

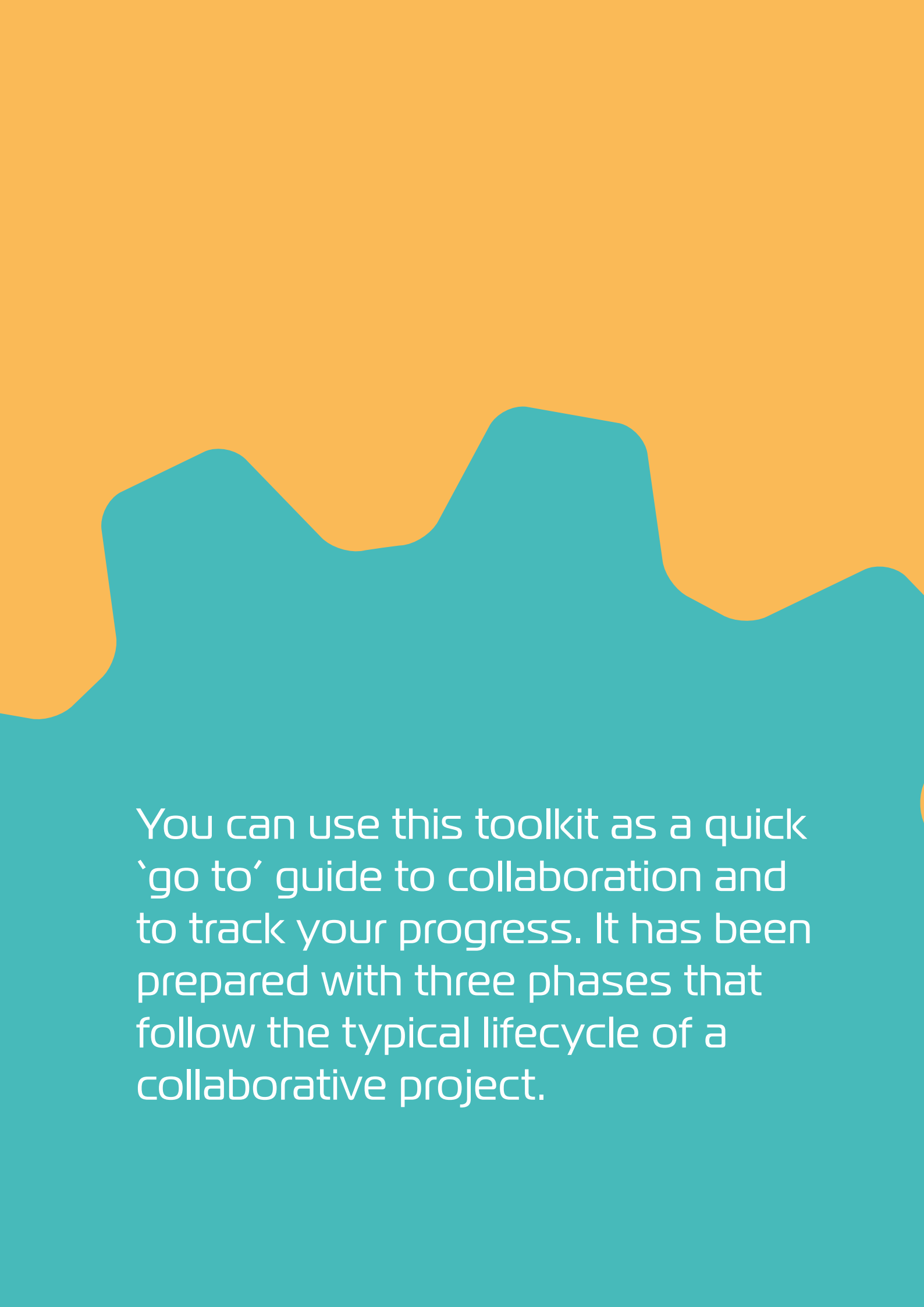
P4P



Collaboration Toolkit Guidance Notes

Executive Summary





You can use this toolkit as a quick 'go to' guide to collaboration and to track your progress. It has been prepared with three phases that follow the typical lifecycle of a collaborative project.



Guidance Notes

Introduction

What is the P4P Collaboration Toolkit and how to use it

Welcome to the P4P Collaboration Toolkit Guidance. The toolkit is aimed at third sector organisations who are considering working together with others to pool resources, deliver new products / services or to do things innovatively.

The guidance should be used in conjunction with the associated **Collaboration Toolkit survey**. The survey will ask you to self-evaluate your progress against a range of factors that demonstrate best practice when developing a collaborative project. Each partner organisation should complete the survey separately which will enable you to compare your respective responses.

Once you complete and submit the on-line survey, P4P will generate an excel report based on your responses. P4P will then provide you with a baseline 'dashboard' and commentary which you can use to assess how 'collaboration-ready' your organisation is. You can use the follow-up survey, thereafter, at any time to record, self-assess and track your progress over time.

The toolkit has been developed by Partnership for Procurement (P4P) to support organisations to self-assess attitudes, capability and hopefully possibilities for collaborative working. P4P is currently supporting organisations to initiate and develop collaborative models for contract delivery.

You can use the toolkit as a quick 'go to' guide to collaboration and to track your progress. It has been prepared with three phases that follow the typical lifecycle of a collaborative project.

Whilst the toolkit is most suited to organisations seeking to bid for public sector contracts, much of the guidance provided (especially in phases 1 and 2) is relevant for collaborative working where contract delivery is not necessarily the end goal.

The Scottish Government's (SG) Social Enterprise Strategy 2016 - 2026 and associated Action Plan, states that organisations have much to gain by working together and P4P is set up to help deliver on this vision to,

"...support work to initiate and develop new co-operative and consortia models... and enable social enterprises to tender for contracts together, find new ways of sharing risk and reward, and deliver on a larger scale - or create a greater social impact - with increased efficiency".

We welcome feedback from organisations using the toolkit to support its continued development.

You can contact P4P at any time on info@p4p.org.uk if you require support.

Overview

Establish - Prepare - Deliver

Phase 1 Establish the Collaborative Environment

- Assess Your Organisation's Readiness for Collaboration
- Appoint a Collaboration Lead to Drive the Project
- Identify Potential Partners and Assess Compatibility
- Pre Start-up Scoping and Planning
- Establish Foundations for Partner and Stakeholder Engagement

Phase 2 Prepare Your Collaborative Project

- Agree Project Scope, Objectives, Roles and Responsibilities
- Create Collaborative Project Team Environment
- Create a Business Plan
- Agree Consortium Model and Legal Structure
- Processes and Procedures

Phase 3 Deliver Collaborative Project

- Ensure Your Consortium is 'Tender Ready'
- Develop Your Bidding Strategy
- Service Delivery
- Monitoring and Evaluation



Phase 1

Establish the Collaborative Environment

Put simply, 'collaboration' just means two or more organisations working in partnership.

At P4P we believe that groups of small third sector organisations working together to pool resources and collaborate on service delivery or products can often better compete for contracts rather than going it alone. Benefits could include reduced overheads, networking and learning from each other and improved overall capability of your organisation, services or products.

We first recommend you assess your organisation's readiness for collaboration. Ask yourself the following questions (which can also be completed using the [Collaboration Toolkit baseline survey](#)):

- ▶ **Do you have a long-term vision?**
- ▶ **Are you ready to share information with partner organisations in an open and honest manner?**
- ▶ **Do you have a good understanding of what collaboration involves, including the practical steps, obstacles and challenges, operating models and governance, development processes and funding?**

Please see the [P4P Resources page](#) which includes case studies of existing, successful collaborative projects.

Once you are satisfied that your organisation is ready to collaborate, it is important to ensure you appoint a suitable 'project lead' who can drive forward your input and deliver your vision. The lead should carry sufficient authority to make decisions in support of the collaborative project and to commit to any actions identified.

You might have partners already identified and there could have been initial discussion but there may also be other potential partners that you have not considered. Some key questions you will need to ask about potential partners include assessing the compatibility between your organisations, the other organisations' aims and objectives, governance and organisational structure and policies as well as their strengths and weaknesses. You should consider how any areas where you are not compatible would be overcome.

Before moving onto the next phase you should ensure all partner organisations have agreement in principle to collaborate; you have completed an initial market assessment to scope out the products and services you wish to deliver and have identified opportunities and potential customers. Register and search for opportunities on [Public Contracts Scotland](#) and find public bodies' procurement strategies or plans. P4P can support you to carry out these actions.



Any concerns expressed by partner organisations at this stage should be recorded for future reference when setting up the project.

Your next step would be to establish the foundations for partner and stakeholder engagement. You should set up a working group consisting of staff/trustees of partner organisations with clear Terms of Reference (see [here](#) for an example from Know How Non-Profit). The working group should oversee development until establishment of a board or alternative governance arrangement; seek development funding (where required - see the [Senscot Map of Support](#)) and make initial contact with stakeholders. Consider using a stakeholder engagement plan to map out and contact the key people and/or organisations whose support is critical.

Once you are satisfied that your organisation is ready to collaborate, it is important to ensure you appoint a suitable 'project lead' who can drive forward your input and deliver your vision.



Phase 2

Prepare Your Collaborative Project

Do all partners have a clear understanding of the mission/vision of the collaborative project? This is a good time to ensure that each partner understands this. Behind your vision should be an outline of the delivery objectives that will allow you to fulfil the mission of the partnership. Have you quantified what success will look like and how you will measure this?

At this stage you should also outline and assign roles and responsibilities for delivery and put a procedure in place to ensure effective monitoring and reporting during the delivery phase. You will need to establish rules to ensure continuity of delivery that all partners agree to. You should consider issues such as: underperformance, non-attendance at meetings or lack of communication, and dealing with unforeseen circumstances such as a partner who backs out of the project.

Draft a Project Behavioural Charter (or an agreed set of values) to establish and maintain a collaborative team environment. Project collaborative approaches can only be successful if a climate of mutual trust between all partners can be established. The charter should concentrate on the desired behaviours of the individuals engaged in and contributing to the project.

Your next step should be to create a Business Plan. In Phase 1 we highlighted the importance of an initial market assessment and you should now develop this further (check out this straightforward guide produced by **Forth Sector Development**). You should carry out both a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) and PEST (Political, Economic, Social and Technological) analysis. In your plan you should also outline what resource requirements you need.

Evaluate and agree the collaboration model and legal structure that you will use. There are a number of possible models: this **guide** from Senscot Legal contains information relating to legal structures.

Common models of collaboration include:

1. **Managing agent** - an existing organisation bids for contracts and finds subcontractors but does not deliver any of the service themselves.
2. **Managing provider** - similar to managing agent but the lead body is also a provider.
3. **Super provider** - Organisations come together to set up a separate legal structure. Core management functions are carried out through a central support unit.
4. **Informal network** - Loose partnership or unconstituted consortium.



You should appoint a board (or other suitable governance arrangement) with the skills and knowledge to lead the consortium through its early stages. This could include representation from external stakeholder organisations.

Prior to moving onto the delivery phase of your collaborative project you should finalise processes and procedures, including:

- ▶ **Recruiting additional partners (associate or full members)**
- ▶ **Continuing to develop your commissioner influencing plan and developing on ongoing communications and marketing strategy**
- ▶ **Establishing a suitable and agreed model for the management and support function, including: strategic and business planning, stakeholder engagement, developing policies and procedures, recruitment and managing the membership, identifying and bidding for contracts, performance management, fundraising, governance, and finance management.**

Behind your vision should be an outline of the delivery objectives that will allow you to fulfil the mission of the partnership. Have you quantified what success will look like and how you will measure this?



Phase 3

Deliver Collaborative Project

Please see the P4P guidance on [10 Stages of Procurement](#) to ensure your collaboration is 'tender ready'. Do you have a bid library containing all the documentation you are likely to be asked for during the tender process? Check out the guidance document on the [P4P resources page](#).

You want to provide the buyer with a compelling reason to choose your collaboration over your competitors. Consider what your unique selling points are.

Develop your bidding strategy. Before rushing into the tender process it is important to consider whether or not the opportunity is worth taking further. Ask yourself questions including: does it fit with my aims and strategy, do I have recent, relevant experience, do I have time to write a good quality response, is it a deliverable contract and will it make a profit. Check out the bid/no bid decision making template on the P4P [resources page](#).

You will need to revisit your process for deciding roles and responsibilities in the collaboration for every tender bid. Consider setting up a system for identifying the most suitable partners based on factors such as track record, delivery capacity, and stakeholder relationships. Ensure you have a non-disclosure agreement in place to protect against conflicts of interest and competing bids.

When responding to a tender opportunity, you should first hold a 'kick off' meeting to decide whether or not to bid and assign tasks. Following this you should hold a 'storyboarding' meeting with key staff members to flesh out the details of your delivery model and added value you can bring. Preparation and organisation are key to winning tenders. The key components of a tender timeline can be found [here](#) and a template bid writing plan can be accessed on the P4P [resources page](#).

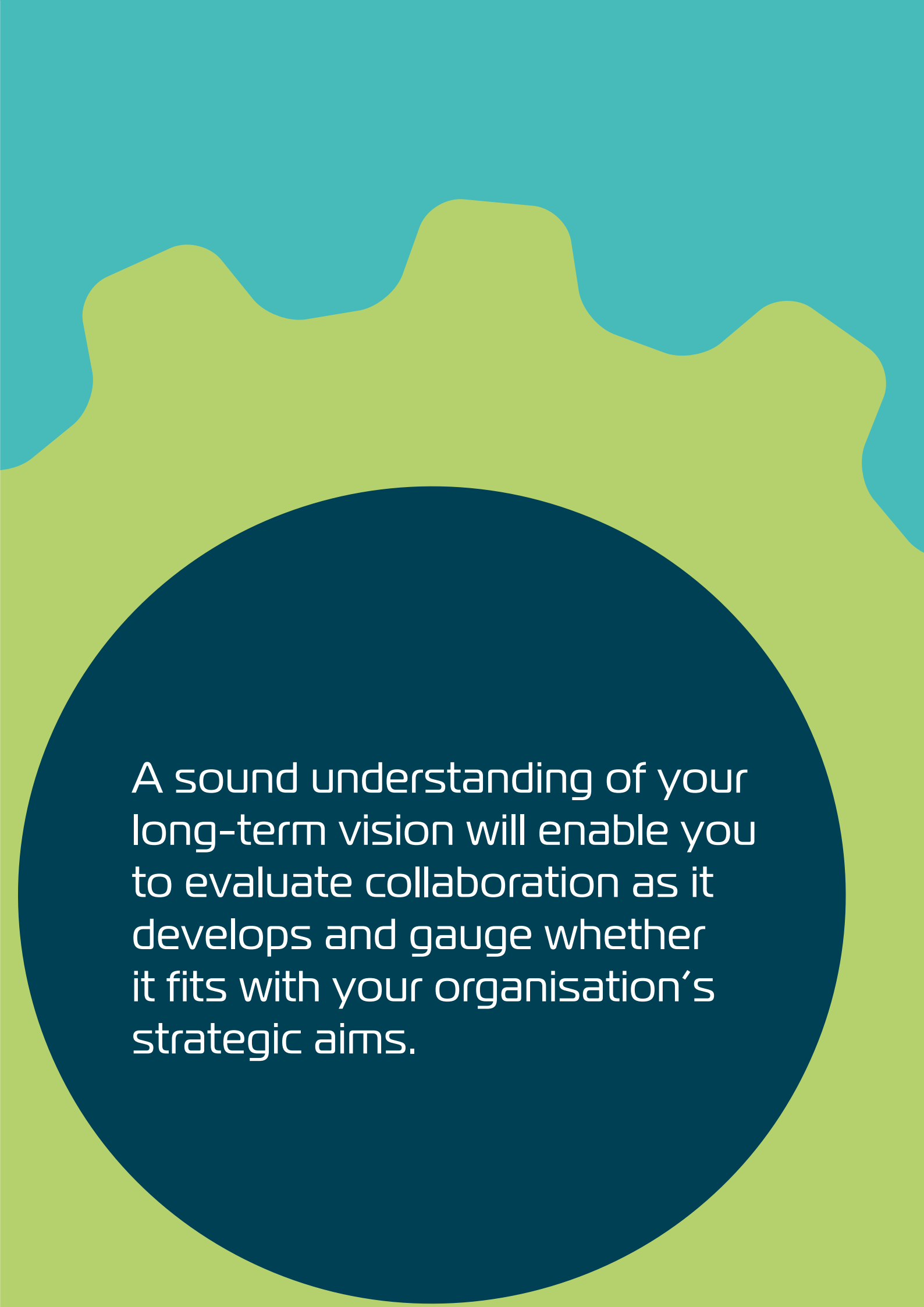
Once you win a tender opportunity, it is time to get on with the job of delivery! Firstly, consider all the potential risks involved in the delivery of the service, what their likelihood is, what impact they could have, who is responsible for them and the mitigating action(s) for each. You may wish to assess risk under the headings of governance, external, regulatory, financial, reputational and operational.

Do you have a robust process in place for awarding contracts amongst partner members? It is a good idea to develop template subcontracts in advance so that these can be completed quickly, where required. You should also consider how risk is passed on to subcontractors. For example, if a subcontractor fails to deliver you may be liable as a prime contractor for withheld payments.

Performance management will be critical for the ongoing success of the project. Consider your approach to managing performance, how you will monitor this, how you will act on the findings of your monitoring activity, and your contract management system (protocols for reporting, payments and response if delivery does not meet targets).

Have you considered how best to ensure clear communications are maintained in the collaboration and how issues/challenges or successes/good practice can be shared? Make sure you use the skills and knowledge within your board or governance structure.

Put in place a 'lessons learned' register which is open to contribution from all stakeholders and a process for collating project outcomes, case studies and feedback.



A sound understanding of your long-term vision will enable you to evaluate collaboration as it develops and gauge whether it fits with your organisation's strategic aims.



P4P takes the security of your data very seriously. All personal data shall be processed by P4P in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations.

The collaboration toolkit is an online guide and contact details are collected as part of the toolkit in order to analyse organisations capacity and ability to collaborate. The information supplied on this form will be processed by P4P using Survey Monkey. The information shall be collected and placed on a dashboard and emailed back to you with the findings of the analysis.

For further details on how your data is used, processed and stored, please see [Senscot Privacy Policy](#).

P4P is funded through the Scottish Government's Building a Sustainable Social Enterprise Sector in Scotland Action Plan 2017-2020.

Contact Details

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or please visit www.p4p.org.uk for more information.

