

# Collaborative Stewardship Starter & Builder Kit

## ***Worksheets: Collaborative Readiness for Organizations and Individuals***

*Self-assessment tools for organizations and individuals exploring whether to enter into a multi-party collaborative.*

**Introduction & Background:** Readiness refers to the conditions that make an organization prepared to enter into a multi-party collaborative. It involves *the willingness and ability of both organizations and individuals to meaningfully participate in a collaborative*. Willingness includes both the **motivation** to partner and the organizational/individual **capacity** to do so effectively.

Readiness is also reflective. It requires organizations and individuals to look inward, acknowledge past collaborative experiences, understand how they are perceived by others, and assess the risks of proceeding or not. This tool is based on approximately twenty interviews and literature review research conducted in 2022 by Jaimie Baxter, Gary Knoblock, Shawn Johnson, and Sharon Farrell, with guidance from Dr. Amy Mickel on collaborative readiness factors.

**Purpose:** The purpose of these worksheets is to help organizations and individuals explore their own **willingness** and **ability** to partner before entering a multi-party collaborative. It provides a structured way to reflect on readiness factors—willingness, ability, leadership support, organizational culture, trust, flexibility, and resources—so that participants can make informed decisions about when and how to engage. The worksheets are designed as practical tools to spark conversation, surface strengths and gaps, and support thoughtful preparation for collaborative work.

**How to Use These Worksheets:** There are three worksheets. The first focuses on the organization's readiness to enter into a multi-party collaborative. The second explores an individual's readiness to participate in a collaborative as a representative of its organization. The third worksheet is designed to help compare and reflect on organizational and individual readiness.

Please cite in direct use or derivatives as: Farrell, S. & O'Herron, M. (2026). Collaborative stewardship toolkit. Parks California. <https://calandscapestewardshipnetwork.org/collaborative-toolkit-2026>.

The latest online toolkit is at: <https://calandscapestewardshipnetwork.org/collaborative-toolkit>.

By working through each section, you explore the conditions that support or hinder your organization's participation and/or your personal participation in a collaborative. As you check items, patterns will emerge. Areas with many checked boxes indicate strengths—places where your organization or you as an individual are aligned, prepared, and supported. Areas with fewer checks highlight gaps, perhaps in culture, capacity, leadership support, or systems that may need attention before entering a collaboration or would require work later.

These insights help you determine whether your organization or you as an individual are ready now, partially ready with some targeted improvements, or not yet ready. The individual worksheet can help identify similar patterns in your own readiness and reflect on how your experiences, skills, and perspectives may support or limit effective participation in a multi-party collaborative.

The worksheet is not a scorecard. It is a reflective tool designed to spark conversation, clarify expectations, and help you make informed decisions about when and how to engage in collaborative work. By the end, you should have a clearer sense of your organization's and/or your own readiness, the conditions you need to strengthen, and the next steps that will support successful collaborative engagement.

Please cite in direct use or derivatives as: Farrell, S. & O'Herron, M. (2026). Collaborative stewardship toolkit. Parks California. <https://calandscapstewardshipnetwork.org/collaborative-toolkit-2026>.

The latest online toolkit is at: <https://calandscapstewardshipnetwork.org/collaborative-toolkit>.

# Readiness Assessment for Organizations

This worksheet should be completed from the perspective of the organization to explore whether to enter into a multi-party collaborative. It can be completed by one or more people who have adequate knowledge of the organization they represent.

## Section 1 — Willingness to Partner

### 1. Shared Purpose & Motivation

*“Readiness involves the willingness and ability of organizations to engage in collaborative efforts.”*

Check all that apply:

- Our organization has a clear reason for exploring this collaborative.
- The issue or opportunity is better addressed collectively than alone.
- Our leadership believes collaboration is beneficial and necessary.
- Our organization can articulate how this collaborative aligns with our mission.
- Our organization is open to co-defining goals with others.

### 2. Organizational Culture, Mindset & Openness

*“There is great leadership intent... however, the organizational culture and institutional structure is lagging behind this intent.”*

- Our organizational culture supports working with external partners.
- Staff generally feel comfortable sharing power, information, and decision-making.
- Our organization is willing to adapt internal processes to support collaboration.
- We are prepared to acknowledge past collaborative experiences—positive or challenging.
- We are willing to examine our strengths and weaknesses.

Please cite in direct use or derivatives as: Farrell, S. & O’Herron, M. (2026). Collaborative stewardship toolkit. Parks California. <https://calandscapestewardshipnetwork.org/collaborative-toolkit-2026>.

The latest online toolkit is at: <https://calandscapestewardshipnetwork.org/collaborative-toolkit>.

### **3. Trust & Relationship Readiness**

*“Trust-building among partners and open, transparent communication are prerequisites for successful collaboration.”*

- We have (or can build) trusting relationships with potential partners.
- We are comfortable engaging in transparent communication.
- We give and receive feedback constructively.
- We are willing to address conflict openly and respectfully.
- We understand how our organization is perceived by others.

## **Section 2 — Ability to Partner**

### **4. Leadership Support & Autonomy**

*“The success of these partnerships currently relies on bold, visionary leaders who are willing to take risks and be creative.”*

- Organizational leaders are supportive of entering a collaborative.
- Leaders are willing to take calculated risks.
- Leaders can allocate time and attention to collaborative development.
- Collaborative work is recognized and valued internally.
- Staff have permission to innovate and adapt.

### **5. Capacity & Resources**

*“Adequate shared resources and the ability to mobilize them... are critical.”*

- Our organization has staff time available to participate meaningfully.
- We have (or can access) the technical expertise needed.
- We have financial resources—or flexibility—to support collaboration.
- We can commit to consistent participation over time.
- We can share data, information, or tools as needed.

Please cite in direct use or derivatives as: Farrell, S. & O’Herron, M. (2026). Collaborative stewardship toolkit. Parks California. <https://calandscapestewardshipnetwork.org/collaborative-toolkit-2026>.

The latest online toolkit is at: <https://calandscapestewardshipnetwork.org/collaborative-toolkit>.

## 6. Flexibility & Internal Systems

*“A key barrier... was CSP’s lack of flexibility for funding, providing staff time, and sharing resources.”*

- Our administrative systems can support shared work.
- We can adapt agreements, contracts, or processes to fit collaborative needs.
- We can respond to emerging needs without excessive delay.
- We can share credit, visibility, and decision-making- authority.
- We can adjust internal priorities to support collaborative goals.

## 7. Skills & Collaborative Competencies

*“Collaborative capacity is just as important as your vulnerability assessment or your forest management strategy.”*

- Staff have basic collaborative skills (facilitation, communication, coordination).
- We have experience working across cultures, disciplines, or jurisdictions.
- We can engage communities respectfully and effectively.
- We can navigate conflict and differing worldviews.
- We have the resources to invest in training or coaching if needed.

## Section 3 — Readiness Reflection

### 8. Risks & Commitments

*“Collaborative readiness requires... understanding the risks of proceeding (or not proceeding).”*

- We understand the risks of joining this collaborative.
- We understand the risks of *not* joining.
- We are prepared for the level of commitment required.
- We have internal alignment on expectations.
- We can sustain engagement through leadership or staff transitions.

Please cite in direct use or derivatives as: Farrell, S. & O’Herron, M. (2026). Collaborative stewardship toolkit. Parks California. <https://calandscapestewardshipnetwork.org/collaborative-toolkit-2026>.

The latest online toolkit is at: <https://calandscapestewardshipnetwork.org/collaborative-toolkit>.

## 9. Summary of Collaborative Readiness for Organizations

<b>Section</b>	<b>Organization Score (0-5)</b>	<b>Interpretation (strength, adequate, gap)</b>
<b>Willingness to Partner</b>		
1. Shared Purpose & Motivation		
2. Culture, Mindset & Openness		
3. Trust & Relationship Readiness		
<b>Ability to Partner</b>		
4. Leadership Support & Autonomy		
5. Capacity & Resources		
6. Flexibility & Internal Systems		
7. Skills & Competencies		
<b>Risks &amp; Commitments</b>		
8. Risks & Commitments		

<b>Range</b>	<b>Section-Level Interpretation</b>
4-5	<b>Strength</b> = Leverage this
2-3	<b>Adequate</b> = Could be strengthened
0-1	<b>Gap</b> = Priority area (needs attention before proceeding)

Please cite in direct use or derivatives as: Farrell, S. & O'Herron, M. (2026). Collaborative stewardship toolkit. Parks California. <https://calandscapestewardshipnetwork.org/collaborative-toolkit-2026>.

The latest online toolkit is at: <https://calandscapestewardshipnetwork.org/collaborative-toolkit>.

## 10. Overall Readiness

Check the statement that best reflects your organization's current position:

- We are **ready** to enter a multi-party collaborative.
- We are **partially ready** but need to strengthen specific areas.
- We are/ **not yet ready** and need further internal work.
- We are **uncertain** and need more information or conversation.

### Reflections:

Our organization is read to enter into a collaborative because:

---

---

---

Our organization is not ready to enter into a collaborative because:

---

---

---

Key strengths we bring include:

---

---

---

Key gaps we need to address include:

---

---

---

Our next steps will include:

---

---

---

Please cite in direct use or derivatives as: Farrell, S. & O'Herron, M. (2026). Collaborative stewardship toolkit. Parks California. <https://calandscapestewardshipnetwork.org/collaborative-toolkit-2026>.

The latest online toolkit is at: <https://calandscapestewardshipnetwork.org/collaborative-toolkit>.

## Readiness Assessment for Individuals

This worksheet should be completed from your personal perspective to explore the level to which you are willing and able to participate in and represent your organization in a multi-party collaborative.

### Section 1 — Willingness to Participate in a Collaborative

#### 1. Shared Purpose & Motivation

Check all that apply:

- I have a clear reason for exploring this collaborative.
- I believe the issue or opportunity is better addressed collectively than alone.
- I can articulate how this collaborative aligns with our mission.

#### 2. Organizational Culture & Openness

- I am comfortable working with external partners.
- I am willing to share power, information, and decision making.
- I am willing to reflect on and adapt my approach as I participate in the collaborative.

#### 3. Trust & Relationship Readiness

- I can build trusting relationships with potential partners.
- I am comfortable engaging in transparent communication.
- I am willing to address conflict openly and respectfully.

### Section 2 — Ability to Participate in a Collaborative

#### 4. Leadership Support & Autonomy

- I have support from leadership or peers to engage in a collaborative.
- I can dedicate time and attention to collaborative development.
- I have the autonomy to innovate and adapt.

Please cite in direct use or derivatives as: Farrell, S. & O'Herron, M. (2026). Collaborative stewardship toolkit. Parks California. <https://calandscapestewardshipnetwork.org/collaborative-toolkit-2026>.

The latest online toolkit is at: <https://calandscapestewardshipnetwork.org/collaborative-toolkit>.

## **5. Capacity & Resources**

- I have the time and capacity to participate meaningfully.
- I have (or can access) the expertise and/or resources needed.
- I can commit to consistent participation over time.

## **6. Flexibility & Internal Systems**

- I can adapt to changing needs and circumstances.
- I can respond to emerging needs without excessive delay.
- I am able to share credit and decision-making authority.

## **7. Skills & Collaborative Competencies**

- I have basic collaborative skills (facilitation, communication, coordination).
- I can work effectively across different perspectives and backgrounds.
- I can navigate conflict and differing viewpoints.

## **Section 3 — Readiness Reflection**

### **8. Risks & Commitments**

- I understand the risks of joining or not joining this collaborative.
- I am prepared for the level of commitment required.
- I can sustain engagement through changes or transitions.

Please cite in direct use or derivatives as: Farrell, S. & O'Herron, M. (2026). Collaborative stewardship toolkit. Parks California. <https://calandscapestewardshipnetwork.org/collaborative-toolkit-2026>.

The latest online toolkit is at: <https://calandscapestewardshipnetwork.org/collaborative-toolkit>.

## 9. Summary of Collaborative Readiness for Individuals

<b>Section</b>	<b>Individual Score (0–3)</b>	<b>Interpretation (strength, adequate, gap)</b>
<b>Willingness to Partner</b>		
1. Shared Purpose & Motivation		
2. Culture, Mindset & Openness		
3. Trust & Relationship Readiness		
<b>Ability to Partner</b>		
4. Leadership Support & Autonomy		
5. Capacity & Resources		
6. Flexibility & Internal Systems		
7. Skills & Competencies		
<b>Risks &amp; Commitments</b>		
8. Risks & Commitments		

<b>Range</b>	<b>Section-Level Interpretation</b>
3	<b>Strength</b> = Leverage this
1–2	<b>Adequate</b> = Could be strengthened
0	<b>Gap</b> = Growing edge (needs attention)

Please cite in direct use or derivatives as: Farrell, S. & O’Herron, M. (2026). Collaborative stewardship toolkit. Parks California. <https://calandscapestewardshipnetwork.org/collaborative-toolkit-2026>.

The latest online toolkit is at: <https://calandscapestewardshipnetwork.org/collaborative-toolkit>.

## 10. Overall Readiness

Check the statement that best reflects your current position:

- I am **ready** to participate in a multi-party collaborative.
- I am **partially ready** but need to strengthen specific areas.
- I am **not yet ready** and need to explore my willingness and ability to engage.
- I am **uncertain** and need more information or conversation.

### Reflections:

I am ready to participate in a collaborative because:

---

---

---

I am not ready to participate in a collaborative because:

---

---

---

Key strengths I bring include:

---

---

---

Key gaps I need to address include:

---

---

---

My next steps will include:

---

---

---

Please cite in direct use or derivatives as: Farrell, S. & O'Herron, M. (2026). Collaborative stewardship toolkit. Parks California. <https://calandscapestewardshipnetwork.org/collaborative-toolkit-2026>.

The latest online toolkit is at: <https://calandscapestewardshipnetwork.org/collaborative-toolkit>.

## Compare and Reflect

Enter this information from the previous two worksheets.

Section	Organization Interpretation (strength, adequate, gap)	Individual Interpretation (strength, adequate, gap)
<b>Willingness to Partner</b>		
1. Shared Purpose & Motivation		
2. Culture, Mindset & Openness		
3. Trust & Relationship Readiness		
<b>Ability to Partner</b>		
4. Leadership Support & Autonomy		
5. Capacity & Resources		
6. Flexibility & Internal Systems		
7. Skills & Competencies		
<b>Risks &amp; Commitments</b>		
8. Risks & Commitments		

Where are you aligned?

---



---



---

Where are the biggest differences?

---

Please cite in direct use or derivatives as: Farrell, S. & O'Herron, M. (2026). Collaborative stewardship toolkit. Parks California. <https://calandscapestewardshipnetwork.org/collaborative-toolkit-2026>.

The latest online toolkit is at: <https://calandscapestewardshipnetwork.org/collaborative-toolkit>.

---

---

---

What does this mean for moving forward?

- If **Individual > Organization**:  
→ You may have personal readiness but need internal buy-in, leadership commitment, or systems support.
- If **Organization > Individual**:  
→ The structure is ready, but you may need confidence, clarity, support, interest, or motivation.
- If **both high**:  
→ Strong position to enter into a collaborative and represent your organization.
- If **both low**:  
→ Focus on readiness-building for both the organization and individual before engaging.

Priority areas to strengthen & next steps:

---

---

---

---

Please cite in direct use or derivatives as: Farrell, S. & O'Herron, M. (2026). Collaborative stewardship toolkit. Parks California. <https://calandscapewardshipnetwork.org/collaborative-toolkit-2026>.

The latest online toolkit is at: <https://calandscapewardshipnetwork.org/collaborative-toolkit>.