



COLLABORATION MAPPING

A FACILITATION GUIDE

WHAT IS A COLLABORATION MAP?

Effective collaboration is a critical aspect of USAID’s work. It ensures that the Agency establishes and leverages relationships with key stakeholders, including other U.S. government actors, donors, host government counterparts, partners, civil society, and the private sector. Collaboration is important in order to identify areas of shared interest and potential cooperation, avoid duplication of efforts, share knowledge about what works and what needs adjustment, and develop new, innovative ideas to address shared development challenges.

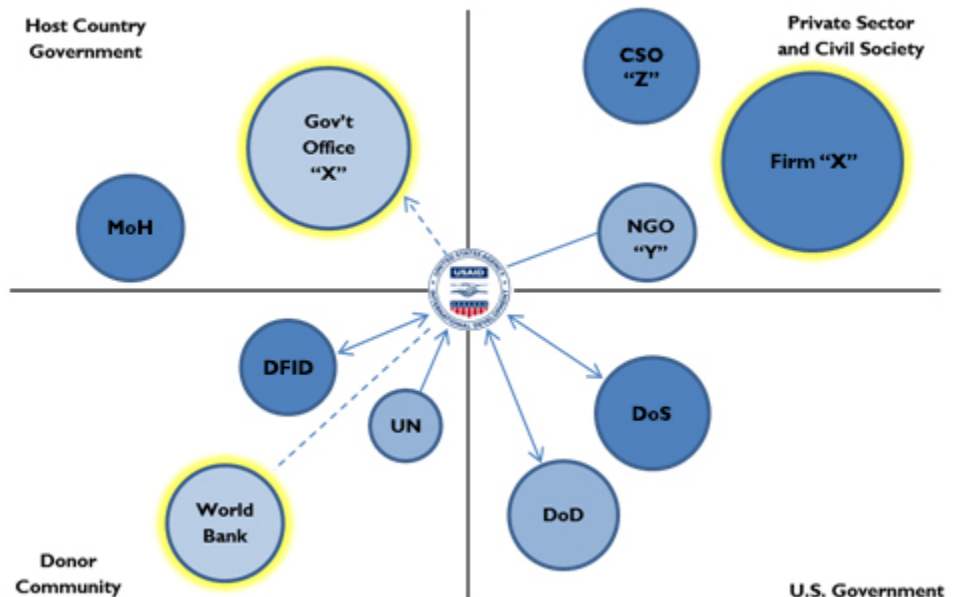
A collaboration map is one approach, developed by USAID/Rwanda, to graphically depict USAID’s relationships with its key stakeholders. As a learning tool, it helps a mission or bureau create a shared understanding of who its key stakeholders are, what their levels of interaction and influence are with USAID, and based on these findings, where USAID should strategically place time and effort cultivating relationships. This tool, however, is not USAID-specific, and could be equally relevant to USAID’s implementing partners or other development actors. Below is an example of a collaboration map (created using PowerPoint).

BACKGROUND

USAID/Rwanda staff first applied the collaboration mapping approach in 2012 to guide their thinking during the development of their Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS). In particular, it helped technical staff to identify what organizations would influence, support, or otherwise affect achieving the objectives of the strategy.

MAP LEGEND

- Quadrant: Type of organization
- Size: Resource-based influence
- Shading: Non-resource-based influence
- Proximity: Frequency of interaction
- Line: Strength of interaction
- Arrows: Financial flows
- Glow: Attention needed



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WHEN TO USE COLLABORATION MAPS

While USAID/Rwanda developed collaboration mapping in the context of the CDCS, the approach could be relevant at various times throughout the Program Cycle. Teams might consider developing a collaboration map for:

- CDCS development
- Project design
- Reflection on project or activity implementation
- Annual portfolio reviews
- Monitoring and evaluation of projects and activities
- Whenever donors and partners need to be convened around a common goal

Discussing and assessing relationships as a team can help USAID staff and implementing partners identify opportunities for teams to leverage their current relationships or establish new ones to identify or advance mission objectives. The visual result of a map then serves as a baseline, target-setter, and reminder of agreed-upon strategic priorities throughout implementation. Having the collaboration map printed and displayed encourages a focus on strategic use of staff time and effort. Collaboration maps can also help coordinate efforts among various partners.

At a more individual level, the ability to identify working relationships, and to flag those which might be at risk as staff leave post or move positions, was a key incentive for using the tool in Rwanda. Also, although primarily designed as an internal tool for Development Objective (DO) teams, it can be used by partners to help define their own relationships and where they align with those of USAID.

COLLABORATION MAPPING TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Collaboration maps can be drawn by hand, created with shapes in a software like PowerPoint, or produced with an interactive Excel-based worksheet that can automatically generate digital collaboration maps. The hand-drawn option might be preferable if the use of technology is inconvenient or not feasible. Hand-drawn maps might also be more appropriate if you need more customization: quadrants of different sizes to accommodate more stakeholders in certain categories, or the ability to include additional information beyond stakeholder labels. If you prefer a computer-generated map, the Excel worksheet can easily produce an editable digital version that you can adjust as necessary and copy and paste wherever and whenever you need. Using a program like PowerPoint will allow you to add lines/arrows connecting various stakeholders, which is not possible in Excel.

Due to different functionality available with the Excel worksheet, there may be slight differences between hand-drawn and automated collaboration maps. Where there are differences, this facilitation guide notes them with further details in the next section.

You can find the Collaboration Mapping Excel Worksheet, as well as a webinar and a PowerPoint presentation for additional information, on USAID Learning Lab: <http://usaidlearninglab.org/library/collaboration-mapping>. For USAID staff, there are additional resources available on ProgramNet, including examples of collaboration maps: <https://programnet.usaid.gov/forum/collaboration-mapping-webinar-discussion-forum>.

STEPS FOR CREATING A COLLABORATION MAP

This is a group exercise, best done in a team environment, whether it is a DO team, a technical office, or a cross-cutting team pulling from multiple offices. It is important to include any staff who will be contributing to the mission Goal, DO, Intermediate Result (IR), Sub-IR, Project, or Activity (referred to here as ‘the objective’ for simplicity) for which you are mapping stakeholder collaboration, since each person may have a different perspective and knowledge to offer. A facilitator should be chosen who can be a neutral voice to guide the process; this may be someone internal or external to the mission.

Before beginning the collaboration mapping exercise, participants should be given clear communication on the purpose of the exercise so that they can adequately prepare. Staff may want to review documents related to the objective and other records of stakeholder interaction (e.g., minutes from partner meetings or email exchanges). While the mapping process will vary depending on the team size and complexity of analysis, the team should plan for a minimum of two hours together to create the first version.

The exercise includes the following general steps*:

1. Define the objective for which you are mapping stakeholders
2. Identify the potential collaborators to include on your map
3. Take stock of the current relationship (frequency and strength of interaction)
4. Determine resource-based influence
5. Determine non-resource-based influence
6. Review and revise your collaboration map

Depending on your preference, you may decide to conduct your analysis (steps 2-5) before entering any information on your map. This may help your team to look at the data more objectively.

*** CUSTOMIZING YOUR MAP**

The Excel-based worksheet allows you to customize the stakeholder/relationship dimensions you want to map. If there are characteristics other than current relationship, resource-based influence, and/or non-resource-based influence you want to capture, you can update the Excel worksheet to reflect those. See Annex A for more details.

As mentioned earlier, you can hand-draw your collaboration map, use a program like PowerPoint, or download and use the interactive Excel-based worksheet. Detailed instructions for the Collaboration Map Excel Worksheet are available in Annex A and in the Instructions tab of the worksheet itself.

1) Define the objective

In order to set the context for the activity, it helps to be explicit about the mission Goal, DO, IR, Sub-IR, Project, or Activity the map will cover. Throughout the mapping activity, you can refer back to this objective in order to ensure that your stakeholder analysis is related to the scope of the map. For example, a certain stakeholder may be very influential for DOI, but if your collaboration map is tied to DO2, you may choose not to include them.

During this first step, it is also a good time to remind participants of the purpose of the collaboration map: to visually depict stakeholders in order to identify opportunities for teams to leverage their current relationships or establish new ones in support of the stated objective.

2) Identify all potential collaborators

Begin by discussing which stakeholders have a stake in and/or influence over the achievement of a particular objective. It is important to focus on only one of these at a time in order to frame all of the questions below.

Answer as thoroughly as possible the basic question: Who are the stakeholders that have influence over the achievement of the objective? Divide potential collaborators into four categories; below are common categories, although the team should choose categories that suit their needs.

- Host Country Government
- Other USG
- Bilateral & Multilateral Organizations
- Civil Society
- Private Sector
- Implementing Partners

The following are examples of guiding questions the team may want to consider to ensure they identify all of the stakeholders that should be included:

1. Who have we worked with in the past on similar or related topics?
2. Who else is already engaged on this issue?
3. Who has expertise, influence, or resources that could be leveraged to achieve our objective?
4. What other organizations also support the change we are seeking?
5. What other organizations may oppose the change we are seeking?

Questions often arise during this step about whether to include implementing partners and how to effectively represent interagency elements. Regarding the first question, feel free to include implementing partners if you are comfortable with the level of complexity (i.e., number of circles) it will add to your map. Implementing partners might be most relevant to the map when they have an assistance relationship with the mission and contribute to the achievement of the objective outside of USAID's funding. Interagency elements will likely need to be discussed as a group and a consensus reached about how to represent them.

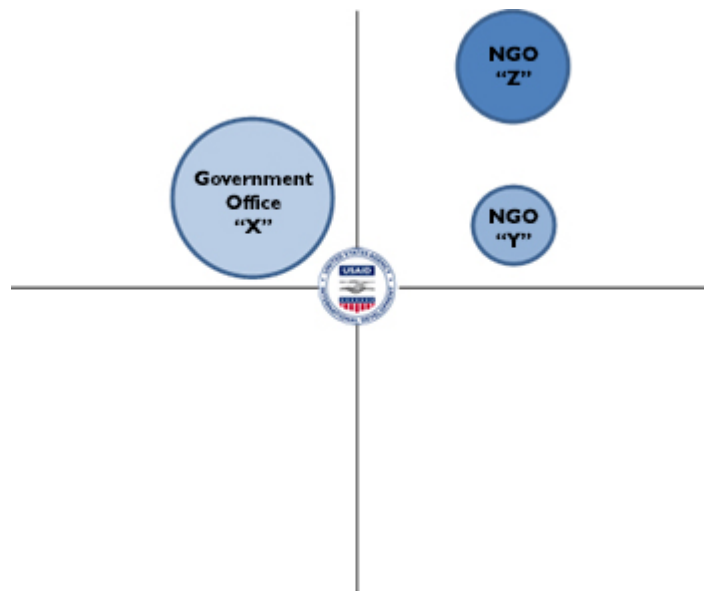
Steps 3-5 Note: The Excel-based worksheet allows you to customize the map's three stakeholder /relationship dimensions. If you choose different dimensions than those listed here in steps 3-5, the guiding questions and point scales below will no longer apply.

3) Take stock of the current relationship

- i) **Frequency of interaction:** Next, determine the current status of the relationship between each potential collaborator and the USAID team creating the collaboration map. Take each potential collaborator and score them according to how much interaction currently takes place between USAID and the stakeholder. These scores should be selected based on an open discussion during which staff share their perspectives. It is possible that each person has unique information that would change how they would rank the current interaction with stakeholders. Have each participating staff member rank each of the potential collaborators on a 10-point scale according to the following:

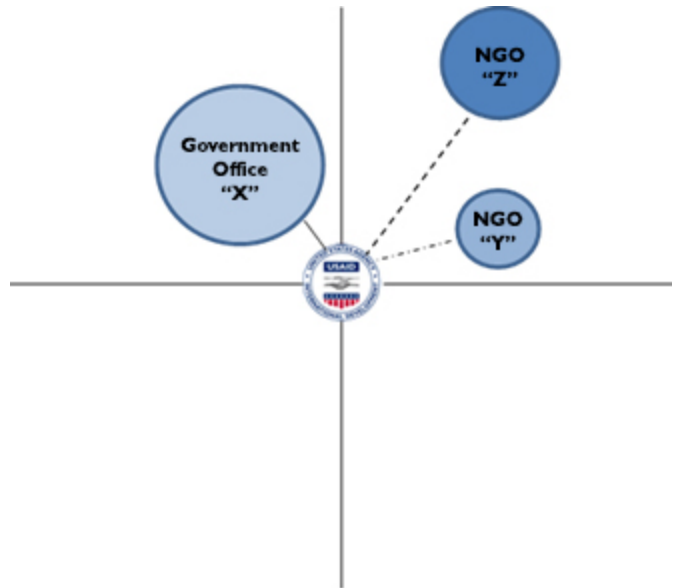
- 1–2 = No Interaction
- 3–4 = Rare
- 5–6 = Intermittent
- 7–8 = Regular
- 9–10 = Constant and Consistent

Average team members' rankings for an overall score for each stakeholder and discuss the average result as a group to allow for any adjustments or to address any disagreements. On the map, this will be represented by the relative proximity of each stakeholder circle to the center—the CLOSER to USAID, the more interaction/closer the current relationship. Discuss the visual representation with the group to make sure everyone understands and agrees with the results.



ii) **Interaction characteristics:** Next, for each potential collaborator, determine strength and quality of the relationship. As a team, discuss the following questions:

- Who has the relationship with X?
- Does the relationship rely on just one contact (at either USAID or the other stakeholder)? If that key person leaves on either end, does the circle (i.e., relationship) begin to move away from USAID?
- How many people do we interact with at X?
- Are communication channels with X open and is communication frank and honest?

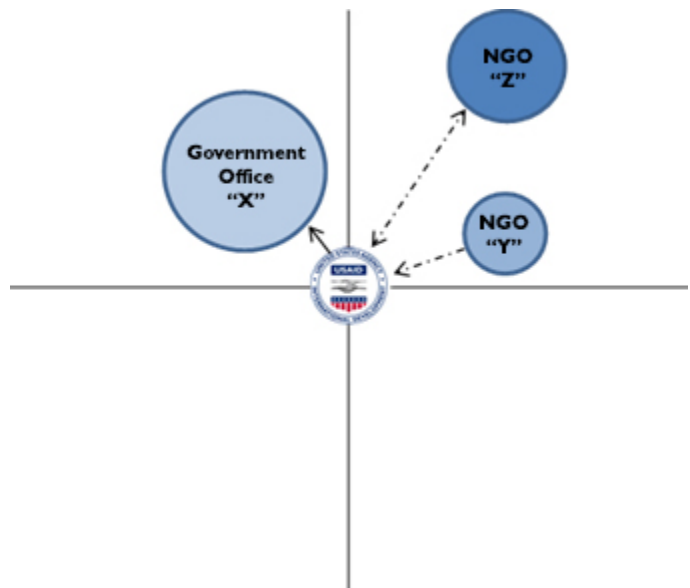


On the map, this will be represented by a line connecting the stakeholder’s circle to USAID at the center. A SOLID line represents a strong relationship that could withstand staff turnover or political changes, and a DOTTED line represents a weak relationship that relies on only one main contact on either side or a potentially tenuous relationship.

Please note: In the Excel worksheet, the line that represent interaction characteristics are not automated and will need to be inserted manually with another program or drawn by hand if you wish to include them. If you do not choose to include lines, you can instead incorporate both the frequency and the quality of the interaction/relationship with each stakeholder when you determine your 1-10 ranking in a combined score that reflects ‘*Current Interaction/ Relationship Strength*’.

iii) **Financial exchange (Optional):** Finally, in some cases, there may be value in representing whether or not there is a financial element to the relationship between USAID and the stakeholder. If so, in what direction is the financial exchange? Is USAID providing funds to this actor, receiving funds from them, or jointly investing in programming?

On a hand-drawn map, this will be represented by the directional arrows on the line connecting the stakeholder circle to USAID. If there is no financial exchange, leave the line without arrows. If USAID is funding the stakeholder, add an arrow pointing toward the stakeholder’s circle. If USAID is receiving funds from this stakeholder, add an arrow pointing toward USAID. If USAID is jointly investing in programming with the stakeholder, add arrows on both ends of the line.



Please note: Similar to the characteristic above, in the Excel worksheet, the arrows that represent financial exchange are not automated and will need to be inserted manually with another program or drawn by hand if you wish to include them.

4) Determine resource-based influence

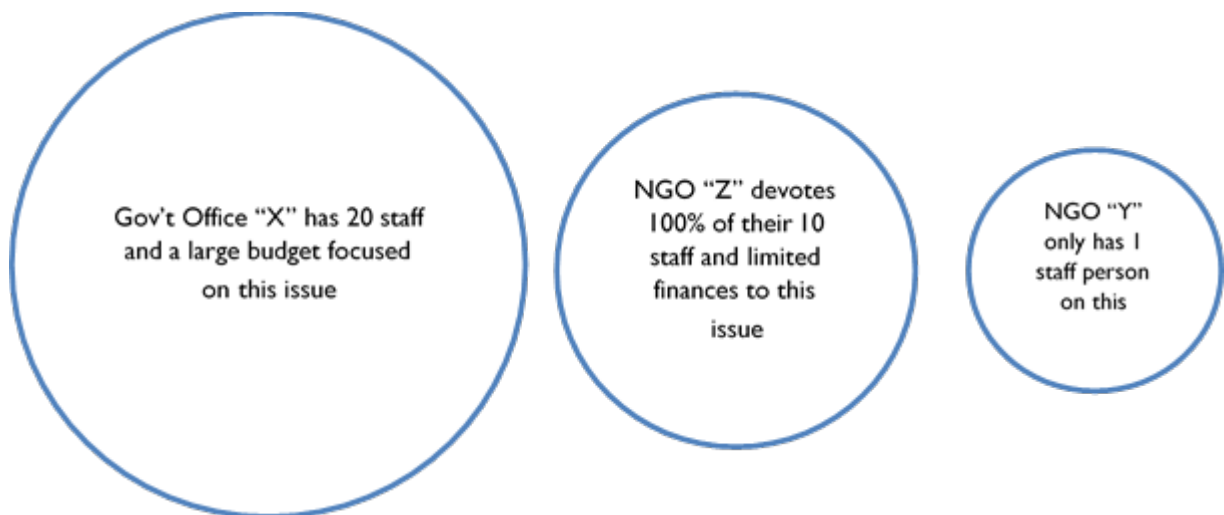
The next step is to provide a score for each potential collaborator or stakeholder according to the level of resource-based influence (financial and human) they have over the achievement of the objective. This influence is defined strictly in terms of direct resources, i.e., how much money, time, and staff this stakeholder already invests or potentially has to invest in the desired outcome.

There are two alternatives to determine how much resource-based influence each stakeholder has over the achievement of the objective:

- If actual resource-based data is available, use it in order to reduce subjectivity. If it is difficult to get figures, the team should provide their best estimate based on observable information. Clearly, it will not be possible to capture or assess all financial resources.
- Another option is to determine these scores through open discussion. Since certain team members might have more detailed knowledge about particular stakeholders, a discussion allows for these figures to be adjusted based on a collective understanding. This discussion will also help everyone better understand the stakeholders' "influence".

After either reviewing available figures and/or having a group discussion, each participating staff member will rank each of the potential collaborators on a 10-point scale: 1=low resource-based influence, 10=high resource-based influence. The facilitator then averages these rankings for an overall score for each stakeholder and lead a group discussion of the results to allow for any adjustments or to address any disagreements. **When deciding the level of rigor for quantifying this type of material influence, there is no universal answer. It is important to use a consistent system that makes sense to the team and everyone can agree on.**

Converting the numerical ranking to a visual helps to see the comparative resource-based influence of each actor—the LARGER the circle, the greater the stakeholder's resource-based influence on this particular objective. Discuss the visual representation with the group to make sure everyone understands and agrees with the results.

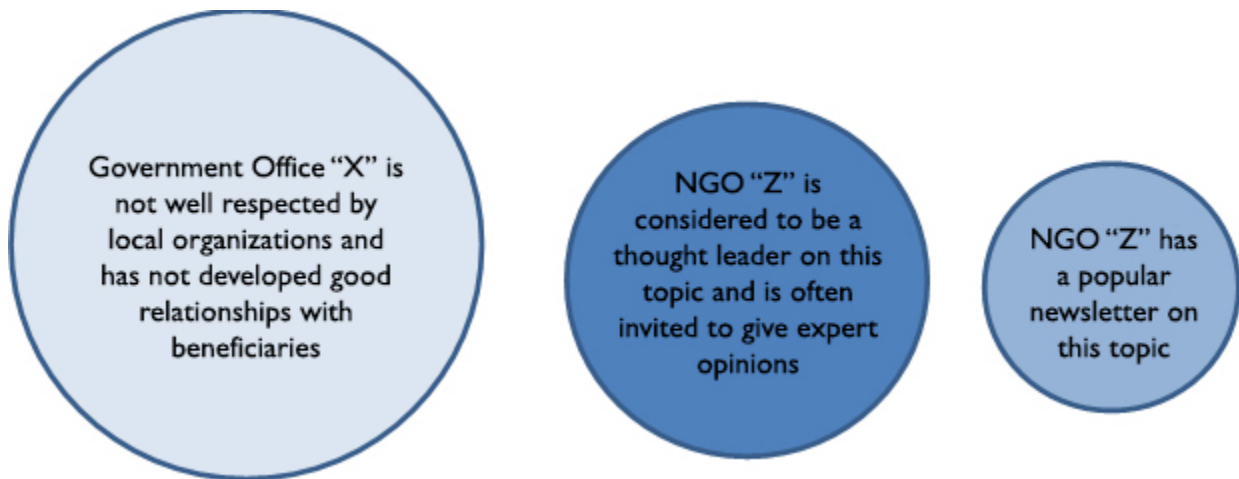


5) Determine non-resource-based influence

Next, take each potential collaborator and score them according to how much non-resource-based influence the stakeholder has over the achievement of the objective. Non-resource-based influence can include political power, traditional and/or social media voice, name recognition, membership size, access to other resources, leadership in key working groups, etc.

To determine how much non-resource-based influence the stakeholders hold over the achievement of the objective, first have an open discussion with the group to reach a joint definition of non-resource-based influence. After this discussion, each participant will rank each of the potential collaborators on a 10-point scale: 1=low, 10=high. Discuss the average results as a group after they are calculated to allow for any adjustments or to address any disagreements.

Take these rankings and average them for an overall score for each. On the map, this type of influence should be represented by the saturation/shade of the circle representing each stakeholder—the DARKER the circle, the more non-resource-based influence this stakeholder has on this particular objective. Discuss the visual representation with the group to make sure everyone understands and agrees with the results.



6) Review and revise your collaboration map

Draw or print out a draft version of the collaboration map developed by the team in steps 1-5. Allow staff to examine the visual representation of the current status of relationships. Make sure people understand what the map means and how to interpret it. Then, as a group, discuss each of these relationships. This discussion may prompt some adjustments in the way USAID approaches its interactions with each stakeholder, the manner in which staff time is prioritized, etc.

Ask the following questions, and make notes on the maps (such as with Post-its) to remind yourselves of the decisions made regarding the following:

- Do our relationships with these stakeholders need to be strengthened? Which ones? Either really big circles or really dark circles that are not close to USAID should be a big concern; these actors have a lot of influence and we are likely not interacting with them sufficiently.
 - ✓ If yes, indicate that this is a priority stakeholder by adding a glow around the circle to show that the relationship needs to be strengthened.
- How can relationships on the other mission teams be used to strengthen collaboration? Does another team have a stronger relationship with this stakeholder? Can we leverage our staff time to strengthen a relationship for more than one purpose?
 - ✓ To answer these questions, it would be helpful to look at collaboration maps from other DOs if they are available. This may not be the case unless this is a mission-wide exercise or if other teams have not done maps.
 - ✓ If a comparison of collaboration maps is possible, add notes identifying these linkages or leverage points with other USAID teams.
- Do we know anything now about future programming that may affect or shift the relationships that we will need to achieve our objective? What can we do now to anticipate those changes?
 - ✓ Record any observations on this point, and review them when updating your collaboration maps. These notes can serve as a reminder of the context and conversation which occurred when they were created.

CONCLUSION

Plan to regularly revisit and update your collaboration map. This is a great tool to help rationalize and manage relationships and impacts over time as staff move, relationships evolve, and programs adapt. To get the most out of this exercise, the maps should be revisited and updated at critical points, such as in preparation for portfolio reviews.

This guidance document is a work in progress that we hope will improve as it is used by missions and partners. We welcome your feedback and input as you use this to create your own collaboration maps so that we can improve the instructions based on field experience. You can provide your feedback by posting comments on the resource page on either Learning Lab or ProgramNet or by contacting a member of the PPL/LER CLA team at learning@usaid.gov. We also welcome sharing of collaboration maps after they have been created so that others may use them as models.

ANNEX A: COLLABORATION MAPPING EXCEL WORKSHEET INSTRUCTIONS

You can use the Collaboration Mapping Excel Worksheet offline by downloading from Learning Lab (<http://usaidlearninglab.org/library/collaboration-mapping>) and saving it to your computer. For the automated features to work properly, make sure you enable macros. As you input each stakeholder and their associated data on the Stakeholder Inputs tab, the collaboration map on that tab will automatically update. The instructions in this annex are also available from the Instructions tab within the Excel worksheet.

Step 1: Title and Logo

Give your map a title by filling out the 'Title' field. That title will automatically appear on your map.

If you would like to use a logo different from the default USAID logo, click on the logo, and on the 'Chart Tools/Format' menu tab, select the 'Shape Fill' option from the Shape Styles area. Choose the 'Picture' option near the bottom of the Shape Fill drop-down menu and browse for the image file you would like to use instead. It will be cropped to a circle the same size as the default USAID logo.

Step 2: Organization Categories

In the worksheet section marked 'Organization Quadrant Setup,' type the four types of organizations in the 'Name' column, replacing the I, II, III, and IV. This could be U.S. Government, Host Country Institutions, Implementing Partners, Academic/Civil Society, Other Donors, etc., depending on the nature of your collaboration map. If you want them to appear in particular quadrants on the map, align your labels with the 'Location' column (Upper Right, Upper Left, etc.). Once you identify the labels for the organizational type quadrants, these will appear on the drop-down menu in the collaboration mapping template below in the 'Type of Organization' column.

Step 3: Stakeholder/Relationship Dimensions

In the worksheet section marked 'Stakeholder/Relationship Dimensions,' you can customize the map from the default dimensions of strength of interaction, and resource- and non-resource-based influence. Replace the default labels to change the type of information you wish to capture. For example, for a communications initiative, you might want to identify stakeholders' current understanding/awareness of an issue. For a change management initiative, you can consider capturing the level of impact the change could have on the stakeholder.

Step 4: Stakeholders

In the collaboration mapping template section, list your stakeholders in the 'Stakeholder Name' column.

This name will be automatically copied to the 'Custom Data Label' column and serve as the stakeholder's circle label in your collaboration map. If you would like to use a shortened name or acronym in your collaboration map, you can simply type the custom label you prefer in the 'Custom Data Label' column.

Step 5: Quadrant Placement

For each stakeholder you have listed, identify which 'Type of Organization' best fits them in the next column. Double-click on the cell (or click the small arrow button to the right of the cell) to show the drop-down menu of labels you chose in step 2. By selecting one of the four options, the circle for the stakeholder will be placed in the appropriate quadrant of your map.

Step 6-8: Stakeholder/Relationship Dimension Information

For each of the three stakeholder/relationship dimensions you chose in Step 3, provide a numeric determination of the value on a scale of 1-10 for each stakeholder.

- **Dimension 1** (Default: *Current Interaction/Relationship Strength*): This will determine the circle's proximity to the center of the map. The higher the number, the closer the circle will be to the center.
- **Dimension 2** (Default: *Resource-based Influence*): This will determine the circle's relative size. The higher the number, the larger the circle.
- **Dimension 3** (Default: *Non-resource-based Influence*): This will determine how light or dark the circle color is. The higher the number, the darker the circle's color fill.

Please note: The lines/arrows between the stakeholder circles described in the Facilitation Guide (page 6) are not automated and will need to be inserted manually with another program or drawn by hand if you wish to include them. For example, to use another program, copy and paste your completed collaboration map into a Word document or PowerPoint presentation slide and use the insert function to add your lines/arrows.

Step 9: Priority

By selecting the checkbox in the 'Priority' column, you can indicate if a particular stakeholder is a priority for collaboration based on the strength of current interaction, resource-based influence, and non-resource-based influence. This will be indicated by a glow effect around the circle.

Step 10: Relative Positioning

Due to relative size and random placement of the circles, they may occasionally overlap one other. You can re-order a circle by clicking on its cell in the 'Custom Data Label' column and then clicking the 'To Top' or 'To Bottom' buttons. The 'Reset Order' button will reset the layer order to the default with the stakeholders' circles displayed from bottom to top in the order than are entered into the table (e.g., Stakeholder #1 is the bottommost circle).

You can also adjust a circle's position within its quadrant without changing the value of its 'Current Interaction/Relationship Strength' by using the 'Adjust Position' sliders. This might be useful if you want to indicate that a particular stakeholder is closer to one neighboring quadrant than other. For example, if an NGO has very close ties with local universities, its circle would be in the NGO quadrant, but you can move it relatively closer to the adjacent Academia quadrant.

You can also use the 'Adjust Position' sliders to move stakeholders closer or farther apart from one another to give a more accurate picture of the overall stakeholder relationships rather than simply their relationship to the center. Moving the slider to the right adjusts the circle clockwise; to the left adjusts the circle counterclockwise. The 'Clear' button will reset all of the sliders to the beginning of each quadrant when adjusting it clockwise (all the way to the right on the slider). The 'Randomize' button will assign random values to each circle's position, which can then be refined using the individual sliders.

The offset controls in the 'Logo Size and Offset' box under the map allow you to adjust the proximity to the central logo and the stakeholder circles. Use this to increase the distance between the central logo and stakeholder circles that have a high relationship strength (closer to the circle) and/or high financial influence (larger circle) and would otherwise overlap with the central logo.

Similarly, the 'Axis Scale' options under the map allow you to adjust the axis value for the quadrants. This allows for customization when there are stakeholders with low relationship strength (further from the central logo) and their circles would be cut off the map. Press 'increase' to bring the stakeholder circles relatively closer to the central logo. Conversely, if you would like to increase the distance between the circles and spread them out further from the central logo, press 'decrease.'

The relative scale of the circles to one another and the map overall can also be adjusted with the 'Circle Scale' option below the map or on the Configuration tab.

Other Configuration Options

There are several interactive elements on the Configuration tab that allow you to customize your collaboration map by changing various settings:

- **Dimension 3 shading color palette:** This is where the colors for each of the input values (1-10) are assigned for stakeholder/relationship dimension 3 (*default: Non-resource-based Influence*). Various preset color palettes have been provided, however this can be set to any desired combination. The fill color of each cell maps to the circle color for the corresponding non-resource-based influence value. To adjust, change the fill color to the desired color. You can also specify any label color combination by setting the font fill color for the corresponding cell. To use a preset color palette, copy and paste the 10 cells of the preset palette to the input area labeled 'Color Palette'.
- **Glow Color:** Set the fill color of this cell to the desired glow color that identifies priority stakeholders.
- **Glow Radius:** The size of the glow can be adjusted by entering the value (0-20) or using the arrows.
- **Logo Offset:** This specifies the distance between the central logo and the closest possible stakeholder circle (as defined by the Current Interaction/Relationship Strength [proximity to center] and Resource-based Influence [size of circle]). Enter any value greater than 0 or use the arrows.
- **Logo Size:** This specifies the relative size of the logo, corresponding to the sizes for Resource-based Influence (size of circle). Enter a value 1-10 or use the arrows.
- **Logo on Top:** By checking this box, your logo will appear above any circles that may be close enough to overlap.
- **Axis Size:** This specifies the visible axis. The axis adjustment needs to be large enough to accommodate the entered Current Interaction/Relationship Strength (proximity to center), Resource-based Influence (size of circle), and Logo Offset from the center. Depending on the relative size and placement of the circles, this can be adjusted to zoom in or out to avoid outlying circles being cut off or to increase the distance between the central logo and closer circles.
- **Relative Circle Size:** The relative size of the circles can be determined using either Width or Area. Choosing 'Width' will size each circle using the width and will exaggerate the relative Resource-based Influence (size of circle). Choosing 'Area' will base the relative size on the area of each circle and will have a more gradual increase in size. Use the drop-down to select either choice.
- **Circle Scale:** The overall scale of the circles can also be adjusted from its default value of 100. This can be modified to provide greater customization depending on the set of organizations and their size/placement. Enter any value (0-300) or use the arrows.