

# Regional Resilience Network



Best Practices  
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The City of Ann Arbor  
Office of Sustainability  
and Innovation



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# Language & Concepts

A shared language can help us better understand and clarify the network we are creating. The following descriptions offers a starting point for what might best describe this network, as well as what may not describe this network well.

**Regional:** Encompassing the geographic breadth of Washtenaw County

**Resilience:** The ability to adapt and thrive in the face of disruptions

**Network:** Connected member organizations across sectors and communities

**Mutual aid:** Positive interdependence, in which members come together to meet each other's needs

**Environment:** The physical, virtual, or social context in which behavior occurs

**Small Experiments:** Trying out innovative ideas in incremental steps, observing the results, and making adjustments.

**Survivors (rather than Victims):** Strength-based term for those who have endured hardship

**Underrepresented/Disinvested/Marginalized (rather than Vulnerable):** Terms that capture systemic factors contributing to lived context

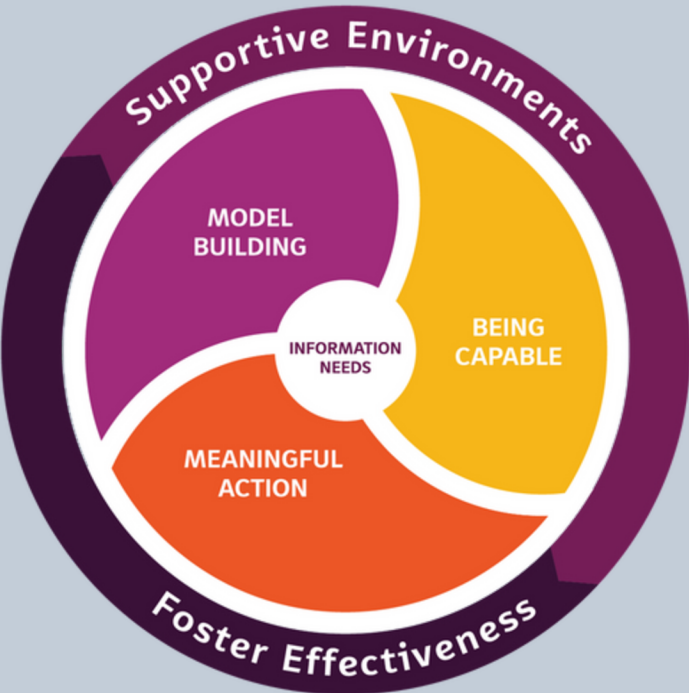
**Partners/Parties/Relevant Groups (rather than Stakeholders):** Alternative descriptions of interested parties that avoid colonial implications

**Regenerative (rather than Sustainable):** An eco-system lens that goes beyond sustainability to nourish a continuous process of collaborative thriving



# Supportive Environments for Effectiveness (SEE)

Supportive Environments for Effectiveness (SEE) is a framework that recognizes people are presented with a variety of opportunities when navigating different settings. These three elements form the basis for how we effectively understand and explore the world around us:



- MB** **Model Building:** Forming an understanding through exploration
- MA** **Meaningful Action:** Meaningfully participating in an effort to make a difference
- BC** **Being Capable:** Having the resources and mental clarity to feel competent when engaging with the information in a given environment.

Together, these elements create a supportive environment for sustainable change. The SEE framework was used to inform and shape the recommendations contained within this report.

Find more information at [reDirect.org](http://reDirect.org)



Look for the following icons throughout the document to see these elements at work!

- MB** **Model Building**
- MA** **Meaningful Action**
- BC** **Being Capable**

# A Model Regional Resilience Network

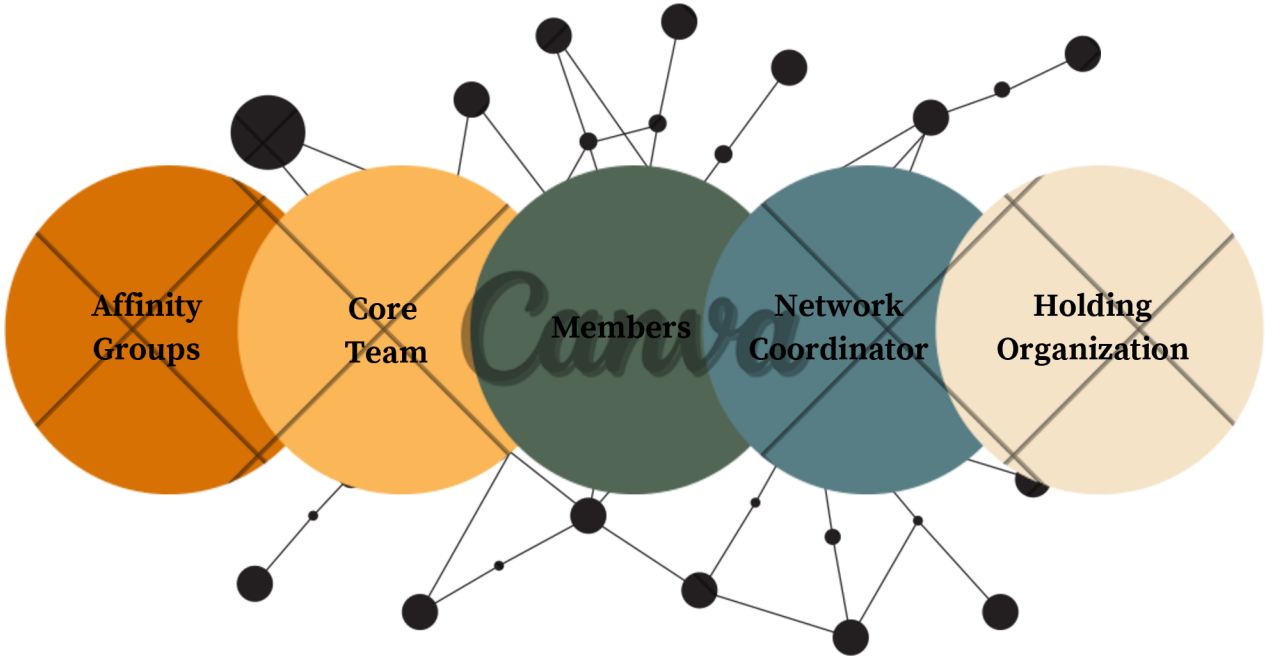
A regional resilience network (RNN) is a group of members whose aim is to improve everyday climate adaptation, disaster recovery, and community wellbeing. They do this by cultivating trust and relationships with one another, sharing resources and knowledge, and co-creating shared paths forward.

## What is the Goal?

Cultivate a **durable**, cross-sector network of organizations to ensure that our communities thrive in the face of climate change. Members build relationships through **collaborative learning, resource pooling, collective emergency response, and other acts of mutual aid**. Network efforts prioritize investing in the adaptive capacity and enhancing local social cohesion for the region’s frontline and most disadvantaged populations.

## How will it function?

**Holding organization(s)** will provide administrative and technical support. A **Network Coordinator** will facilitate early relationship building and activities. A **Core Team** of members will collaboratively make decisions and guide the network into alignment with a co-created network vision. **Members** will attend regular **Affinity Group** meetings and periodic network convenings to engage in collaborative learning and action. These roles will be described in further detail in the following pages.



## What will success look like?

An effective regional resilience network demonstrates trusting relationships, collaborative learning, collaborative action, and network management that is both clear and reliable.

### Relationships & Trust

Success is not possible without a foundation of relationships and trust. Trust is reflected in a network culture of general reciprocity, in which members help one another without the expectation of a specific return. Meetings are held with a person-first mentality, in which introductions focus on who we are as a fellow human rather than our profession. Face-to-face meetings are regularly scheduled to support authentic connection.



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### Collaborative Learning

Members co-create a collective model of regional opportunities for change and envision shared paths forward. Members share their expertise through presentations, educational resources, and webinars within regular meetings. Outside experts are drawn in to share where knowledge gaps exist. A directory provides easy access to contacts and resources on relevant topics.



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### Collaborative Action

Collaborative action typically emerges after collaborative learning is established. Network members collaborate on resilience efforts to implement change within specific communities or on a regional scale. Members work together to develop technical tools, best practices, and educational resources. Members can also take on more systemic efforts such as advocacy and policy change.



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### Effective Management

There is a clear network structure with transparent and understandable operations. A holding organization, core team, and organizational members are identified and carry out associated responsibilities. Communication is streamlined, easily accessible, and frequently shares information within the network and out to relevant parties. Distributive and procedural justice are apparent within network processes.



BC

# Guiding Principles

The following principles will guide the initial planning period of the model regional resilience network. These principles will remain in place until the Core Team is established, at which point the core team will revisit and update these principles to best fit an evolving network. Guiding principles will continue to be revisited at least every two years to ensure relevance and responsiveness to network needs, goals, and context.



## 1. Relationships Come First

**Social Connection:** Relationships are the web that holds the network together and are prioritized within network activities (Erllichman, 2021). The Office of the Surgeon General (2023) warns that loneliness and disconnection are associated with a growing list of negative health outcomes, increasing as an epidemic that is antithetical to resilience. As a resilience network, we must model a more connected community. Ask the following questions: Is anyone regularly left out of conversations? Does everyone have the opportunity to speak? Do members offer emotional support and mentorship? Is there network support during times of crisis? Is conflict handled with wisdom and appropriate communication?

**Trust:** Connection also helps us understand and respect one another, leading to trust (Kaplan & Basu, 2015). Trust is not founded on the necessity of liking or agreeing with one another; rather, trust emerges from **acting with mutual confidence in one another** towards a particular purpose (Erllichman, 2021). Members expect that fellow members are acting with positive intent, and believe that their own actions make a difference. As an essential element to network flourishing, trust is developed with intention and monitored with care.

**Knowledge Humility:** Interactions are approached with the understanding that we always have more to learn. Our expertise may be missing information, irrelevant, or even maladaptive within certain contexts. We recognize the worth of local knowledge and lived experience, opening ourselves with humility to the perspectives of others--ever **expanding our mental models** based on experience that builds toward familiarity.

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## 2. Center Critical Care Work in Local Context

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The network is guided by the process of [localization](#)--social change directed towards the local context that **takes into account the limited resources** of our planet (DeYoung & Princen, 2012). This process recognizes the importance of our lived environment, or “place.” Localization also recognizes our need to attend to and reconnect with our natural world. From this connection emerges **a profound awareness** of local risks and opportunities, as well as their impact on those within the region. Those most impacted, such as frontline communities and critical care organizations, must be prioritized and centered within the network as key decision makers and co-creators.

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## 3. Co-create Regenerative Systems

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Members gather together to **envision a desired shared future**. Members trace the necessary steps to achieve this goal and practice “prefiguration”(cit) -- the act of co-creating a microcosm of this envisioned future. Members hold the tension inherent in building new systems while living within the old and offer grace to themselves and one another throughout this difficult process. The network offers critically relevant benefits to members, addressing the values they seek from network



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interactions, while also **providing opportunities for members to share their gifts and expertise**. A regenerative system fosters equity and shared power, elevating member voices that are underrepresented and centering those most impacted by our changing climate. A regenerative approach also nourishes our mental and physical wellbeing, cultivating the holistic resilience of individuals while honoring the eco-system we are nested within (Kimmerer, 2013).

## 4. Practice General Reciprocity

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General reciprocity differs from specific reciprocity in that it transcends a transactional approach to relationships. Rather than engaging in an act with the expectation of an immediate corresponding return, **members act with the trust that they will also experience future mutual aid as a network member**. A culture of mutual aid serves as a foundation of positive interdependence, demonstrated through the regular sharing of gifts, resources, and knowledge among network members.

## 5. Practice Conflict Wisdom

Particularly during the early phases of network development, some amount of conflict is to be expected. Rather than viewing conflict in a negative light, conflict can be generative--illuminating important discrepancies and offering a chance to craft a shared path forward. Cultivate safe spaces for discussion, and draw in someone who is skilled at facilitation to guide the conversation. The Stewardship Network recommends an approach of conflict wisdom, in which conflict is embraced as an opportunity to grow--deepening our relationships and **broadening our perspectives**. Wisdom can help us recognize when stepping away is helpful for calming emotions and **restoring mental vitality**. Conversely, wisdom can also help us decipher when postponing a discussion is harmful--creating additional tension or **lack of clarity**.

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## 6. Engage in Small Experiments

A model regional resilience network is, in itself, a small experiment. Approach network planning as a an opportunity to **creatively combine resources and skills to address the novel problems** of building a resilience network. As experimenters, **test innovative ideas** through taking small actions, **gathering feedback on the results**, and making any necessary adjustments. Start small, go slow, and be kind to yourselves throughout the process. For more information on small experiments, Anne Kearney describes how to apply this flexible, incremental approach to problem solving in [“The Big Idea of Small Experiments.”](#)

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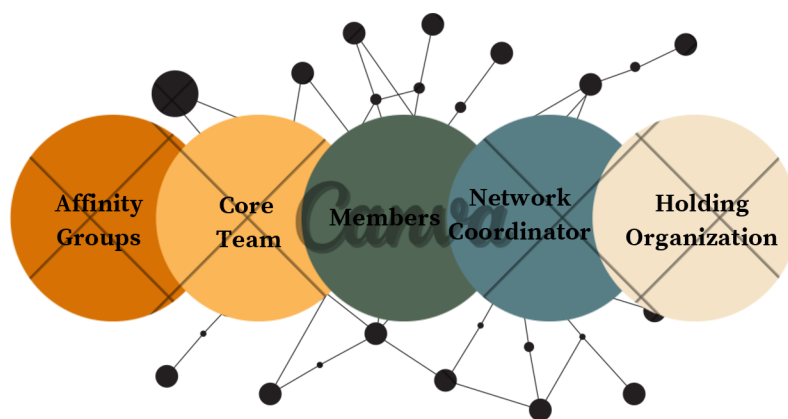
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# Network Structure

The main structure of the network consists of four main entities: the Holding Organization(s), a Network Coordinator, a Core Team, and Network Members. Network members will gather to form Affinity Groups. The following section will detail the overall structure as it develops over time, as well as the roles and responsibilities for each entity within the structure.



## A Foundation of Connection

Connections between member organizations may be limited at first. A network coordinator will take on the role of facilitating initial connections between members. Eventually, these connections will deepen and expand. This structure eventually develops into a core of highly connected, active network members and a periphery of less active members.

## Reliable & Flexible Structure

Network members can easily understand and navigate a network when they have a clear mental model of how it works. This document outlines a clear structure with corresponding responsibilities to support **understanding** and **clarity**. Change is inevitable, however, and a responsive network is a resilient network. The Core Team is responsible for revisiting the network charter to ensure there is an appropriate alignment between network activities and network goals while taking into account the broader context. The Core Team has the ability to make adjustments that support this alignment as necessary.

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## Shared Power

This network is built around the idea of mutual aid--the idea of positive interdependence with one another. Network coordinators are weavers of connection and allies of member organizations, not leaders in a hierarchical sense. Decisions are made through consensus and previously underrepresented populations are given voice. Distributed power and redundancy aids transferability and durability. Those who are most impacted are centered in this work. To help guide your approach, reference [these helpful charts](#) from Dean Spade, who has written extensively on the topic of mutual aid (Appendix, pp. 30-32). Also, check out how the SEE framework can help us think about power on [pg. 22](#).

## An Emergent Framework

There must be a balance between providing guidance and inviting the participation of members to craft a structure that serves them best. The model proposed in this document offers one example of what a starting point might look like. This model is--intentionally--an unfinished and living structure. It is expected that the Planning Team, the Core Team, and network members will work together to adapt this structure over time, enhancing relevance, durability, and self-determination.

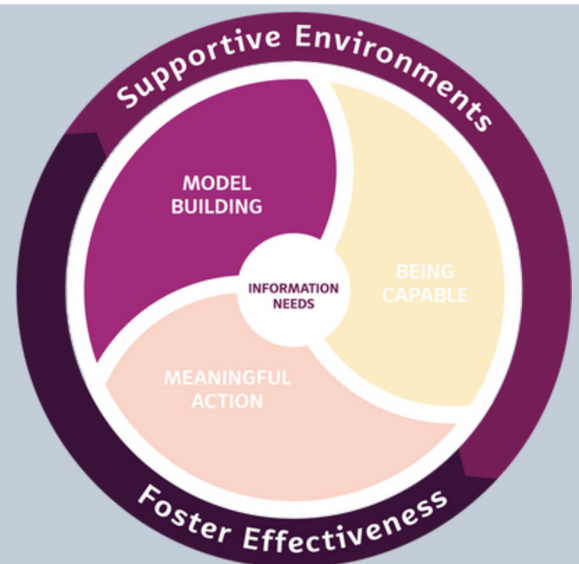
## Building a Shared, Network Model

**“You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.”**

- Buckminster Fuller, A Fuller View

In the SEE framework, 'model building' describes the automatic process of compiling information from your lived experiences, and forming a 'model' in order to better understand the world around you.

As network members work together to better understand the form and function of their network, and share with one another their own individual resilience work, a collective model is built. This facilitates a shared understanding of the work and purpose of the collaborative, as well as each role within that context, and can serve as a reference map to help navigate future challenges together.



# Membership

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Diverse membership offers the opportunity to **build cross-sector relationships, draw in new perspectives, and elevate underrepresented experiences.** Prioritizing critical care services in membership outreach can help ensure that those most impacted by climate change are centered within this work.

**Three common approaches to network membership include open, closed, and tiered eligibility structures.**

Approach	Benefits	Drawbacks	Example
<b>Open:</b> Anyone can join the network	Removes barriers to membership	May lack member buy-in and sense of belonging without defined community	<a href="#">Resilient Virginia</a> allows anyone who is doing resilience related work to join the network and access important resources
<b>Closed:</b> Only individuals/organizations meeting certain requirements can join	Scholarships that cover dues can be a great opportunity for sponsors to get involved. Dues can provide additional funding. Solid boundaries may increase sense of belonging.	Can be exclusive and miss important perspectives Funding from dues is generally limited	<a href="#">Urban Sustainability Directors Network</a> only allows municipal sustainability directors to join and caps their membership to prioritize sense of community
<b>Tiered*:</b> Members access benefits relative to the requirements met; can also be inherent within open or closed approaches.	A more equitable approach than closed, while still offering a sense of buy-in and community. Can waive fees for EJ organizations and CBOs.	Must be careful that those who pay more money do not get a greater voice or that those with the greatest need are restricted from access to resources	<a href="#">Green Umbrella</a> requires that members align with vision and offers a tiered dues structure.

\*A tiered membership structure offers a pathway to include important perspectives and provide equitable access to resources, while also providing permeable boundaries that instill a sense of community and a commitment to membership that enhances member buy-in.

## The Importance of Member Participation

The primary role of members is to build relationships and engage in opportunities for learning and collaboration. This is a role of active participation, one in which members foster a sense of ownership and dedication to the network. This can be supported by ensuring the following:

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- Members have regular opportunities to engage in network activities/collaborations and **see the impact of their actions**
- Members have regular opportunities **to provide feedback** and see that the network is responsive to their feedback
- Members have **the information they need** to effectively take these actions

## Levels of Engagement

To balance the demands of membership participation with **various levels of member capacity**, offer members the opportunity to engage in a way that best fits their situation. This allows flexibility and continued participation as workloads and life circumstances shift. [Impact Networks](#) recommends presenting the following options to members when proposing a collaborative effort:

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Lead: “I will take responsibility for making this network/team happen.”

Partner: “I will actively work with the leaders to make this network/team happen.”

Follow: “I would like to stay informed about how this network/team is progressing.”

Honor: “Although I appreciate what you are proposing, this network/team is not of particular interest to me at this time.”

## Finding a Starting Point

As the planning team considers eligibility requirements, the [Urban Sustainability Directors Network \(USDN\)](#) recommends asking the following questions:

- Who is eligible?
- What criteria must they meet?
- How many members should this network have?
- Are there different classes of benefits/responsibilities?
- Are there participation standards?
- Do they pay member dues?

A common baseline is that members commit to the network vision, attend regular network convenings, and join one Affinity Group.

# Governance

In a collaborative network, governance structure is emergent and co-created through consensus. The recommended model proposed below offers one example of what a starting point might look like. This model is offered as a living structure--one that can shift and adapt over time to enhance flexibility, durability, and self-determination.

## 1 Planning Team

At the initial meeting, identify individuals at the forefront of resilience work that have the interest and capacity to step forward to form an initial planning team. This planning team will draft the intentions of the network, as well as guiding principles and norms that will go on to form the network charter. Planning team members will identify and recruit members from relevant organizations and form initial Affinity Groups. The planning team will also identify a communication platform and format that works well for in-group and out-group communications. **While planning and network development can be challenging work, this is also a great opportunity to be creative and try out innovative ideas!**

## 2 Core Team

After the initial planning period, 7-10 individuals will form a steering committee, or “Core Team.” Team members will commit to serve two years and facilitate one Affinity Group each. Two spaces on the Core Team will be reserved for members that focus on meta-level activities, such as overall network priorities, inclusive representation in membership, and network-wide events. The Core Team will work closely with the Network Coordinator to ensure clear communications and relationship building between the holding organization and network members, as well as among represented populations, sectors, and geographies. Core Team members can nominate themselves for a position or be nominated by fellow members.

Responsibilities:

- Guide network to ensure actions align with network vision
- Invite and monitor member participation, gather and respond to feedback
- Ensure the network offers relevant value\* to members
- Engage in consensus decision-making
- Monitor network funding and oversee fundraising efforts

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\*Members often have different priorities in network engagement. The Core Team must ensure diverse values are addressed while also weaving connections between these differences. For example, members of local government may seek applicable lessons for work, while community organizations often desire access to power and connectivity.

# Holding Organization

A holding organization supports the network as facilitator and ally. A holding organization serves as a backbone to the network, promoting durability and stability while providing financial support through grants, as well as administrative and technical support through a network coordinator. The holding organization is not in charge of network decision-making, instead serving as an institutional ally to the Core Team.

Holding Organization	Benefits	Drawbacks
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Durable</li> <li>• Well-resourced</li> <li>• Increased municipal participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instability due to fluctuations in administrations</li> <li>• Challenging power dynamics</li> </ul>
Academic Institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well-resourced</li> <li>• Supportive infrastructure</li> <li>• Access to climate science and research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High overhead costs</li> <li>• Challenging power dynamics</li> </ul>
Non-Profit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More neutral power dynamics</li> <li>• More independence</li> <li>• Specific expertise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less infrastructure</li> <li>• Larger non-profits can still have challenging power dynamics</li> </ul>
Distributed*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dispersed power dynamics</li> <li>• Redundancy</li> <li>• Dispersed capacity demands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires support from multiple organizations</li> <li>• Requires clear roles and responsibilities</li> </ul>

\*A distributed system disperses power and increases system durability--reducing the chance that failure or change within any one holding organization would have a large impact on the future of the network.



# Network Coordinator

A Network Coordinator is usually a member of the holding organization and provides technical and administrative support to the network. Network Coordinators often schedule and facilitate meetings, compile and send network communications, and plan network events. [Impact Networks](#) recommends the following responsibilities for the Network Coordinator:

## Responsibilities:

- Keep the network on track by identifying and framing emerging issues, collecting agenda topics, and supporting the design of convenings and calls
- Establish and maintain network operations including setting up the network's online systems, guiding logistics for convenings and other events, tracking the network's finances, and managing evaluation activities
- Provide knowledge management by gathering resources and learnings from network efforts, organizing the information so that it can be easily accessed later, and sharing relevant information with participants
- Assist network teams by offering thought partnership, helping with scheduling, and securing meeting locations

The goal of a coordinator is to weave the relationships within the network that will help the network build its own capacity to function without the coordinator, if necessary. A durable network should not hinge on any one relationship to continue functioning, so the coordinator must work to create redundancy in the group and have one or two group members that are trained in the coordinator's work to step forward if need be.



# Affinity Groups

Affinity Groups are member groups organized around member-identified categories, such as critical care, transportation, or agriculture. Especially in a larger, cross-sector network, members need regular opportunities to develop long-term connections with others doing similar work. Within these smaller communities, members are able to gain a greater sense of belonging and understanding that **their participation matters**.

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Affinity Groups offer members a dedicated space for collaborative learning and action within their field of resilience work.

## Build Understanding through Collaborative Learning

- Expand field-specific knowledge
- Exchange resources and expertise drawn from professional and lived experience
- Develop a shared language

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## Meaningfully Participate in Collaborative Action

- Plan and implement collaborative efforts
- Deepen our relationships with one another
- Engage in small experiments to test innovative ideas, share feedback on the results, and creatively make adjustments (Check out [Gaming for Justice](#), the [Honey Project](#), or [Project New Village](#) for inspiration!)

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## Group Structure

Each network member belongs to at least one Affinity Group, and each Affinity Group is facilitated by one or two members of the Core Team. Meetings are held monthly and alternate between virtual and Face-to-Face. Face-to-Face meetings rotate throughout parks and coffee shops local to group members. While seemingly inconvenient to members already struggling with capacity, Face-to-Face meetings are often described as the most valuable for network members.

## Recommended Activities

“Rapid Coordination”: This simple activity encourages effective collaboration and only takes approximately 30 seconds per member. [Impact Networks](#) recommends including this activity within each group meeting.

1. Invite participants to share something they need help with or a potential collaborative opportunity.
2. Invite others to raise hands and provide information, resources, or other collaborative efforts.
3. Continue until all have been offered the chance to make a request.

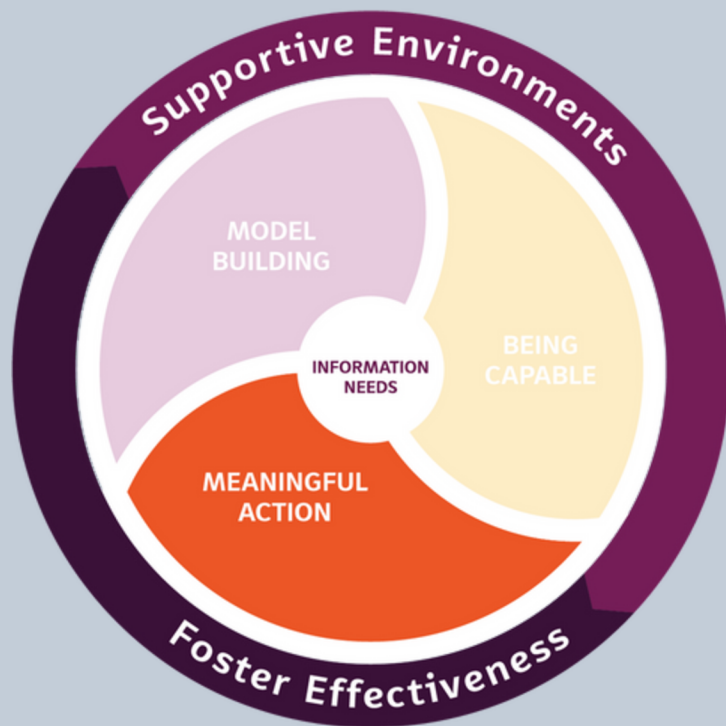
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“Purpose Stands”: Another activity used by [Impact Networks](#), Purpose Stands ask members to give a one-minute speech describing “Why I do what I do.” Importantly, members can think about the different layers of purpose that shape their own world: Personal, Professional, and Collective. This activity can help members **clarify their purpose** within themselves and explicitly convey that to others. Members also can recognize the impact of actions towards their purpose, **instilling a sense of meaning within their work**.

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“Envisioning”: Using the process of [envisioning](#), network members collectively create a **shared model of the future** and trace the path to get there. Use Jamboard during a virtual meeting or a large sheet of paper during a Face-to-Face meeting. Invite members to add words or short phrases that describe what they would like the network to be in five to ten years. What do relationships look like? What kind of tools and resources have been developed and shared? What collaborative efforts have members accomplished together? While this exercise must be grounded in reality, try to stretch your mind beyond preconceived limitations and toward what you really want to see happen. Take time to reflect on the results and identify concrete steps that lead the way.



## Connecting to Meaningful Action

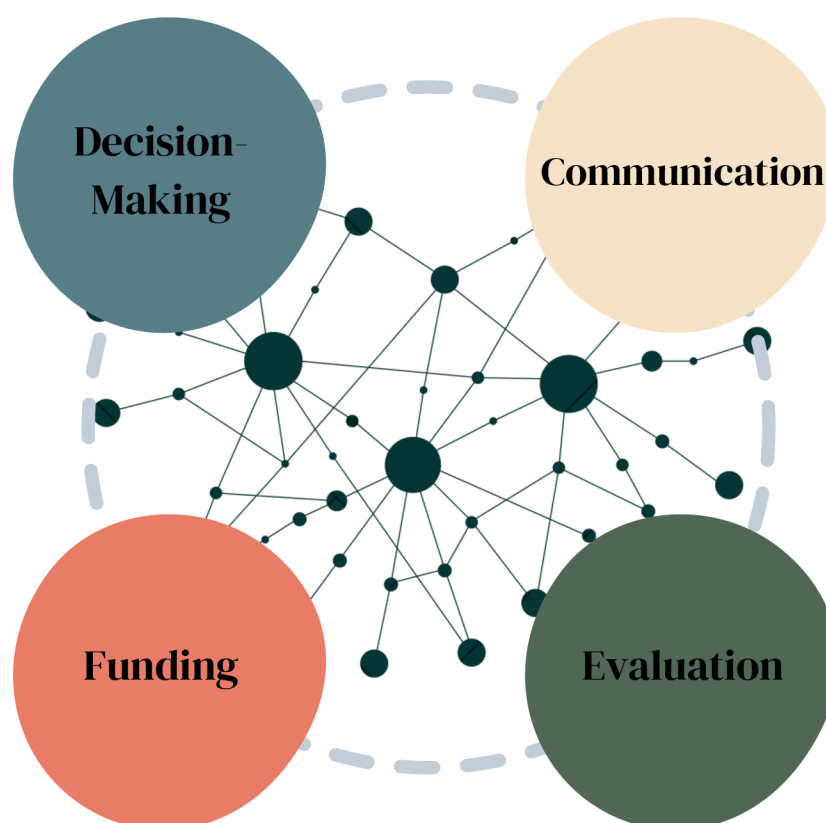
As we work together toward a common purpose, our actions take on meaning that goes beyond ourselves. This is represented within the SEE framework as 'meaningful action.'

When we engage in meaningful action, we simultaneously build out our understanding of our individual and collective abilities. When we feel competent and clear-headed enough to take action, we are encouraged to continue doing so in the future. This creates a positive feedback loop promoting future network engagement.

# Network Processes

Network processes outlined in the following pages include decision-making, communications, funding, and evaluation. As we move through the various stages of network development, it is critical to think about the following questions:

- **How we can best steward the power within our interactions?**
- **How we can communicate important information clearly and effectively?**
- **How do we approach funding in a way that is transparent and inclusive?**
- **How do we gather and respond member feedback to help our network thrive?**



# Decision-Making

Collaborative decision-making based on consensus assures that all perspectives are considered and none are overpowered. Decisions should be considered in light of long-term impacts, rather than convenience or short term benefits. The Iroquis Confederacy approached decisions with future generations in mind--weighing the potential impacts on the seventh generation out. [The Stewardship Network](#) practices an approach to conflict described as **conflict wisdom** (See [Guiding Principles](#), pg. 10), in which conflict is welcomed as an opportunity to explore possibilities and deepen relationships.

## 0-5 Framework for Consent

The following content is drawn from [Impact Networks](#) and outlines the 0-5 Framework for Consent in decision making. This framework can be used by the Core Team to guide conversations through the decision-making process.

### Step 1

Context: Gather the relevant factors to frame the decision to be made. Discuss the pros and cons related to the decision at hand. Include background information from previous conversations on the topic.

### Step 2

Clarification: Allows for further clarifying questions needed to make a decision.

Avoids evaluation and veers towards clarifying how it might relate to goals and principles and how the proposal is in the best interest of the network as a whole.

### Step 3

Voting: Ask Core Team members to close their eyes and raise hands with fingers indicating their corresponding opinion:

**5: Lead-** Proposal serves network well, would like to take lead

**4: Partner-** Proposal serves network well, would like to support

**3: Follow-** Proposal serves network, but I have no capacity to offer

**2: Concern-** I have concerns, will be tracking implementation

**1: Caution-** I have major concerns about potential harm, would like to discuss further before taking any action

**0: Oppose-** This proposal is outside a range of tolerance and requires changes

### Step 4

Decision: Have members open their eyes and look around at fellow member positions. The decision moves forward only with votes of 2 and above. If there are 0s or 1s, schedule meeting with 0s, 1s, 4s, and 5s to discuss options.

## How do we SEE power?

All human actions and interactions hold power. Merriam-Webster defines power as “the ability to act or produce an effect.” Sometimes, power is used to influence the actions of others. This influence can stem from intentions that vary from positive to negative, with a similar range of effects. When making decisions within a network, it is critical to consider these dynamics and intentionally cultivate a system of shared power in both processes and outcomes.

The complexity of collaborative decision-making goes beyond sharing power to include **sharing information**. Often, power dynamics are cast in a way that imbues negative intentions to one party over another when, in fact, the true source of unequal dynamics may be **missing** or **inaccurate information**.

The SEE framework can guide our approach to help prevent these pitfalls. The following tips help cultivate a **supportive environment** for shared power that also addresses our **human informational needs**:

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**Building Mental Models**: Gather the appropriate depth and breadth of accurate information on the issue at hand. Draw in diverse perspectives, especially those who will be most impacted by the decision. Develop a shared understanding of network goals and principles through charters and agreements. Cultivate network norms that elevate historically underrepresented voices, diverse knowledge, and an exploratory approach to conflict.

BC

**Being Capable**: Clearly define roles and expectations. Gather the resources and support needed to complete tasks. Foster transparent processes, as well as open and active channels of communication to support accurate and timely information sharing. Include someone skilled in facilitation to guide challenging conversations. Consider attentional needs when scheduling these conversations: when might members have the necessary mental space for this? Limit distractions and add breaks when conversations go long.

MA

**Meaningful Action**: Make decisions through consensus, in which the participation of each member is valued and impactful. Recognize individual expertise as legitimate and integrate within collaborative learning and actions. Track the outcomes of decisions and update relevant parties on decision outcomes.

# Communication



Network communication should be **clear, concise, frequent, and easy to access**. In the beginning, take advantage of free platforms like Google workspace and Zoom. Many collaboratives do well using these and never move beyond to more complex (and expensive) systems. However, once a network has a stable membership and funding, the core team can reassess whether a different platform is more appropriate. The network coordinator can help by creating and disbursing network-wide communications.

Communication	Channel	Frequency	Audience
Newsletter	Email	Monthly	Network Members
Event List	Google Spreadsheet	Annually, by Thanksgiving	Network Coordinator
Meeting Updates	Email	Monthly	Affinity Groups
Tools & Resources*	Google Drive	As Needed	Network Members & Affinity Groups
Member Directory*	Google Spreadsheet, Asset Map	As Needed	Network Members
Member Conversations	Google Groups	As Needed	Network Members & Affinity Groups

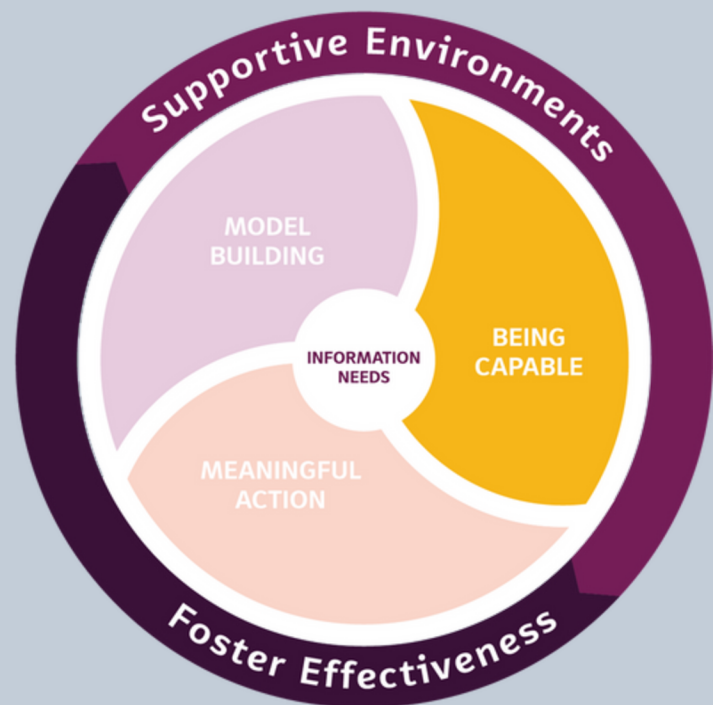
\*If possible, compile a physical library of important resources and member contact information to have on hand in the event that online databases are inaccessible.

## Network Communications Planning

A monthly newsletter is a great way for a network coordinator to compile snapshots of what is going on within the network, as well as relevant topics outside of the network. Network members can provide the coordinator with a list of future member events, and the coordinator can work with members to provide the various flyers, social media posts, etc. to help advertise these events. Affinity Groups can use email to update their members about upcoming meetings, as well as email a meeting summary and recorded video upon conclusion. The network can collect general member resources into a shared Google drive, with each affinity group having their own space within the drive to drop group-specific resources, event information, and meeting materials. A member directory can be helpful for members to identify contacts within the network for collaboration or information sharing. See this [Network Communications Plan](#) for further suggestions.

## Clarity is Key to Being Capable

The SEE framework describes being capable as feeling competent and clear headed. Clear roles and expectations allows us to better explore creative solutions without feeling overwhelmed by ambiguity. Feedback on network functioning and collaborative efforts shows us where adjustments can be made to refine our approach. Accurate and timely communication ensures that network members have the information they need to effectively act within the network.





# Funding

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## Internal Funding

Multiple approaches can be used to select grant applications for funding. However, a more participatory approach is outlined below that elevates **transparency, procedural justice,** and **member participation**. Start small, try out the process, and make adjustments as necessary.

Organizations that have used this approach, such as [The Stewardship Network](#), remark that open access to information about other grant applications brings an awareness to the needs of others in the group. As a result, members will often adjust their own funding requests or offer collaboration to support fellow member needs.

### Participatory Grant Process

1. Call for Proposals: Core Team releases a call for proposals to network members.
2. Initial Screening: Core Team compiles list of projects that meet requirements
3. Presentation of Eligible Proposals: Proposal list is shared electronically or through member presentations
4. Revision & Finalization: Opportunity is given for applicants to revise proposals based on other submissions
5. Voting: Core Team and applicants are eligible to vote on which proposals move forward and which may be tabled for the next round

#### THE VALUE OF PARTICIPATION IN FUNDING

Participation within funding processes increases the opportunity for collaboration, perspective taking, and shared investment in network funded efforts. This transparent process also increases clarity regarding funding decisions.

## External Funding

Some degree of external funding is necessary to cover the costs of network functioning. However, the foundation of this network should be as low-cost as possible to support durability in the face of ever-changing funding flows. Take advantage of free/low-cost online platforms like Google Workspace for resource sharing and Zoom or in-person meetups for Affinity Groups. Work together as a network to compile a running list of relevant grants, conduct grant-writing workshops, and collaboratively apply for grant funding. Remember that member dues often make up little of the funding needed to run a network and can be burdensome or prohibitive for some organizations. As an alternative, seek sponsorships from local businesses and organizations that would like to get involved in resilience work. **A low-cost network founded on local relationships will be more likely to thrive during adverse events when even the most stable institutions are preoccupied with crisis.**

# Evaluation

## The Power of Feedback

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Evaluation occurs when a network gathers feedback on network functioning and compares it to prior or desired states. The feedback we gather can be used to **update our mental models, supporting clarity** by ensuring that we have the most current and accurate information for **taking action**. Through diligently seeking out and integrating this information, we can develop durable systems that are responsive to ever-changing contexts. See Evaluation Metrics and Collaboration Lifecycle Tracker in the Appendix.

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**It is best to incorporate both formal and informal approaches, as they offer different perspectives and complementary benefits.**

### Informal Feedback

Informal feedback often occurs in the context of conversations or informal member surveys. This type of feedback is helpful for responding to immediate issues and fostering a culture of care within the network.

#### Actions

- Develop a regular practice of gathering and incorporating feedback from members within meetings and conversations.
- Ask the following questions: What is working well? What could be improved? What are the next steps?
- Listen to what members are saying.
- Observe signals of trust and mutual interdependence.
- Protect time to reflect on this information and make adjustments.

### Formal Feedback

Formal feedback is often drawn at periodic intervals using structured methods, such as interviews, surveys, social network analysis, and asset mapping. This type of feedback is helpful for benchmarking network growth.

#### Actions

- Enlist a third party evaluator to reduce bias.
- Share results with network members and check if it aligns with their experience or how it may be missing information.
- Make adjustments based on evaluation results and reflections.
- Share results with current and potential funders to demonstrate the value of the network.

**Durable change is often a lengthy and iterative process.**

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**Rather than taking on drastic changes, try out small experiments, analyze the results, and make small adjustments.**

# First Step: The Initial Convening



The initial convening will bring together cross-sector and critical care organizations to co-create a regional resilience network. [The Stewardship Network](#) calls this type of meeting an “exploring possibilities” workshop—an opportunity to think about why this network should exist and who should be involved.

## Who should be invited?

Between 5-12 diverse and representative participants that are directly involved in resilience work within the region, with attention given towards including critical care organizations and those representing historically marginalized populations.

## Agenda:

- Person-first introductions: Get to know one another as fellow humans before diving into professional contexts.
- Ask guiding questions: Why develop this network? What are the possible issues? Who else should be at the table? To what degree are you interested in participating?
- Use [this template](#) to develop network intentions.
- Choose a planning team to help guide this initial phase of network planning
- Create a network map of who is in the room.

Note: Guiding principles, group norms, and core team will be developed during subsequent convenings. A similar format can be used to structure these meetings.

## A SEE Approach to Network Development

Creating something new is hard, especially when the ground keeps moving during these early phases. There are many decisions to be made, and the process can easily feel overwhelming. View these early planning phases as an opportunity for small experiments--trying out ideas, assessing feedback, and making the appropriate adjustments as the network evolves. The effort involved in this process can hamper our effectiveness, so also try out small experiments that bring **restoration**. Learn to recognize when your attention is fatigued, take small breaks or change tasks, and retreat into nature to nourish your mind. Make sure to extend kindness to yourself and one another, and hold on to the meaning that drives your work. See this [short video](#) for more on attention restoration.

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# Appendix

## Network Development

USDN Network Building Guidebook

Worksheets

Impact Networks: A useful and comprehensive toolkit for building social impact networks that includes templates, trainings, activities, and evaluation tools.

ARCCA Toolkit: Toolkit for developing a regional resilience network that is directed more towards large scale networks of regional entities.

Just Communities: Great resource for best practices on developing communities that elevate building relationships and trust and elevating voices of those not in positions of power.

Georgetown Climate Center Lessons in Regional Resilience:

Institute for Sustainable Communities:

## Network Maintenance

Resources: Meeting norms, facilitation guides

Communication Guide: A plan for network communications developed by the Urban Sustainability Directors Network that includes ideas for disseminating information for the public, gathering member feedback, and pro tips from other networks.

Tools:

# Network Evaluation

EPA Equitable Resilience Builder:

<https://www.epa.gov/emergency-response-research/equitable-resilience-builder>

A resource that helps resilience practitioners assess built, natural, and social systems through an equity lens. It includes sections on participatory research and a guide to using results to collaboratively build equitable community resilience.

Partnership Impact Evaluation Guide:

[https://www.onetam.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/Partnership\\_Impact\\_Evaluation\\_Guide.PDF](https://www.onetam.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/Partnership_Impact_Evaluation_Guide.PDF)

An in-depth guidebook to evaluating collaborations that centers connection and trust. This guidebook highlights potential impacts to measure and includes a step-by-step guide to completing an evaluation.

Tools: kumu

## Regional Network Groups

The following networks offer support and resources that would be beneficial for Core Team members, the Network Coordinator, or members engaged in collaborative efforts:

[Regional Collaboratives Forum](#) - Georgetown Climate Center

[Network of Networks](#) - American Society of Adaptation Professionals

## Theory

**Supportive Environments for Effectiveness**

[www.redirect.org](http://www.redirect.org)

**Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation**

<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf>

Systems Theory - Donella Meadows

Mutual Aid - Dean Spade

Network Theory - June Holley

Localization - localizationpapers.org

# Mutual Aid in Practice

The following charts include ways to further incorporate elements of mutual aid (pg. 12) in a Regional Resilience Networks. The following resources are drawn from Dean Spade's book, *Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity During this Crisis (and the Next)*

## Helpful Qualities of Group Cultures

Reliable, responsible, punctual, follows through

Welcoming to new people

Flexible, experimental

Collaborative

Realistic work load, sustainable work flow, real culture of wellness and care

Direct feedback and growth

Sticks to values

Humble

Fun, celebratory, appreciative of each other

Forgiving

Able to have generative conflict and learn, repair

Clarity about procedures

Human pace with clear priorities and realistic expectations

Transparency

Generous

Sharing work well

## Cooperative Leadership Qualities

Supports the growth of decision-making processes that include everyone affected by the decision

Wants to find out how others are doing, what they need or believe, what they want

Willing to admit mistakes

Humble and dignified

Good at communicating; sharing and listening

Wins support by being supportive, consistent, trustworthy

Open to influence and changing their opinion

Concerned about the group's material impact--does it alleviate suffering and increase justice?

Fosters compassion and a desire that no one is left out of the group

Generous and open to newcomers while holding clear principles and boundaries

Holds steady to the groups' decisions and purpose; reliable

Can tolerate people being different in a lot of ways; sees potential in people to become part of the work for change and helps them develop skills and abilities

Cares most about what those on the bottom of hierarchies think and know; works to cultivate authenticity

Can take the risk of being seen, can step back so others can be seen

Avoids advice-giving unless asked, interested in supporting people to make decisions that align with their values

Sees the long view and holds to values

Gives direct feedback in a compassionate way

Open to feedback, interested in how they impact others

Can delegate, can ask for help, wants more people's participation rather than more control

Supports processes with integrity that lead to more people participating in decision-making

Interested in what can be learned from discomfort, from changing roles or being out of place, from conditions transforming

Self-accepting and steady in sense of self, and so able to take risks or hold unpopular opinions

## Basic Steps to Consensus Decision-Making

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**Step 1:**  
Discussion

**Step 2:**  
Identify emerging proposal

**Step 3:**  
Identify any unsatisfied concerns

**Step 4:**  
Collaboratively modify proposal

**Step 5:**  
Assess degree of support

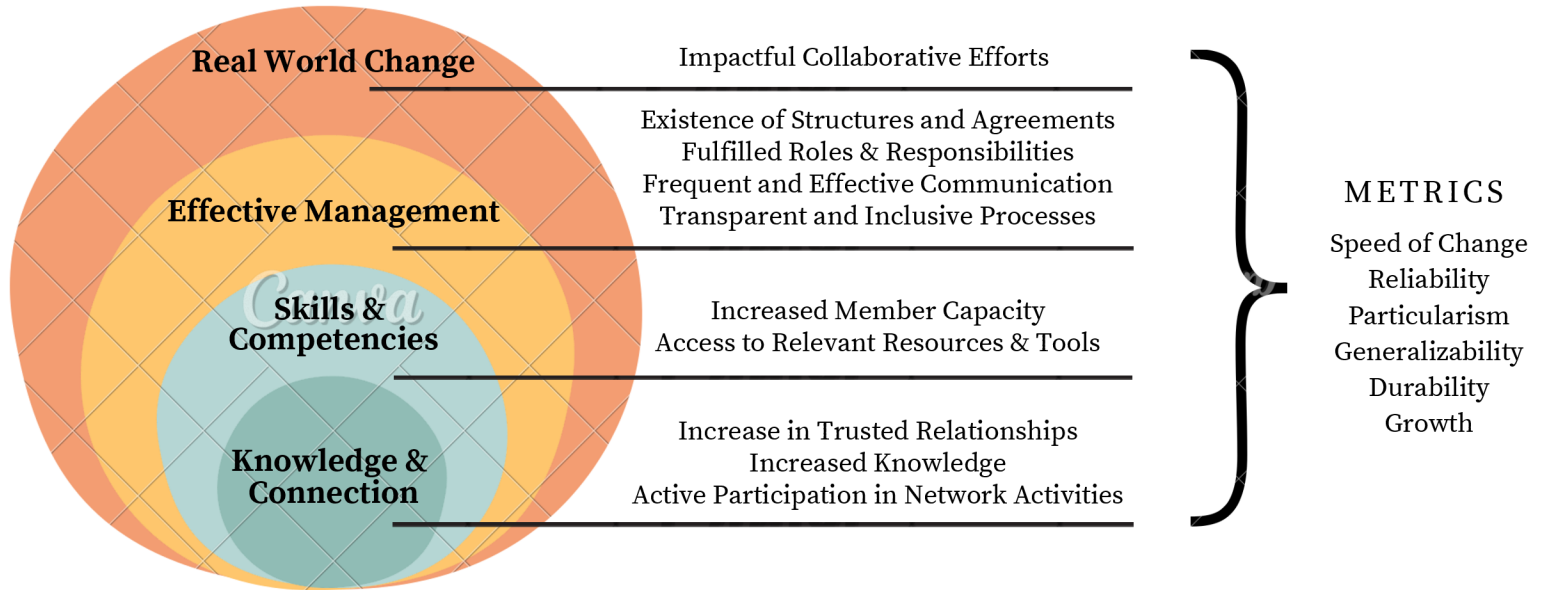
**Step 6:**  
Finalize decision **OR** Circle back to  
steps 1 or 3



# Evaluation Metrics

## AREAS OF EVALUATION

## OUTCOMES



## METHODS OF EVALUATION

- Social Network Analysis
- Asset Mapping
- Member Surveys
- Focus Groups & Interviews

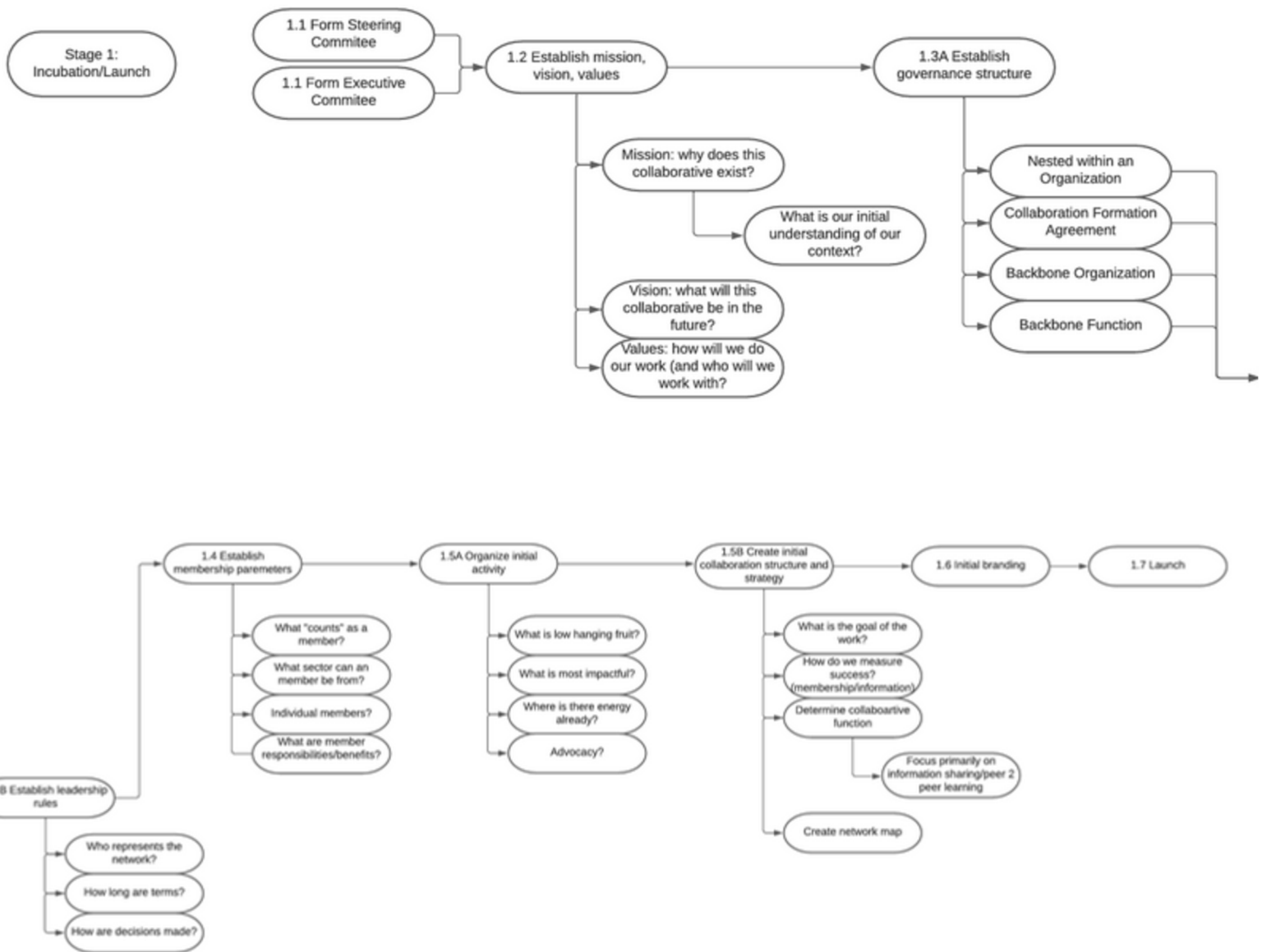
### Implementing Evaluation Metrics

The metrics listed above were developed by DeYoung (1993) to measure the long-term effectiveness of change. To best gauge progress towards desired outcomes, address the following questions within network evaluation:

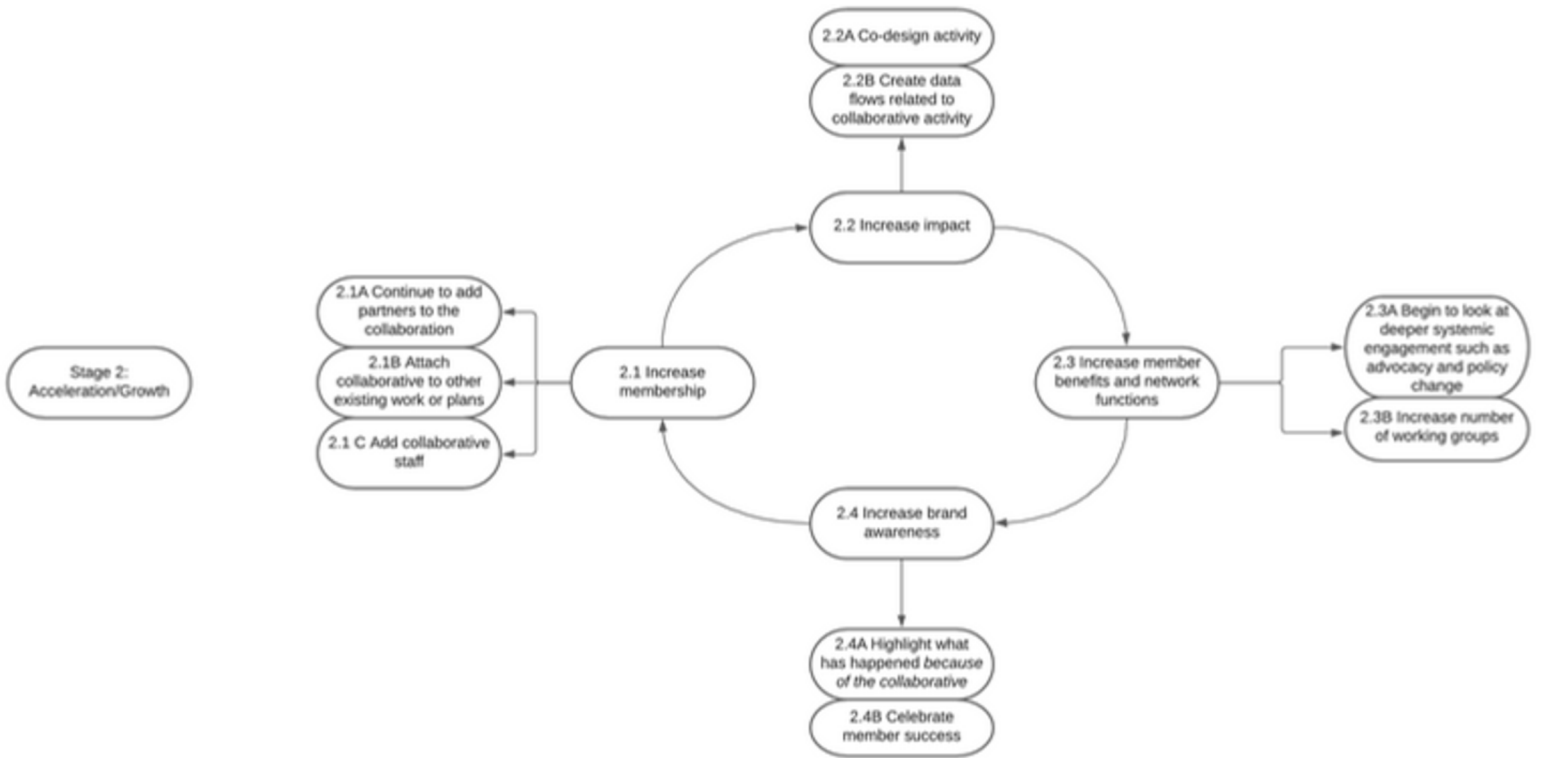
- How quickly is change occurring?
- Is the network able to induce change with each repeated attempt?
- Is the action that produced change specific to this network or a set of members within this network, or could it be successfully applied elsewhere?
- Do we see change endure across time?
- Does this change expand to encompass other areas without further outside intervention?

# Collaboration Lifecycle Tracker Stage 1

Developed by the Institute for Sustainable Communities



# Collaboration Lifecycle Tracker Stage 2



# Collaboration Lifecycle Tracker Stage 3

## Collaboration Lifecycle Tracker - Funding

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