Factors for Successful Coordination -

A Framework to Help State Agencies Coordinate Effectively

State Services Commission

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New Zealand Government

This document is also available through the State Services Commission's website
http://www.ssc.govt.nz/state-services-coordination

The State Services Commission welcomes any comments and suggestions you may have about this document. If you require further information about this document please let us know. In both instances, please contact:

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About This Document

This document, prepared by the State Services Commission (SSC), presents the *Factors for Successful Coordination Framework,* a simple framework to help agencies plan coordinated activity. The framework groups nine success factors according to the three dimensions of mandate, systems and behaviours. Ensuring these factors are in place over time will help agencies coordinate more effectively and achieve success together.

The document explains in detail <u>what</u> each success factor means and <u>why</u> it is important to achieve successful coordination. It does <u>not</u> provide detailed guidance on <u>how</u> to ensure the factors are in place. The SSC is progressively developing guidance and tools relative to each of the success factors. These future tools will help agencies put in place each success factor when they embark on a coordinated initiative.

The main focus of the document is on coordination between agencies in the State Services. However, the principles outlined can also be applied to initiatives between government and non-government organisations.

A useful complement to the present document is *Getting Better at Managing for Shared Outcomes: A Resource for Agency Leaders,* available on the SSC's website.[1] *Getting Better at Managing for Shared Outcomes* explains when and how agencies should decide work together, and outlines the advantages and disadvantages of doing so. It also explains how to define a shared outcome. Therefore, the present document does not revisit these aspects in detail.

This document is structured as follows:

- the first section provides the strategic context for coordination, set by the Development Goals for the State Services and more specifically by the Coordinated State Agencies goal

- the second section clarifies what is meant by coordination, why and when agencies need to work together to achieve results

- the third section presents the *Factors for Successful Coordination Framework* and describes in detail each success factor.

To complement this document, the SSC has developed a one-page fact sheet which presents a high level summary of the *Factors for Successful Coordination Framework*. The fact sheet is available on the SSC's website.[2]

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[1]   Managing for Shared Outcomes Development Group for the Managing for Outcomes Programme Office, State Services Commission, *Getting Better at Managing for Shared Outcomes: A Resource for Agency Leaders*, 2004, www.ssc.govt.nz/mfso-resource

[2]   See www.ssc.govt.nz/state-services-coordination

Putting Inter-agency Coordination in Context

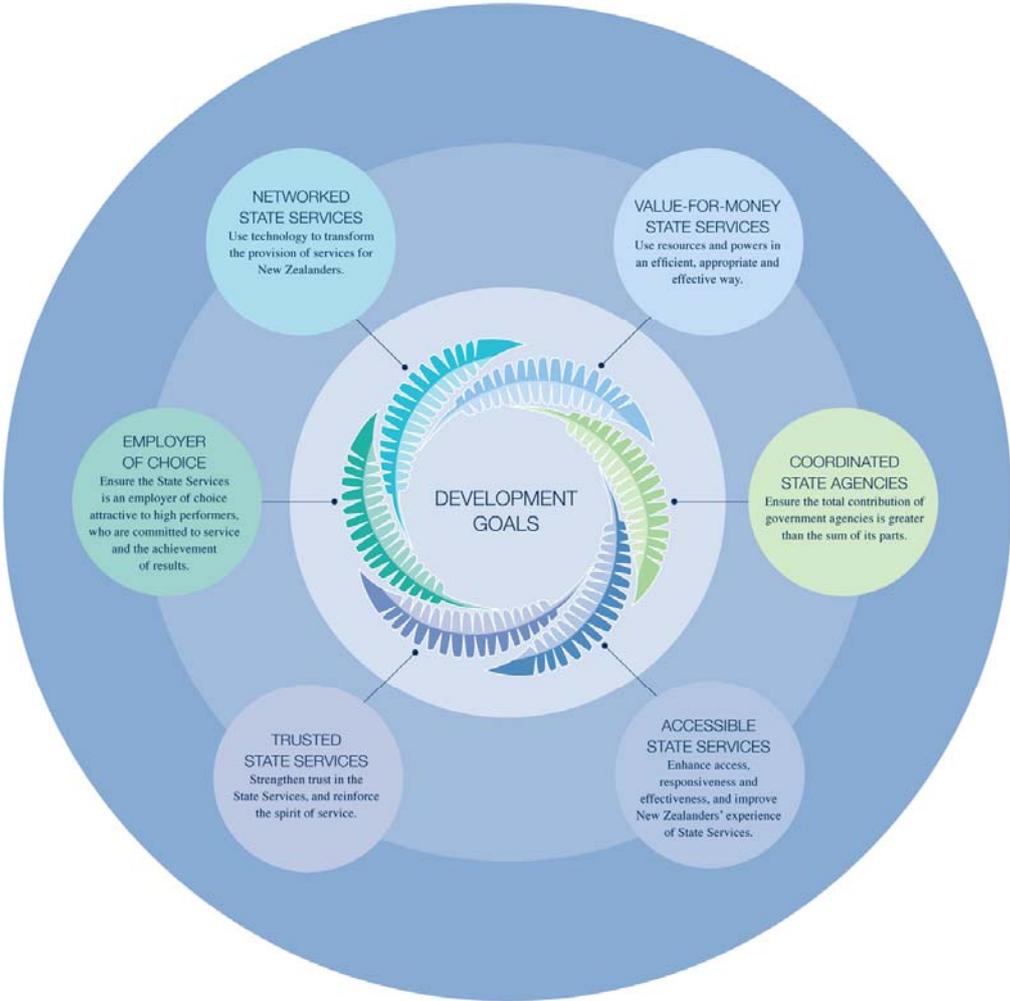***Development Goals for the State Services***

The Development Goals for the State Services provide an agenda for delivering the next generation of State Services. They aim to transform the State Services in a way that is aligned with government priorities and delivers better results for all New Zealanders. The goals are designed to meet the vision that the New Zealand State Services be

A system of world class professional State Services
serving the government of the day and meeting the needs of New Zealanders.

There are six Development Goals, which support each other and collectively contribute to strengthening the degree of trust New Zealanders have in the State Services. Taken together, these goals constitute a deliberate agenda focusing on aspects of performance that matter.

The six goals are presented in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Development Goals for the State Services

This is how the goals work together to achieve the vision: if State Services agencies are considered a great place to work and offer constant development of staff (Employer of Choice goal), then good people will want to work and stay in government agencies. If State Services agencies are well connected to each other and to citizens (Networked State Services goal), better coordinated to improve their overall performance (Coordinated State Agencies goal), then New Zealanders will get from agencies good quality services that meet their needs (Accessible State Services). When these services are delivered in an open and honest way and New Zealanders can see that their tax dollars are being used wisely (Value-for-Money goal), trust in the State Services will improve (Trusted State Services goal).

More information on the Development Goals can be found on the SSC's website.[3]

The Coordinated State Agencies Goal

One of the six Development Goals is the Coordinated State Agencies goal:

Ensure the total contribution of government agencies
is greater than the sum of its parts.

The vision for this goal is that government agencies coordinate their efforts using their expertise as appropriate, and are committed to shared outcomes where these help achieve the right results for New Zealanders. Agencies recognise that they need to work closely together and with partners to provide clear, joined-up responses to complex policy challenges and provide seamless services to the people who need them. State servants have common values and goals and are dedicated to making a difference to the lives of New Zealanders.

To achieve this goal, agencies need a shared understanding and good judgement about who needs to be involved to deliver well for New Zealanders. This understanding and judgement is used to work in an integrated and collaborative way, as appropriate, across and within a range of agencies, as well as with partners such as non-government organisations.

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[3]   See www.ssc.govt.nz/development-goals

The Case for Coordination

What is Coordination

There is a large spectrum of joint agency activity taking place in the State Services. This activity can be situated anywhere on a continuum from communication to collaboration, depending on what outcomes agencies are trying to achieve, what is being shared and the accountability, risks or resource implications.[4]

In a State Services context, coordination means the sharing of information, resources and responsibilities to achieve a particular outcome. Agencies coordinating can mean that they elect to share decision-making authority, provided existing accountabilities are not modified.

Agencies can share information, knowledge and expertise as an input for developing policies and strategies, and for programme or service design, delivery, evaluation and adjustment. In this case, they usually encounter minimal accountability issues because authority and accountability are not altered.

Agencies can also share resources by pooling them between parties, without necessarily sharing work or personnel. Pooling of resources is primarily used to gain access to resources or funds for programme or service delivery. In this context, care is required to ensure that funds are utilised for the purpose approved by Parliament.

In contrast, collaboration refers to arrangements that encourage joint decision-making with regard to direction-setting, planning, implementation and review. It is more than just the sharing of work; it is the sharing of responsibilities and, in some instances, of mandated authority. Therefore, it usually entails Ministerial involvement. It can raise particular accountability issues because shared management requires Ministers from relevant agencies to be collectively accountable for the results of the arrangement.

The term 'coordination', as used in the context of the Coordinated State Agencies Development Goal and the *Factors for Successful Coordination Framework*, should be taken broadly and is not meant to exclude other forms of joint work. Quite the opposite: it is meant to cover the spectrum of joint activity from communication to collaboration. In effect, the terms coordination and collaboration are often used interchangeably. Ultimately the goal is for agencies to work together to achieve results, regardless of the terminology being used.

Why Coordinate?

Because the challenges facing New Zealand are bigger than one agency can solve alone

Internationally, government agencies are recognising that the policy issues they are addressing often transcend agency boundaries.[5] There are a number of factors driving this awareness, including the increasing number of international cooperation agreements entered into by

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[4] Managing for Shared Outcomes Development Group for the Managing for Outcomes Programme Office, State Services Commission, *Getting Better at Managing for Shared Outcomes: A Resource for Agency Leaders*, 2004, pp.12-13, www.ssc.govt.nz/mfso-resource

[5] Herman Bakvis and Luc Juillet, *The Horizontal Challenge: Central Agencies, Line Departments and Leadership,* Canada School of Public Service, 2004, www.csps-efpc.gc.ca/Research/publications/html/hc/1_e.html

governments[6] and the increasing evidence gathered by social scientists of the interconnectedness of problems.[7] The need for a more sophisticated understanding of community needs and for integrated governance responses also increases the complexity of policy challenges.[8]

Because by pooling the best of our resources we provide better solutions

Diversity of thinking and skills has been shown to produce better results. Organisations working jointly are more likely to complete high quality analysis of issues and opportunities. They are more likely to have a broader skill and resource base that leads to better quality task completion.[9] Kanter calls this diversity 'collaborative advantage'. She argues that "in the global economy, a well-developed ability to create and sustain fruitful collaborations gives companies a significant competitive leg up".[10]

Because coordination can reduce duplication and provide New Zealanders with the best services at the right cost

Coordination is widely seen as a solution to the fragmentation of the State sector in countries that implemented the New Public Management[11] approaches of the 80's and 90's. In New Zealand, the 2001-02 Review of the Centre concluded that fragmentation was caused by "a proliferation of agencies; a proliferation of Ministerial portfolios leading to an excessive number of votes; and in some areas, by an over-emphasis on vertical accountabilities at the expense of whole of government approaches".[12] Fragmentation makes coordinated service delivery more complicated, adds to the costs of doing business by duplicating services, effort and expenses, and blurs accountability for some issues.[13]

While vertical accountability mechanisms are still viewed as an efficient way to ensure agency performance, they also tend to break down issues into their component parts. This approach is shown to be ineffective in solving complex issues at its best and resulting in 'dumping' of issues across organisations at its worst.[14]

When the right agencies coordinate over a complex issue, they can develop targeted solutions based on a better understanding of the full scope of the issue, resulting in more effective interventions.

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[6] Ibid.
[7] Geoffrey Mulgan, 'Joined Up Government in the United Kingdom - Past, Present and Future', *Canberra Bulletin of Public Administration*, No.105, 2002, p.26.
[8] Institute of Public Administration Australia, *Working Together – Integrated Governance,*, 2002, pp.12-13, www.ipaa.org.au/_dbase_upl/national_research_final.pdf
[9] Barbara Gray, Cited in Paul. W. Mattessich et al., *Collaboration: What makes it work 2nd edition,* 2001, p.4.
[10] Rosabeth Moss Kanter, 'Collaborative Advantage', *Harvard Business Review*, July/August 1994, http://harvardbusinessonline.hbsp.harvard.edu/hbsp/hbr/index.jsp?ml_issueid=3944
[11] Vigoda describes the features of New Public Management as an approach that relies on embedding the theory of the marketplace and a business-like culture in public organisations. Its core principles are downsizing, managerialism, decentralisation, debureaucratisation and privatisation. See Eran Vigoda, 'From Responsiveness to Collaboration: Governance, Citizens and the Next Generation of Public Administration', *Public Administration Review*, Vol.62, No.5, Sept/Oct 2002, p.533.
[12] *Report of the Advisory Group on the Review of the Centre*, January 2002, p.7, www.ssc.govt.nz/roc
[13] Ibid, p.7.
[14] Geoffrey Mulgan, 'Joined Up Government in the United Kingdom - Past, Present and Future', p.26.
      For a discussion of the issues in the UK context, see Tom Ling, 'Delivering Joined-up government in the UK: Dimensions, Issues and Problems', *Public Administration*, Vol.80, No.4, 2002, pp.615-642. A discussion of accountability and joined-up government is found in Peter Wilkins, 'Accountability and Joined-up Government', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol.61, No.1, 2002, pp.114-119.

Because New Zealanders expect it

New Zealanders are increasingly expecting government policies and services to be tailored for particular communities or client groups. This trend is fundamentally altering the way policy is formed.[15] Rather than re-orient agencies around client groups and risk duplicating services, the obvious answer is to enhance coordination across agencies.

One of the drivers for this societal change is the emergence of technology as an enabler.[16] Today, New Zealanders can easily network virtually with others, and expect the same of government agencies. Furthermore, technology provides the vehicle for New Zealanders to become more informed and involved in the activities of government.[17]

Deciding When to Coordinate

Adding value: the ultimate test

A warning comes from those studying and practicing coordinated initiatives: coordination takes time, resources and energy. Therefore, agencies must be careful to ensure that they work together by "choice, not chance", based on an assessment of whether:

- outcomes for New Zealanders will be improved by better-coordinated government action

- the benefits to New Zealanders will outweigh the costs

- all agencies will be accountable for their actions

- there is a clear rationale for including all participants[18]

- there is sufficient time to achieve a superior outcome through a coordinated initiative.

Advantages and disadvantages of coordination

Beyond the value question, the full range of pros and cons of coordinated rather than individual agency activity needs to be considered. Table 1 below outlines the advantages and disadvantages that should be considered before deciding whether or not to coordinate.[19]

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[15] Guy B. Peters, *Managing Horizontal Government: The Politics of Coordination,* Canadian Centre for Management Development, 1998, p.11, www.csps-efpc.gc.ca/Research/publications/pdfs/p78.pdf

[16] Herman Bakvis and Luc Juillet, *The Horizontal Challenge: Central Agencies, Line Departments and Leadership*, p.14.

[17] Tom Fitzpatrick, *Horizontal Management: Trends in Governance and Accountability*, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat for Canadian Centre for Management Development's Roundtable on the Management of Horizontal Issues, 2001, p.8, www.csps-efpc.gc.ca/research/publications/html/horinz_rt/documents/trends_e.html

[18] Managing for Shared Outcomes Development Group for the Managing for Outcomes Programme Office, State Services Commission, *Getting Better at Managing for Shared Outcomes: A resource for Agency Leaders*, 2004, p.6.

[19] Ibid, drawn from Cabinet Office, *Wiring It Up: Whitehall's Management of Cross-Cutting Policies and Services*, United Kingdom, 2000, p.17.

Table 1: Advantages and Disadvantages of Coordination

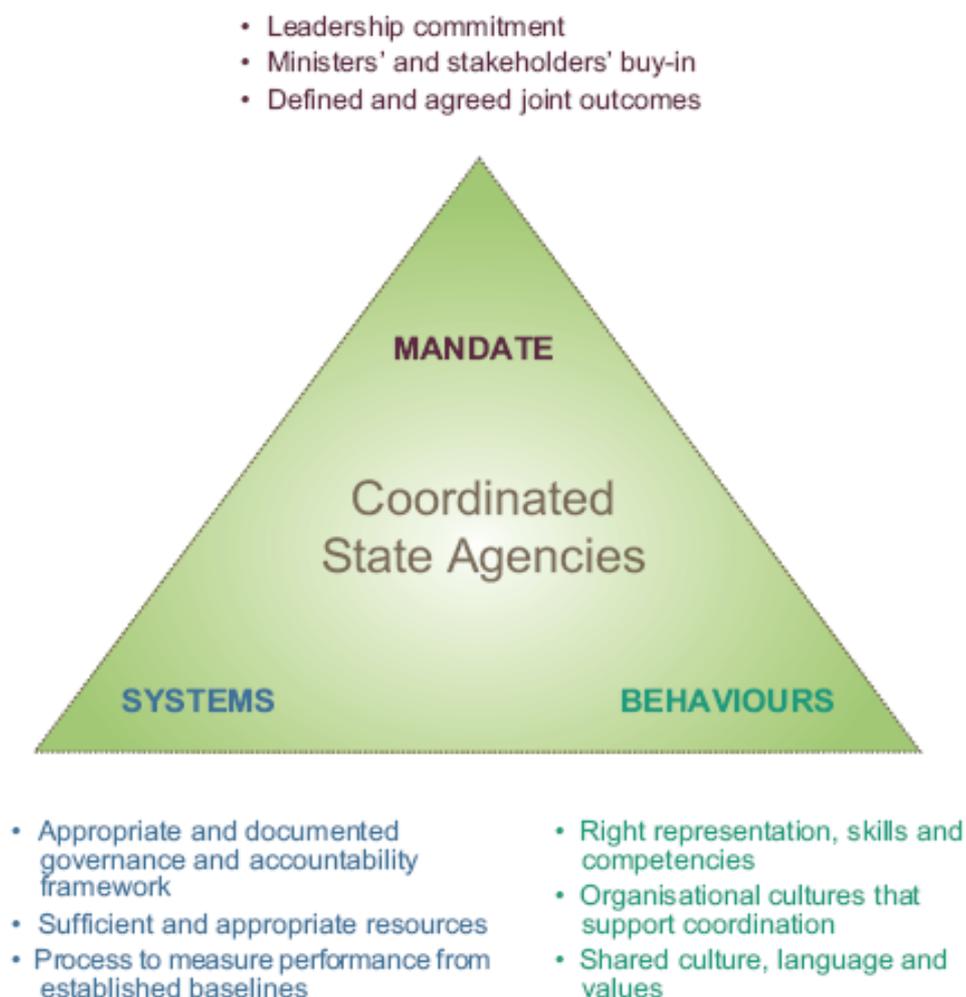| Benefits/Advantages	Costs/Disadvantages
• A potentially better result for the population or entity of interest	• less clear lines of accountability for policy development and service delivery
• helping to convey 'big picture' strategic issues (e.g. sustainable development) which are not captured by agency objectives	• longer decision-making processes
• helping to realise synergies and maximise the cost effectiveness of policy and/or service delivery	• greater difficulty in measuring effectiveness and determining impact, because of the need to develop and maintain more sophisticated performance measurement systems
• exploiting economies of scale (e.g. sharing of IT facilities, data and information, property, etc)	• direct and indirect costs of management and staff time spent establishing and sustaining joint working arrangements
• bringing together organisations or key staff whose co-operation could prove beneficial in other areas	• organisational and transitional costs of introducing joint approaches and structures
• improving customer focus and thus the quality and user-friendliness of services	• can lead towards consensus and the "lowest common denominator" at the expense of making tougher decisions about trade-offs to get better results for the public
• assisting prioritisation, resolution of potential conflicts and trade-off decision-making	
• developing goodwill with other agencies that are likely to be critical to future successes	

The Factors for Successful Coordination Framework

There are numerous studies identifying factors that ensure coordinated activities are successful or effective. Drawing from these studies, the *Factors for Successful Coordination Framework* highlights nine success factors consistently identified in the literature, and groups them under three dimensions: mandate, systems and behaviours. Whilst separate, the three dimensions are interrelated and mutually-reinforcing. Ensuring these factors are in place will help agencies coordinate more effectively and achieve success together.

It is important to note that the framework is not static, and does not assume the nine factors all have to be firmly in place before a coordinated activity can take place. In practice, some factors will be in place first, while others will occur later, as the coordinated activity evolves. What the framework emphasises is that if all nine factors are recognised as important and are put in place over time, the success of the coordinated activity is more likely and will occur sooner.

The framework is pictured in Figure 2 below. Each factor under the three dimensions is then explained in more detail.

Figure 2: Factors for Successful Coordination Framework

- Leadership commitment
- Ministers' and stakeholders' buy-in
- Defined and agreed joint outcomes

MANDATE

Coordinated State Agencies

SYSTEMS

BEHAVIOURS

- Appropriate and documented governance and accountability framework
- Sufficient and appropriate resources
- Process to measure performance from established baselines

- Right representation, skills and competencies
- Organisational cultures that support coordination
- Shared culture, language and values

The Mandate Dimension

Leadership commitment

Studies show that in organisations where coordinated activity is successful, the senior leaders have invested significant time and energy modelling and supporting this way of working.[20] This applies equally to the success of joint agency initiatives. Particular behaviours required of leaders include: seeking out opportunities to work with others; incentivising and recognising staff involved in coordinated work; ensuring that resources and time are available for the team; and managing external and political pressures so that coordination can occur.[21] The support of a senior level champion can also raise the profile of an initiative and motivate the team.[22] This leadership support cannot be taken for granted; it must be continually worked on by the participants involved in the coordinated activity.[23]

To ensure the coordinated activity is successful, leaders need to make sure that it is supported by the right infrastructure. They need to assist participants by ensuring the joint activity is given sufficient priority, integrated into a wider system of performance management, linked to budgetary allocations and sufficiently tangible to be translated into departments' operational priorities and outputs.[24]

Ministers' and stakeholders' buy in

A stakeholder is a group or individual who can affect, or is affected by, the achievement of a particular outcome. Any coordinated activity will seek to achieve outcomes that will affect stakeholders. Ensuring Ministers, decision-makers and key stakeholders support the coordinated activity is critical. A key task for participants in the joint agency initiative is to spend time engaging with stakeholders and checking that the outcomes of the group are realistic or will meet the requirements of these players. It is also important to monitor the climate among stakeholders continually during the life of the initiative, in order to manage any shifts in priorities.[25]

Early engagement with stakeholders is noted as both a benefit and a risk. The length of time required for building shared trust and understanding means that engaging with key stakeholders early can help to develop a sense of ownership and willingness to stay at the table as soon as possible. This ownership and commitment is important when the 'going gets tough'. However, expanding a network too early can make consensus harder to build. The initiators of joint activities need to think carefully about who to engage with and when.[26]

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[20] Lynda Gratton and Tamara J., 'Eight ways to Build Collaborative Teams', *Harvard Business Review*, November 2007, pp.100-109, http://harvardbusinessonline.hbsp.harvard.edu/hbsp/hbr/index.jsp?ml_issueid=BR0711

[21] Glenn Parker (1994) and the Institute on Governance (1996), cited in the Canadian Centre for Management Development, *Managing Horizontal Policy issues,* Deputy Minister's Task Force on Horizontal Issues, December 1996, pp.28-29, www.csps-efpc.gc.ca/Research/publications/pdfs/horize.pdf

[22] Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Companion Guide, *The Development of Results-based Management and Accountability Frameworks for Horizontal Initiatives*, June 2002, www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/tools_outils/comp-acc_e.asp

[23] Jonathan Hughes and Jeff Weiss, 'Simple Rules for Making Alliances Work', *Harvard Business Review,* November 2007, pp.122-131, http://harvardbusinessonline.hbsp.harvard.edu/hbsp/hbr/index.jsp?ml_issueid=BR0711

[24] Cabinet Office, *Wiring It Up: Whitehall's Management of Cross-Cutting Policies and Services,* United Kingdom, 2000, p.36, www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/upload/assets/www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/coiwire.pdf

[25] Paul W. Mattessich et al*., Collaboration: What makes it work 2ⁿᵈ edition,* 2001, p.13.

[26] Mark Hopkins et al., *Moving from the heroic to the everyday: Lessons learned from leading horizontal projects*, Canadian Centre for Management Development, 2001, p.9, www.csps-efpc.gc.ca/Research/publications/html/horinz_rt/horinz_rt_1_e.html

Defined and agreed joint outcomes

The majority of studies on coordinated initiatives stress the importance of working towards clearly-defined and mutually-agreed joint outcomes. If objectives are unclear or not shared, participants may work towards different, incompatible goals and fail to achieve desired outcomes. To overcome this risk, all participants need to have a clear understanding of both the goals and agreed timeframes towards which they are working.[27]

The process of developing joint outcomes is often as valuable as the final product. Case studies point to the identification of joint outcomes and results being both a critical success factor and a key turning point in the progress of many initiatives.[28] To be successful, the outcome that the group is seeking needs to be greater than the individual outcomes of each of the contributing agencies. The sphere of activity should overlap but not be identical.[29]

Joint outcomes are only successful if participants feel they are attainable. In many cases, defined outcomes can be too long term to motivate participants on a day-to-day basis. In order to increase this motivation, a number of studies suggest not only measuring the extent to which outcomes are achieved, but also outcomes and results for the participants themselves. For example, the New Zealand *Mosaics* study suggests that two types of outcomes should be measured: impact outcomes, relating to the impact of the project on the issue addressed; and process outcomes, relating to what the group is achieving for its members and their organisations, such as better information-sharing.[30]

More guidance on developing shared outcomes can be found in the SSC's *Managing for Shared Outcomes: A Resource for Agency Leaders*.[31]

The Systems Dimension

Appropriate and documented governance and accountability frameworks

All participants need to clearly understand and agree their own and others' roles, responsibilities and accountabilities and how to carry them out. However, circumstances can change frequently in joint agency initiatives. Role definitions should not be so rigid that they inhibit flexibility as the initiative develops.[32] Care should be taken that developing a formal plan does not obscure the need to explore and clarify the nature of the working relationship – not just what people will do but how they will go about it.[33] In practice, the degree of flexibility is generally dictated by the nature and timeframes of the project. Clarity of roles and objectives is needed from the very beginning if timelines are short or externally-driven. In projects with long timeframes, patience in allowing clarity to emerge is valuable to garner long term commitment to the objectives.[34]

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[27] Comptroller and Auditor General, *Joining Up to Improve Public Services*, Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General, United Kingdom, 2001, p.47, www.nao.org.uk/publications/nao_reports/01-02/0102383.pdf

[28] Mark Hopkins et al., *Moving from the heroic to the everyday: Lessons learned from leading horizontal projects*, p.18.

[29] Paul W. Mattessich et al., *Collaboration: What makes it work 2nd edition*, p.26.

[30] New Zealand Ministry of Social Development, *Mosaics: Key Findings and Good Practice Guide for Regional Co-ordination and Integrated Service Delivery*, 2003, p.17, www.msd.govt.nz/documents/publications/strategic-social-policy/mosaics.pdf

[31] Managing for Shared Outcomes Development Group for the Managing for Outcomes Programme Office, State Services Commission, *Getting Better at Managing for Shared Outcomes: A resource for Agency Leaders*, 2004.

[32] Paul W. Mattessich et al., *Collaboration: What makes it work 2nd edition*, p.21.

[33] Jonathan Hughes and Jeff Weiss, 'Simple Rules for Making Alliances Work', pp.122-131.

[34] Mark Hopkins et al., *Moving from the heroic to the everyday: Lessons learned from leading horizontal projects*, p.12.

The need to reconcile individual accountabilities with a collective sense of purpose and responsibility is one of the most significant tensions to be resolved in the management of a joint agency initiative. Because in the State sector, accountability frameworks are vertical, the horizontal accountability structures of joint agency initiatives can sometimes conflict with other established accountability mechanisms. However, the issues can be overcome. The literature points out that while system-wide projects can create challenges, there is plenty of evidence of projects that have made existing accountability structures work for the project rather than against it. The key to success is the way accountability is managed, as well as the capacity of managers and organisations to take measured risks and to be innovative.[35]

Some particular practices are mentioned in studies of coordinated projects. The literature notes that it is particularly important to ensure that all Ministers with connections to the initiative are regularly briefed. Clear outcomes, governance and accountability structures and deliverables create a solid basis from which to negotiate both with Ministers and those within agencies.[36] Mechanisms should also be in place to help participants resolve any conflict that arises from the competing demands placed on them as employees and as inter-agency group members.[37]

Several studies recommend that a single lead agency be identified early, with supporting agencies' roles and accountabilities clearly documented and defined. This appears to be most relevant when dealing with cross-cutting policy issues across executive government agencies.[38]

Systems and structures can encourage or inhibit cooperation as they influence the way personal interactions develop over time.[39] The structures of joint initiatives need to sustain relationships over the long term. This means balancing two conflicting needs: structures need to be in place to give relationships resilience as other priorities compete for people's attention, but not provide too much formality and impede the initiative's ability to adapt to changing circumstances. Elaborate and formal structures may also over-shadow continued personal contact and commitment among the key participants.

No single structure provides the ultimate solution. In fact, different structures may be appropriate at different stages of an initiative's life cycle. At a diagnostic stage, formal machinery is premature and can hinder the emergence of a culture of shared ownership. However, waiting too long to formalise or institutionalise a coordinated initiative bears the risk that the initiative loses focus, momentum and resilience.

A wide range of structures can be applied to coordinated initiatives. The appropriate form should be decided by matching structure to task, objectives, what information, resources and authority are being shared, and to what end. Scale and scope will often determine the amount of logistical support an initiative needs.[40]

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[35]   Ibid, p.20.
[36]   Ibid, p.20.
[37]   Paul W. Mattessich et al., *Collaboration: What makes it work 2nd edition,* p.20
[38]   See for example, New Zealand Office of the Controller and Auditor General, *Key Success Factors for Effective Coordination and Collaboration Between Public Sector Agencies*, 2003; Institute of Public Administration Australia, *Working Together – Integrated Governance*, 2002, p.3; Guy Peters, *Managing Horizontal Policy issues,* p.10; New Zealand Ministry of Social Development, *Mosaics: Key Findings and Good Practice Guide for Regional Co-ordination and Integrated Service Delivery*.
[39]   Giddens (1984) in S. Faerman et al., 'Understanding inter-organizational cooperation: public-private collaboration in regulating financial market innovation', *Organizational Science*, Vol.12:3, Linthicum, May/June 2001.
[40]   Mark Hopkins et al., *Moving from the heroic to the everyday: Lessons learned from leading horizontal projects*, p.28.

Whatever the structure and however it has developed, all participants need to agree on governance and accountability arrangements. And because of the need to ensure continuity, provide assurance to Ministers and stakeholders and manage risk, documenting these is important.[41]

The SSC is developing models of governance frameworks that can be applied in a range of contexts. This work is due for release in June 2008.

Sufficient and appropriate resources

All studies agree that resources are critical if a coordinated initiative is to be sustainable and provide value for money.[42] The main resource requirements are a dedicated budget, a working pace that can sustain progress without overwhelming the group and, most importantly, sufficient time to establish working relationships, achieve outcomes and nurture the required behaviours.[43]

Money is found to be a double-edged sword. On one hand it can cause participants to lose sight of objectives and create a struggle over 'turf' and resources. On the other hand, it can contribute significantly to an initiative's capacity and can be the stimulus that brings parties to the table. The key is timing. If money precedes the development of trust, commitment to shared outcomes and agreement over an agenda, then problems can result.[44]

Process to measure performance from established baselines

No matter whether they are short or long term, coordinated initiatives are no different from other activities in that their progress should be monitored and action taken if performance is unsatisfactory. This typically requires agreed action plans, responsibilities and timeframes for each party, and reliable performance measures to track progress.[45]

The quality of information is important for success. The more time invested in understanding what data is required and creating a baseline, the more accurate the outcomes and the more effective the initiative is likely to be. However, systems of measurement must serve the project and its outcomes, not replace them.[46]

Ensuring that early wins can be identified is important both for the motivation of the team and as a way to secure resources and buy-in. Dividing large initiatives into smaller measurable activities can help identify more manageable short-term objectives. The results must then be visible and widely recognised as worthwhile accomplishments. This type of publicity generally helps boost the larger initiative.[47]

Measuring progress as early as possible helps participants demonstrate the progress they are making to stakeholders and also provides clarity amongst the participants around shared

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[41]   Ibid. p.23.
[42]   For example, Comptroller and Auditor General, *Joining Up to Improve Public Services*, p.9.
[43]   Paul W. Mattessich et al., *Collaboration: What makes it work 2nd edition,* p.27.
[44]   Mark Hopkins et al., *Moving from the heroic to the everyday: Lessons learned from leading horizontal projects*, p.39.
[45]   Comptroller and Auditor General, *Joining Up to Improve Public Services*, p.9.
[46]   Mark Hopkins et al., *Moving from the heroic to the everyday: Lessons learned from leading horizontal projects*, p.18.
[47]   Ibid, p.35.

objectives and working style. In order to do this, at the early stages, initiatives can measure the means as well as the ends (e.g. information sharing or the development of new ideas).[48]

The SSC is due to release good practice guidance on performance measurement by June 2008.

The Behaviours Dimension

Right representation, skills and team leadership

Successful coordinated initiatives require team members who have authority to represent their agency, as well as the right mix of agencies.

Participants in a coordinated initiative should represent a cross-section of agencies which involvement is necessary for the coordinated initiative to succeed. Participants need to continually monitor whether new stakeholders have emerged, who need to fully participate in the initiative rather than only be consulted or kept informed.

Successful coordinated initiatives often involve people at multiple levels of an agency. This means that each participant must be able to speak for the entire unit or function that they represent. However, when major decisions are made, there should be enough time allocated for the participants to take information back to their organisations to confer with colleagues about what the decision should be. Representatives need the ability to negotiate, sense when to compromise and have the patience to allow the relevant parts of their agency time to act deliberately and thoughtfully to reach decisions.[49]

Having the right skills and competencies on the team is critical to the success of the coordinated initiative. Participants must display a positive attitude to work well as a team and develop a sense of shared commitment. Participants need to establish working relationships based on mutual support and trust, acknowledging their differences and sharing information openly. They also need access to the right advice to inform decision-making.[50] In an inter-agency initiative, participants need to accommodate a broader range of perspectives and styles than they would likely see on an internal agency project. This requires them to be flexible when making decisions and to be open to considering a range of options, approaches and styles. Participants need good relationship and communication skills to fulfil formal communication needs, maintain informal communication channels and aid group cohesion.[51]

Complementing participants' skills and competencies is their level of motivation. Motivation is linked to self-interest and incentives.[52] Participants need to be able to see how their function, unit or organisation will benefit from being involved in the initiative. This may include the added value of sharing best practice or lessons learned. The lead organisation may also create value for partnering organisations by reducing administrative burdens associated with coordination, reporting and evaluation functions.[53]

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[48]   Jonathan Hughes and Jeff Weiss, 'Simple Rules for Making Alliances Work', pp.122-131.
[49]   Ibid, p.17.
[50]   Comptroller and Auditor General, *Joining Up to Improve Public Services*, p.48.
[51]   Paul W. Mattessich et al., *Collaboration: What makes it work 2nd edition*, pp.16-19.
[52]   Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Companion Guide, *The Development of Results-based Management and Accountability Frameworks for Horizontal Initiatives*, p.4.
[53]   Ibid, p.84.

The majority of studies on the behaviours required for successful coordination emphasise the role of leadership. Two types of leadership are identified: first, the leadership role played by the group itself, and second, the leadership role within the group.

By coordinating an initiative, a group immediately assumes a leadership role. Therefore the agencies involved and the group itself need to have legitimacy amongst the people that the initiative is aiming to influence. A group's leadership image should be assessed at the early stages and corrected if necessary. Furthermore, the group should continue to ensure it maintains its legitimacy throughout the life of the initiative.[54]

Leadership of the group is critical in directing the team and initiative toward the outcome and maintaining momentum, particularly when difficulties emerge and people revert to what they know.[55] Several skills are identified as critical for the leader of the group.[56] These can be broadly grouped under political knowledge and skills, interpersonal knowledge and skills and process knowledge and skills.[57]

Organisational cultures that support coordination

Individuals taking part in a coordinated initiative can often find it difficult to balance the outcomes and priorities of the initiative with those of their own organisation. The support of the individual's organisation for the initiative's outcomes and priority level is critical.[58]

Research shows that organisational culture and behaviour can make or break joined-up working. Participants in coordinated initiatives need to understand that effective processes and integration rely on a change in the working practices and cultures of individuals and their organisations.[59] The sense of purpose built into the initiative's objectives also needs to be translated into the work programmes of the individual agencies.[60]

Overall, if individuals involved in a coordinated initiative are from organisations which cultures support collaboration internally, it is likely to contribute to the success of the coordinated initiative.[61] Particular practices can help build a culture that supports collaboration. These include: senior leaders modelling and purposely investing in building collaboration; coaching and mentoring as a practice; human resource practices – particularly training in skills needed for collaborative behaviour; and support for informal community-building.[62]

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[54] Paul W. Mattessich et al., *Collaboration: What makes it work 2nd edition,* p.13.
[55] Mark Hopkins et al., *Moving from the heroic to the everyday: Lessons learned from leading horizontal projects*, p.33.
[56] Refer to Paul W. Mattessich et al., *Collaboration: What makes it work 2nd edition*, p.28.; Mark Hopkins et al., *Moving from the heroic to the everyday: Lessons learned from leading horizontal projects,* pp.33-34; Canadian Centre for Management Development, *Managing Horizontal Policy issues,* Deputy Minister's Task Force on Horizontal Issues, December 1996, p.29; Madeline Carter, *'The Importance of Collaborative Leadership in Achieving Effective Criminal Justice Outcomes'*, Center for Effective Public Policy, Jan 2006, pp.3-4; P.M. Jackson and L. Stainsby, 'Managing Public Sector Networked Organisations', *Public Money and Management,* January-March 2000, pp.11-16.
[57] Madeline Carter, *The Importance of Collaborative Leadership in Achieving Effective Criminal Justice Outcomes*, pp.3-4.
[58] Comptroller and Auditor General, *Joining Up to Improve Public Services,* p.13.
[59] Kenneth Hogg, *Making a Difference: Effective Implementation of Cross-cutting Policy,* Scottish Executive Policy Unit, June 2000*,* p.23, www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/158621/0043026.pdf
[60] Richard Boyle, *The Management of Cross Cutting Issues*, Committee for Public Management Research, Discussion Paper 8, Institute of Public Management, Dublin,1999, pp.32-33, www.cpmr.gov.ie/publications/discussion-papers/the-management-of-cross-cutting-issues.pdf
[61] Paul W. Mattessich et al., *Collaboration: What makes it work 2nd edition,* p.12.
[62] Lynda Gratton and Tamara J. Erickson, 'Eight ways to Build Collaborative Teams', pp.100-109.

Shared culture, language and values

Shared culture is important if members are to develop a sense of joint ownership of the way the group works and of the results it produces.[63] This is easier to achieve when agencies have a prior history of working well together, primarily because the issue of shared culture has already been partially resolved. If there is no shared history, agencies should consider the environment in which they are working, for example, whether there is competition between agencies that needs to be carefully managed.[64]

Developing trust between participants is key to creating a working environment where the concerns of individual agencies can be entrusted to the group. Barriers can arise because of individuals' pre-conceived notions of the attitudes or skills of people from different backgrounds, compounded by a lack of understanding of the other agencies' mandates, cultures and ways of working. Participants need to be aware of these differences and understand that discomfort is part of the process of developing a shared culture.[65]

One way to develop trust amongst participants is to allow sufficient time at the beginning of the coordinated initiative to: learn about each other's perspectives; present intentions and agendas honestly; understand how language is used; and recognise how members perceive each other. It is important to remember that each participant comes from an organisation that has its own culture. Although the participants in the coordinated activity will build a shared culture over time, they will not stop associating with the culture of their organisation. Developing a shared culture means bringing existing cultures together and developing a subsidiary working culture. It does not mean forcing participants to abandon their own culture or work practices.[66]

Another suggestion is that trust relies on each party being prepared to accept elements of risk: the more modest the outcomes expected and the lower the degree of risk, the more likely it is that expectations will be fulfilled and trust developed. This creates a virtuous cycle. Therefore, where possible, initiation of joint working arrangements should begin with modest or low-risk activities before targeting more ambitious outcomes.[67]

Successful coordinated initiatives require people to work together almost as if they were employed by the same organisation. Participants need to know how their colleagues operate, make decisions, allocate resources and share information. Further, they need to have a clear understanding of each participant's organisational structure, policies and procedures, culture and norms. This understanding should be used to establish formal guidelines for working together. Researchers point out that, usually, relationships and how people will work together are discussed in highly abstract terms, but unspoken assumptions about what that means may differ in practice. Taking the time to explore unspoken assumptions in more detail and recognising when misunderstandings arise is important in building shared language and a stable relationship.[68]

When building a new coordinated initiative, there is a temptation to ignore or disguise differences between the participants. However, the ultimate strength of the initiative and the

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[63]   Ibid, p.18.
[64]   Ibid, p.12.
[65]   Comptroller and Auditor General, *Joining Up to Improve Public Services,* p.49.
[66]   Mark Hopkins, et al., *Moving from the heroic to the everyday: Lessons learned from leading horizontal projects*, p.12.
[67]   S. Vangen and C. Huxham, 'Nurturing collaborative relations: Building trust in interorganizational collaboration', *The Journal of Applied Behavioural Science,* Vol.39:1, Arlington, March 2003, pp.5-32.
[68]   Jonathan Hughes and Jeff Weiss, 'Simple Rules for Making Alliances Work', pp.122-131.

development of a shared culture comes from a group's ability to explore, understand and harness the different skills, cultures and working styles that people bring.[69]

Each organisation will bring to the table different assumptions and technical vocabulary. Taking time to understand what each of the participants mean by key expressions and concepts is part of developing a shared culture. More than just terminology needs to be understood: a deeper understanding touches on the various mental models (core assumptions and values) that sit behind the use of language.[70]

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[69]   Ibid.

[70]   Mark Hopkins et al., *Moving from the heroic to the everyday: Lessons learned from leading horizontal projects*, p.12.

In Summary

The Development Goals for the State Services are designed to meet the vision that the New Zealand State Services be

A system of world class professional State Services
serving the government of the day and meeting the needs of New Zealanders.

This goal cannot be achieved by agencies working in isolation. For the State Services to work well for New Zealanders, agencies have no choice but work closely together.

There is a large spectrum of joint agency initiatives, from communication to collaboration. The Coordinated State Agencies goal encompasses joint agency activity across this spectrum.

Coordinated initiatives can assist in solving complex policy issues; provide better targeted services and results; reduce duplication; overcome fragmentation; and deliver services to New Zealanders in a way that meets their expectations. However, coordinated initiatives are not suited to all situations and have disadvantages as well as benefits. Care must be taken to ensure that the initiative's impact, value, accountability mechanisms and rationale have been carefully considered before launching into it.

The literature highlights numerous factors that contribute to the success of joint agency initiatives. The *Factors for Successful Coordination Framework* groups nine success factors under three inter-related dimensions: mandate, systems and behaviours. The framework does not assume that all factors must be present before any coordinated activity begins. However, by ensuring these factors are in place over time, agencies will coordinate more effectively and achieve success together. The factors are summarised below:

Mandate: for successful coordination, leaders must emphasise the importance of effective coordination and commit to making it work by prioritising the coordinated activity within an all-of-government context; Ministers and other stakeholders need to buy into the coordinated approach; and State servants must agree on clearly-defined joint outcomes to focus effort.

Systems: for successful coordination, appropriate governance and accountability frameworks must be in place and the roles, responsibilities and contributions of each agency documented – for instance through a memorandum of understanding; sufficient and appropriate resources and systems must be available to deliver the required tasks; and an effective process to measure performance from established baselines must be in place, with remedial action being taken when necessary.

Behaviours: for successful coordination, the right agencies must be represented by State servants with the appropriate authority, and the right skills and competencies to work collaboratively; there must be clear leadership among the group; and each agency's organisational culture must support coordination so that, over time, those State servants involved in the coordinated activity come to share common culture, language and values.

A high level summary of the *Factors for Successful Coordination Framework* is also available as a one-page fact sheet on the SSC's website at www.ssc.govt.nz/state-services-coordination.

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