

# Collaborative Stewardship Sustainer Kit

## ***Resource: Why Assess & Evaluate***

In the sustaining stage, evaluations and assessments help collaboratives show how their work and investments are producing meaningful results over time, while also supporting ongoing learning and adaptation. Assessments and evaluations can serve as a powerful catalyst for securing sustainable funding for the collaborative.

- **Assessing Pulse for Continuous Learning**—Pulse assessments in the sustaining stage help collaboratives maintain performance and protect long-term capacity by:
  - √ Checking the ongoing health of the collaborative, including partner engagement, leadership continuity, and relationships
  - √ Monitoring coordination, staffing, and operational capacity as work scales
  - √ Identifying emerging challenges, capacity strain, or partner fatigue
  - √ Supporting day-to-day and annual decisions about priorities, roles, and investments
  - √ Ensuring governance and decision-making processes remain effective and trusted
  - √ Supporting adaptive management as ecological, social, and funding conditions change
  
- **Evaluating Impact or Change Over Time**—Impact-focused evaluations in the sustaining stage help demonstrate long-term value and accountability by:
  - √ Measuring performance and outcomes at scale, including sustained stewardship actions and collaborative effectiveness
  - √ Tracking progress over time, including trends, improvements, and long-term change across the landscape/seascape
  - √ Validating effectiveness and impact, answering whether collaborative approaches are making a difference and why
  - √ Ensuring accountability and transparency to funders, partners, agencies, Tribes, landowners, communities, and the public

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- √ Supporting strategic decisions about continuing, adapting, scaling, or sunsetting initiatives
- √ Demonstrating responsible use of resources, including investments in coordination, capacity, and collaborative infrastructure
- √ Communicating impact and celebrating success to sustain partner commitment and momentum

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