



**Calhoun: The NPS Institutional Archive**  
**DSpace Repository**

---

Faculty and Researchers

Faculty and Researchers' Publications

---

2012-05-01

# Inter-Organizational Collaborative Capacity (ICC) Assessment

Hocevar, Susan Page; Jansen, Erik; Thomas, Gail Fann

---

<https://hdl.handle.net/10945/38477>

---

This publication is a work of the U.S. Government as defined in Title 17, United States Code, Section 101. Copyright protection is not available for this work in the United States.

*Downloaded from NPS Archive: Calhoun*



Calhoun is the Naval Postgraduate School's public access digital repository for research materials and institutional publications created by the NPS community. Calhoun is named for Professor of Mathematics Guy K. Calhoun, NPS's first appointed -- and published -- scholarly author.

**Dudley Knox Library / Naval Postgraduate School**  
**411 Dyer Road / 1 University Circle**  
**Monterey, California USA 93943**

<http://www.nps.edu/library>

# Inter-Organizational Collaborative Capacity (ICC) Assessment



Susan Page Hocevar, Erik Jansen and Gail Fann Thomas  
Naval Postgraduate School  
Monterey, CA

[shocevar@nps.edu](mailto:shocevar@nps.edu)

[ejansen@nps.edu](mailto:ejansen@nps.edu)

[gthomas@nps.edu](mailto:gthomas@nps.edu)

May 1, 2012

As part of our ongoing research efforts, we are interested in working with organizations that want to use the ICC instrument. Data will be kept anonymous.

For permission to use the instrument, please contact one of the authors.

Contact information:

Susan Hocevar, PhD  
Graduate School of Business & Public Policy  
Naval Postgraduate School  
Monterey, CA 93943  
[shocevar@nps.edu](mailto:shocevar@nps.edu)  
831-656-2249

Erik Jansen, PhD  
Graduate School of Operational &  
Information Sciences, NPS  
Monterey, CA 93943  
[ejansen@nps.edu](mailto:ejansen@nps.edu)  
831-656-2623

Gail Fann Thomas, EdD  
Graduate School of Business & Public Policy  
Program Manager, Strategic Communication  
Center for Executive Education  
Naval Postgraduate School  
Monterey, CA 93943  
[gthomas@nps.edu](mailto:gthomas@nps.edu)  
831-656-2756

## Inter-Organizational Collaborative Capacity (ICC) Assessment

Effective collaboration across organizational boundaries is important for achieving governance reform. But, given the complexities of both aligning and competing interests, collaboration is often a challenge. The Inter-Organizational Collaborative Capacity (ICC) model was originally developed to help public sector agencies (municipal, state, regional and federal) achieve collective results.<sup>i</sup> Our team's research goal was to identify factors that enable and inhibit inter-organizational collaboration. A key assumption of this model is that building collaborative capacity requires deliberate leadership attention and the alignment of organizational design elements toward collaboration.

The ICC model assesses different factors that contribute to an organization's capacity to collaborate with other organizations. This model comprises five organizational domains: Purpose and Strategy, Structure, Rewards and Incentives, People, and Lateral Mechanisms. Thirteen factors, which are discussed below, are measured by the ICC diagnostic survey. These factors are distributed across five domains of an organizational system as illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Inter-Organizational Collaborative Capacity Model.<sup>ii</sup>

**Purpose and Strategy.** The ICC model has three factors in the domain of Purpose and Strategy: (1) *Felt Need* is the organization's recognition of interdependence with others and the acknowledged need to collaborate to effectively accomplish its mission and goals. Felt Need often comes from perceptions of a threat or problem or an opportunity to be pro-active in preventing problems from developing. (2) *Strategic Actions* include goals for collaboration, demonstrated senior leadership commitment, and willingness to consider other organizations' interests in planning. (3) The third factor assesses the extent to which the organization makes adequate *Resource Investments* (e.g., budget, personnel) for collaboration. Felt Need to collaborate is typically the initiating factor; but without the additional leadership, planning, and resource commitments, there is inadequate strategic emphasis for building collaborative capacity.

**Structure.** This domain comprises four factors. (1) *Collaboration Structures* can include liaison roles, participation in inter-organizational teams and task forces, clearly established roles for each participating organization, and internal processes that enable effective inter-organizational collaboration. (2) *Structural Flexibility* allows adaptation of partnerships as requirements change, demonstrates willingness to adjust procedures to facilitate coordination, and responds to the requirements of other organizations. (3) *Metrics* include established criteria and performance standards for evaluating inter-organizational efforts, and routine mechanisms for assessing outcomes. (4) *Support for Individual Collaboration Efforts* has two facets. The first is how clearly individual collaborative work is structured in terms of clear goals, constraints, and authorities. The second is the strength of the link between personnel in boundary-spanning roles working directly with other organizations, and the strategic leadership of their own organization. This is reflected in the extent to which the organization follows through on recommendations of these boundary spanners.

**Incentives and Reward Systems.** Because the ICC model focuses on ways organizations align different internal design elements to improve collaboration, this domain, with its single factor, considers *Reward Systems* as they impact the organization's personnel. Are employees rewarded for investing time in building collaborative relationships with other organization members and for successful collaborative results? Are collaborative talents and achievements considered when people are reviewed for promotion? In our research work, external factors that motivate an organization to engage in collaboration (e.g., mandated requirements or financial awards) are often identified as a factor that affects collaboration. But this incentive comes from the larger

organizational context or environment, and is thus not a “managed” reward system, and they do not represent Incentive and Reward Systems inside the organization reflected in the ICC model.

**Lateral Mechanisms.** Four factors constitute the Lateral Mechanisms Domain that represents both the “hard” and the “soft” aspects of lateral coordination. (1) *Social Capital* represents the social and professional relationships that organizational members have with counterparts in other organizations. It is a basis for awareness and trust-building. (2) *Collaborative Tools and Technologies* provide the technical mechanisms for collaboration such as inter-operable information systems and collaborative planning tools. (3) The *Information Sharing* factor represents the organization’s norms and values that support information sharing, and the adequacy of access that other organizations have to information relevant to their success in the collaborative activity. (4) *Collaborative Learning* is demonstrated in several ways: cross-organizational training, learning about the interests and capabilities (and limitations) of other organizations, and systematic assessment of lessons learned to improve future collaborations.

**People.** This domain has only a single factor, *Individual Collaborative Capabilities*. These include the attitudes, skills, knowledge, and behaviors of individual organizational members that impact the organization’s ability to collaborate. Examples are conflict management skills, willingness to engage in shared decision-making, respect for the expertise of those in other organizations, and knowledge and understanding of how other organizations work.

## Inter-Organizational Collaborative Capacity Assessment

**Directions:** This questionnaire is designed to assess your organization’s capacity to collaborate with other organizations. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. If an item doesn’t seem to apply or you “don’t know,” mark the appropriate response.

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree	Don't Know
<b>Felt Need to Collaborate</b>							
Effective inter-organizational collaboration is a high priority for my organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My organization recognizes the importance of working with other organizations to achieve its mission.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Members of my organization understand the benefits of collaborating with other organizations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The success of my organization's mission requires working effectively with other organizations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There is agreement within my organization about the purpose and value of inter-organizational collaboration.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Strategic Action for Collaboration</b>							
We have clearly established goals for inter-organizational collaboration.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The leaders of my organization emphasize the importance of inter-organizational collaboration.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My organization is willing to address inter-organizational goals even if it must compromise its own interests.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My organization considers the interests of other organizations in its planning.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Leaders of my organization work productively with those of other organizations to improve our collaborations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree	Don't Know
<b>Resource Investment in Collaboration</b>							
My organization has committed adequate budget, and resources to inter-organizational collaboration.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My organization is willing to invest resources to accomplish inter-organizational goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My organization has assigned adequate personnel to the work required for effective inter-organizational collaboration.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Structural Flexibility</b>							
My organization can quickly form or modify partnerships as requirements change.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My organization is flexible in adapting its processes and procedures to better fit with other organizations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My organization invests appropriate time and energy to deconflict existing policies and processes that impede collaboration.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My organization's procedures are flexible and responsive to the requirements of other organizations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Metrics for Collaboration</b>							
My organization has measurement criteria to evaluate inter-organizational collaboration efforts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My organization has clear performance standards regarding inter-organizational work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My organization has measurement criteria to evaluate the outcomes of inter-organizational collaboration.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree	Don't Know
<b>Rewards and Incentives</b>							
My organization rewards employees for investing time and energy to build collaborative relationships.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My organization rewards members for their successful inter-organizational collaborative activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Collaborative talents and achievements are considered when people are reviewed for promotion.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Engaging in inter-organizational activities at work is important to career advancement.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Collaborative Learning</b>							
My organization commits adequate human and financial resources to training with other organizations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My organization has strong values and norms for learning from other organizations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My organization works with other organizations to identify lessons learned for improved collaboration.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My organization understands how the other organizations we work with make decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My organization takes time to learn about the interests of stakeholder organizations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Information Sharing</b>							
My organization has strong values and norms that encourage sharing information with other organizations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My organization provides other organizations adequate access to information that is relevant to their work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Members of my organization willingly share information with other organizations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree	Don't Know
<b>Social Capital</b>							
Members of my organization know who to contact in other organizations for information.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Members of my organization take the initiative to build relationships with their counterparts in other organizations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Members of my organization have strong networks of professional relationships with people in other organizations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Individual Collaborative Capacities</b>							
Members of my organization have the collaborative skills (e.g., conflict management, team process skills) needed to work effectively with other organizations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Members of my organization understand the capabilities of other organizations with which we work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Members of my organization respect the expertise of those in other organizations with whom we work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Members of my organization understand how our work relates to the work of other organizations with whom we need to collaborate.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Members of my organization are able to appreciate another organization's perspective on a problem or course of action.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Members of my organization are willing to engage in a shared decision making process with other organizations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Members of my organization seek input from other organizations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree	Don't Know
<b>Support for Individual Collaboration Efforts</b>							
Leadership listens to input from subordinates about ways to improve inter-organizational collaboration.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My organization gives people the authority they need to effectively collaborate with other organizations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My organization follows through on recommendations from our representatives on inter-organizational task forces.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
People are given clear guidance on goals and constraints for their inter-organizational work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Collaboration Structures</b>							
My organization has adequate and appropriate structures (e.g., liaison roles, teams, task forces) for effective inter-organizational collaboration.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My organization establishes specific agreements about each organization's roles and responsibilities in a collaboration.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My organization's processes and procedures are structured to enable effective inter-organizational collaboration.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Collaborative Tools and Technologies</b>							
Our inter-organizational collaborations are effectively supported by collaborative planning tools and technologies.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My organization has the necessary information systems' interoperability to enable effective inter-organizational collaboration.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Our inter-organizational collaborations are supported by effective communication tools and technologies.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<b>Context and Demographics</b>	
My organization has a history of working well with other organizations.	Strongly Disagree (1) through Strongly Agree (6), Don't Know (7)
How long has your organization been involved in inter-organization collaborations?	Not involved, less than 6 months, 6 months to 1 year, 1 to 2 years, 2 to 3 years, 3 to 5 years, greater than 5 yrs, don't know
How would you rate the overall success of your organization in collaborating with other organizations?	Very Poor (1) to Excellent (6), Don't Know (7)
How many people are employed by the unit or organization that you have been thinking about in answering these questions?	Response categories tailored to organization
What percentage of your work week is spent doing inter-organizational work?	Response categories tailored to organization
How many years have you worked for the unit OR organization you have been thinking about in answering these questions?	Response categories tailored to organization
How many inter-organizational teams are you currently on?	Response categories tailored to organization
For what organization do you work?	Response categories tailored to organization
How high is the risk if inter-organizational coordination is not effective?	Insignificant (1) to Very Significant (6); Don't Know (7)
How often does your organization participate in formal inter-organizational meetings?	Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Quarterly, Semi-Annually, Annually, Don't Know

<sup>i</sup> Hocevar, S.P., Thomas, G.F., Jansen, E., "Building Collaborative Capacity: An Innovative Strategy for Homeland Security Preparedness," In Beyerlein, Beyerlein & Kennedy (Eds) *Advances in Interdisciplinary Studies of Work Teams: Innovation Through Collaboration*, Volume 12, pp. 255-274. Elsevier JAI Press, 2006.

<sup>ii</sup> Hocevar, S.P. "Inter-Organizational Collaborative Capacity: A Conceptual Model and Measurement Tool." Presentation at the *Fourth Annual Homeland Defense and Security Education Summit*, Georgetown University, February 24-25, 2010. <http://www.chds.us/resources/uapi/summit10/Track2/Hocevar-Inter-Organizational-Collaborative-Capacity-02-031510-01.pdf>