, design, capacity needs, and desired outcomes—is key to optimizing both operations and performance.

**THE FIELD WOULD BENEFIT FROM EXPANDED PERFORMANCE METRICS.** When funders focus on a narrow set of quantitative measures (e.g., acres, miles) to assess collaborative impact, they miss significant accomplishments such as relationship building, transferability, and increased process efficiency. Ways to assess and report less easily quantified benefits that collaborative capacity enables—including organizational, social, and co-benefit outcomes—is needed.

**FLEXIBLE FUNDING IS ESSENTIAL.** Adaptable funding models and trust-based philanthropy allow collaboratives to tailor investments based on life-cycle stage, design and structure, and regional context. This is not only empowering, but also enables them to focus on their work, better serve their communities, and reach their conservation and stewardship goals.

**INVESTING IN COLLABORATIVE MODELS MAKES A DIFFERENCE.** When adequately resourced, collaborative approaches can drive systemic, scalable, and sustained environmental change. They are a worthwhile investment for those seeking to undertake or fund this work at a scale sufficient to address today's systems-level challenges and opportunities.

**THE COLLABORATIVE CAPACITY IMPACT MODEL IS PRACTICAL.** This data-driven framework can be used by individual collaboratives and their partners, networks, and funders to describe, assess, and demonstrate the impacts they generate. It also highlights how capacity is needed to scale up, accelerate, and sustain those impacts and optimize performance, as well as the interdependent relationships between collaborative capacity, activities, and impact.



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# FOOTNOTES

1. The *Collaborative Capacity Impact Model*<sup>™</sup> is an expansion of the *Partnership Impact Model*<sup>™</sup>, which was created by Amy Mickel, PhD, and Leigh Goldberg and based on the work and impact of the One Tam partnership and findings from a four-year partnership study. The project was funded by the S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, commissioned by the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, guided by One Tam Director Sharon Farrell, and supported by One Tam agency partners. This model was first published in the study's final report, *Generating, Scaling Up, and Sustaining Partnership Impact: One Tam's First Four Years* (Mickel & Goldberg, 2018).

2. While the *Collaborative Capacity Framework* is an effective way to conceptualize shared capacity needs, those needs vary according to life-cycle phase, collaborative design, and other contextual factors.

3. The *Collaborative Capacity Impact Model* adapts and expands the *Partnership Impact Model* (Mickel & Goldberg, 2018) by adding a fourth impact classification (integrated). This addition increases the number of interdependent impacts from 11 to 15. Moreover, the vital role of collaborative capacity is highlighted in this model. The original *Partnership Impact Model* outcome impacts and the operational impact of awareness are also recharacterized.

# ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Dr. Amy Mickel** has 30 years of experience conducting social science research using integrative mixed-methods approaches. Her strong background in both qualitative and quantitative data analyses has produced many articles. Her research is published in prestigious peer-reviewed journals, including the *Academy of Management Review*, *Human Relations*, *International Journal of Business Communication*, and *Journal of Management Inquiry*. She is a full professor in the College of Business at California State University, Sacramento, where she has taught undergraduate and graduate students since 2000. Mickel is the Applied Research Lead for [The Stewardship Network](#).

Mickel's research expertise has contributed to landscape-scale stewardship and conservation efforts. Examples of some of her work include [Partnership Impact Model](#), [Partnership Impact Evaluation Guide](#), [Cutting Green Tape Case Study](#), [Collaborative Capacity Research Brief](#), [Guide for Systems Thinking and Change](#), and [Four Cornerstones to Effective Collaboration](#).

**Sharon Farrell** has more than 35 years of successfully incubating innovative environmental stewardship programs; building and supervising strong and diverse multidisciplinary teams; facilitating cross-boundary landscape-scale partnerships; teaching collaborative leadership; and managing projects and programs of significant scope, scale, complexity, and public profile in national parks and public open space. She directed the [One Tam Partnership](#), founded the [California Landscape Stewardship Network](#) and [Global Landscape Stewards](#), and currently provides strategic coordination capacity to five California-based cross-boundary collaboratives. Farrell is the Special Projects and Strategic Advisor for [The Stewardship Network](#).

Farrell's ecological and partnership expertise has contributed to landscape-scale stewardship and conservation efforts at regional to global levels. Examples of some of her work include: [Increasing Collaborative Capacity and Infrastructure for Landscape Stewardship](#), [Measuring the Health of a Mountain: A Report on Mount Tamalpais' Natural Resources](#), and [Ecological Health Assessments Process Guide](#).