

# ACE Collaborative Activities Project Framework

## May 2011

### Executive Summary

#### Key Summary

The Collaborative Activities Project (CAP) Framework:

- Aims to encourage and support purposive networking and the development of sustained collaborations over and above information-sharing networks.
- Encourages specific, ground up approaches that recognise that the sector is uneven in its capability and that there is no 'one size fits all' solution.
- Enables and empowers the ACE sector to evolve its own networking arrangements to fit purpose and solutions.
- Stimulates thinking about purpose, 'business case' and sustainable approaches from the beginning of the project.
- Is based on a strong assessment of the current situation in the sector and encourages incremental, evolutionary advancement from the position of the organisations participating.

#### Purpose

The CAP Framework has been developed through a process of dialogue and research, including fieldwork discussions across the ACE sector in New Zealand.

The scope of the project is:

'to ensure that focused and effective collaborative activities across the ACE sector take place in a systematic and structured way which leads to better outcomes for ACE learners'

'to support ACE practitioners and organisations to share information, knowledge and expertise and to take account of natural groups, which might be geographical, learner-based, needs-based or interest-based'.

The purpose of the CAP Framework is to develop both capability and quality in ACE organisations to encourage:

- the achievement of common goals and/or mutually beneficial outcomes for organisations and their learner communities
- development based on need identified by the organisation itself
- development based on organisational 'readiness' and
- effective networking as a means to adding value and quality in ACE organisations.

This will assist ACE organisations to increase and/or improve their:

- management and governance capability
- resources for learning
- teaching practices
- knowledge of, and engagement with, the communities and learner groups they service
- working relationships with wider ACE and 'community learning' partners.

Across New Zealand a range of initiatives have been outlined through the fieldwork - both small/local and larger/more significant - that can usefully be supported in the next phase of this project.

The Framework includes explicit mechanisms to develop collaborative governance arrangements. Collaborative governance has been described as “*a way of working with diverse stakeholders to co-create enduring solutions to our most complex issues, problems and dilemmas*”.

## **The Collaborative Activities Project Framework**

### **Aims**

- To foster and sustain an approach so that ACE providers themselves can achieve the best possible outcomes and benefits for the learners they engage with and support.
- To foster and support collaborative activity and networking led by ACE practitioners, to achieve goals at both individual/organisational level within ACE organisations and between ACE organisations and their collaborative partners where there is common purpose.
- To foster both collaboration capability and collaboration quality among ACE organisations, through an organic and evolving approach, to realise the best possible infrastructure through which effective provision of ACE learning can be provided.
- To foster a collective capability to develop new and innovative practice in meeting the needs of ACE learners.
- To foster sustainable governance and management arrangements that underpins long term partnership.

The Collaborative Activities Project Framework has the following categories:

#### **A. Collaboration Capability**

- a) *Developing relationships*: to strengthen current or future delivery; identifying the nature of the relationships needed for long term, high quality service; engaging with potential organisations that TEC contracted ACE providers need to work with; forming new, enduring, structured relationships.
- b) *Developing organisations*: including both bodies working from local bases, and emergent organisations of national or sector strategic significance; developing appropriate collaborative governance arrangements.

#### **B. Collaboration Quality**

- a) *Adding value* to collaboration activities: facilitating activities that extend the collaborative process (e.g. workshops, seminars, hui, exchanges/visits).
- b) *Sharing good practice*: identifying and enabling inter-organisation collaboration to share best practice, including by those recognised within the sector as lead practitioners.

The following table shows the generic types of projects that should be supported in order to reflect the need

- for ACE organisations to be able to develop collaboration capability and quality to meet their own objectives; and
- to develop strategic collaboration capability across the sector.



All activities should include a specific element that develops sustainable governance/management arrangements to embed a long term relationship, with seeding projects including objectives for long term, sustainable collaboration.

An important aspect of the Project will also be to make *early, proactive* referrals to other existing sources where these are best placed to provide the support needed.

### Implementation

A two phase implementation programme is suggested to ensure that there is good understanding among the ACE community of the purposes of the Project and to demonstrate the types of processes and outcomes that are possible:

- By end June 2011: invitation for a series of 'pathfinder' projects of 3-12 months duration, covering each project category and also giving reasonable geographic and sub-sectoral spread.
- July 2011 –June 2012: rollout of full funding programme, building on the experiences of the 'pathfinder' series.

### Outcome

As a result of implementing the Collaborative Activities Project Framework there will be:

- less variability in the extent of engagement and collaborative effort among ACE organisations
- improved cooperation and collaboration between ACE organisations in delivering quality, effective services locally in New Zealand
- improved capability at individual organisational level and at a collective level (sector, sub-sector, geographic locality) to promote, engage and support ACE learners to achieve their desired outcomes
- improved collaborative governance and management arrangements that enable ACE organisations to develop the effectiveness and quality of their provision and to contribute to wider learning and community objectives
- an improved sense of community and coherence in the ACE sector both in terms of sharing best practice and information and in terms of working proactively and collaboratively to promote the aims of ACE learning.

*Venture Group (New Zealand) Ltd*

*ACE Aotearoa Inc.*

*Project Oversight Group (Chair, Peter McNeur)*

# The ACE Collaborative Activities Project Framework

## Background

### Purpose of the project

Venture Group and ACE Aotearoa have been working jointly to implement the Collaborative Activities project, commissioned by the Tertiary Education Commission and supported by a Project Oversight Group.<sup>1</sup> The scope of the project is:

‘to ensure that focused and effective collaborative activities across the ACE sector take place in a systematic and structured way which leads to better outcomes for ACE learners’

‘to support ACE practitioners and organisations to share information, knowledge and expertise and to take account of natural groups, which might be geographical, learner-based, needs-based or interest-based’

The objectives included:

- developing a framework to fund and support ACE collaborative activities
- increasing engagement and communication locally, regionally and globally amongst ACE practitioners and stakeholders
- supporting collaboration and co-ordination of ACE services to avoid overlaps and respond to needs.

From the desk and fieldwork stages (see below) it is clear that there are a number of policy and strategic issues that need to be addressed in the medium to long term:

- The perceived low policy priority given to ACE compared with other learning streams
- The fragmentation of communication links and coordinated policy actions between national and local levels and
- All significant sub-sectors in the ACE community need to be enabled to take a full part in strategic development of ACE provision<sup>2</sup>.

These are important and fall into the first element of the project scope described above.

This framework addresses the more immediate concern expressed by the TEC: to help providers respond to recent changes in arrangements with practical, accessible resources that will help build their capability to collaborate.

Combined with longer term policy discussions taken forward by the Strategic Alliance, a short to medium term programme of collaborative capability building supported by the TEC will help ensure that learner outcomes are enhanced.

To ensure that the activities supported are built around longer term, sustainable partnerships, this programme includes specific encouragement to form structured collaborative arrangements, including appropriate governance and management

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<sup>1</sup> Members of the Project Oversight Group are: Peter McNeur; Dr Airini; Bronwyn Yates; Deleraine Puhara; Erana Brewerton; Pale Sauni; Peter Coolbear.

<sup>2</sup> The ACE Sector Strategic Alliance, in its Discussion Document ‘Real Value: Investing in Ordinary People’ (September 2010) notes that two of the three broad strategic objectives of the ACE Strategy are to “develop an effective sector infrastructure and to develop provider and practitioner capability.” (pp9)

mechanisms that include the whole group or community intended to benefit from the collaboration.

### **Principles of collaboration**

The project first developed a working definition of 'collaborative activities'. This was based on a review of international and national literature on the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of collaboration.

*Collaborative Activities are when organisations are actively working together to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.*

This definition identified a number of key features as critical to collaboration. In particular, these are:

- The need for active intent. Collaborative activity cannot be passive or 'one-off'. Effective collaboration requires agency<sup>3</sup>, sustained commitment, and a common sense of purpose. This can be both 'self-focused' (helping my organisation achieve its outcome or develop an advantage) and 'other-focused' (helping your organisation achieve your outcome).
- The need for reciprocity: a mutually negotiated and recognized level of joint enterprise and a desire to learn from each other. Organisations must want to work with others in open, reciprocal relationships to achieve mutually valuable outcomes and recognise the potential value to all in working in this way. Partnership (shared decision-making); participation (the commitment to work actively and openly with others), and protection (nurturing, strengthening and abiding by core values and governing principles)<sup>4</sup> are key to reciprocity. Reciprocity includes both sharing ideas, and drawing on the skills and ideas of others to develop one's own ideas<sup>5</sup>.
- The need for active participation: this requires regular interaction, based on good communication (whitiwhiti korero), and especially – and ideally – communication that is kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face).

Underlying the three features is the need to have committed relationships between participants that are trust-based and sustained. These are fundamental to the values, aspirations and outcomes embodied in ACE, many of which are drawn from matauranga Maori.<sup>6</sup>

### **Networking and collaboration**

Collaboration starts from co-existence and sharing information, which may lead to networking.<sup>7</sup> The value of networking has been well documented over the years:

- The importance of networking to interaction that supports innovation.<sup>8</sup> Innovation may be achieved through developing practices or resources

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<sup>3</sup> 'Agency' n: active operation; action; intervening action – Concise Oxford Dictionary, 7<sup>th</sup> edition.

<sup>4</sup> Similar concepts were enunciated by the Royal Commission on Social Policy (1988) as encapsulating the three principles of the Treaty.

<sup>5</sup> Termed 'enthusiastic borrowing' (Garvin 1993).

<sup>6</sup> These include, but are not limited to: whakawhanaungatanga (working together and networking), manaakitanga (caring for and supporting others), and kaitiakitanga (guardianship, preservation and protection).

<sup>7</sup> See Potential for Partnership, Craig and Courtney (2004) for similar work on the continuum notion in a NZ community development context.

that are new to the organisation itself, new to other organisations that are collaborating, or potentially new to all parties. It may include refining processes and improving products.

- The advantages and capabilities gained from the use of networking for learning.<sup>9,10</sup>
- The value of networking to make explicit the tacit knowledge within organisations.<sup>11</sup>
- The role of networking to secure structured opportunities tailored to the networkers' specific requirements, including their need to know where to go to access the information or learning they require.<sup>12</sup>

ACE organisations can use networking activity to assess gaps/needs in provision; identify opportunities, solutions and methods to address their needs; develop options, test ideas; and acquire the skills and resources to develop and implement a plan of action.<sup>13</sup>

Networking is therefore a means to, and a pre-requisite for effective collaboration.<sup>14</sup> It is a way to add value and quality to ACE provider organisations when developed into collaborative activity.

The dynamic nature of networking and its potential to develop into collaborative activity distinguishes it from the more one-dimensional support of networks. Networks, which may be an organisational forum and a vehicle for information sharing, can provide a foundation for networking. But they do not have the active or deliberate features associated with the next step, that of collaboration.

The following diagram shows how collaboration is stimulated in a response to a desire to improve learner benefit:

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<sup>8</sup> Blundel and Smith (2001).

<sup>9</sup> Kolb and Fry, 1975.

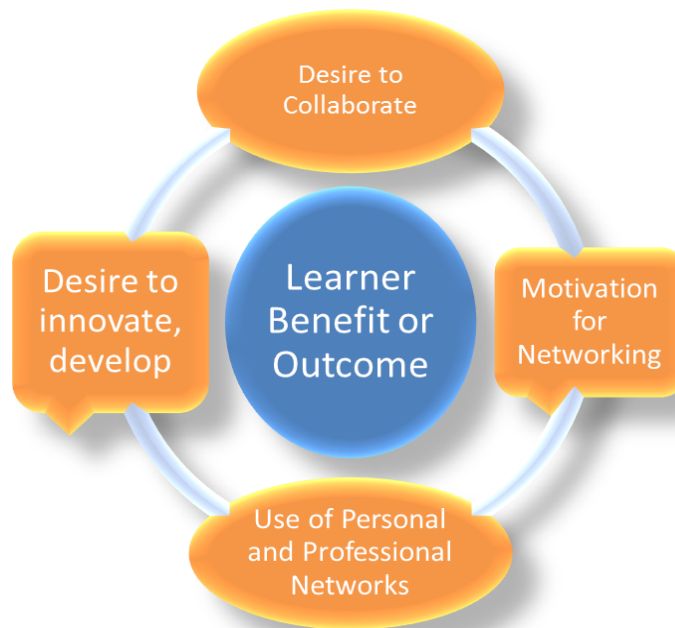
<sup>10</sup> Garvin, David, 1993.

<sup>11</sup> Stewart, Thomas, 1997.

<sup>12</sup> Krebs, Valdis, 2002.

<sup>13</sup> Slowinski's Innovation Model: WANT, FIND, GET, MANAGE. WANT: options, solutions, methods; FIND: where to get, (including through networking): develop options, test ideas, assess competition, etc; GET: acquire the skills and resources to develop and resource a plan of action – includes cooperation/collaboration with others; MANAGE: develop and implement the solution(s) in the organisation (internal collaboration); Slowinski, Gene, 2003.

<sup>14</sup> See Te Kawai Ora: Reading the world, Reading the word, Being the world (2001): 'Networking was suggested as a useful way to build partnerships between providers, programmes and communities. The ideas of linking programmes, such as is the case with Whāia Te Ara Tika to a provider, in this case the rünanga, offers exciting opportunities to both build new capacity and to strengthen existing capacity. Opening up networking opportunities in this way enables exciting opportunities to be created in the community. Marae and other community venues open up as possible locations.'



### Conditions for successful collaboration

Two key conditions have been identified for an organisation to be able to undertake successful collaboration:<sup>15</sup>

- Collaboration capability: the degree to which an organisation has appropriate “*orientation and infrastructure to collaborate...influences the ability to compete tomorrow*”; and
- Collaboration quality: the organisation’s ability to engage in “*a significant breadth of interaction including cross-functional work as well as sharing with external partners*”.

The purpose of the Collaborative Activities Project Framework is to provide an opportunity to develop both capability and quality in ACE organisations, and thus to encourage:

- the achievement of common goals and/or mutually beneficial outcomes for organisations and their learner communities
- development based on need identified by the organisation itself
- development based on organisational ‘readiness’. Each ACE organisation has to be able to recognise, resource, and have a desire to reach its own goals at a time that is appropriate and
- effective networking as a means to adding value and quality in ACE organisations through collaborative activity.

### Scope

Engaging in collaborative projects will assist ACE organisations to increase and/or improve their:

- management and governance capability

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<sup>15</sup> Frost and Sullivan Consulting: White Paper: ‘Meetings around the World: The Impact of Collaboration on Business Performance’ (2006).

- resources for learning
- teaching practices
- knowledge of, and engagement with, the communities and learner groups they service
- working relationships with wider ACE and 'community learning' partners.

Some ACE organisations already have clear goals, may already have the capacity and capability to engage in collaborative activities and wish to expand their collaborative activity. Other organisations may need support and investment to develop capability and quality so that they can collaborate effectively. The Collaborative Activities Project Framework has the potential to assist organisations at both stages of development.

Discussions held with ACE organisations throughout New Zealand (see Fieldwork Context below) have indicated that there is currently wide variability in aspiration, capability and quality of collaborative relationships with other organisations, whether these are other ACE organisations or potential partners in the wider community:

- Some individual ACE organisations have high levels of collaboration capability and are seeking to progress and improve further
- Some individual ACE organisations are in recovery, seeking to establish new working arrangements and partnerships through developing their collaboration capability
- Some groups of ACE organisations are well established, have high levels of collaboration capability and are seeking to progress and improve further
- Some groups of ACE organisations are fragmented and are seeking to re-establish collaboration capability at organisational level and to develop appropriate partnerships.

The stimulation for effective collaboration comes from identified mutual interests that can be sustained beyond individual activities. Consequently those collaborating – or wishing to engage in collaboration – will find connections with like-minded colleagues through networking and as a consequence refreshed or new networks will flourish.

An important principle of the Collaborative Activities Framework is that, although the previously supported TEC ACE networks will no longer be funded directly, strong collaborative networks undertaking constructive, purposeful activity can emerge from the collaborative projects they initiate.

### **Fieldwork Context**

The regional meetings and one to one discussions<sup>16</sup> held between February and April 2011 have shown the value of face to face connections with the sector to share information and experiences.

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<sup>16</sup> A series of 10 regional meetings and some 45 individual discussions were held throughout the country between February and April 2011.



While some ACE practitioners with sector history took the opportunity to revisit TEC's withdrawal of network funding, most were positive about

- the proposed shift of emphasis from networks to networking,  
*and, in particular, were interested in*
- the value of active, facilitated networking in moving from information sharing to collaboration.

It is also clear that a number of people, new to the sector, have come into their positions with little historical reference and with innovative approaches. Often, these 'new' ACE people have refreshing perspectives on learner focused approaches and how ACE can be used as a pathway to further learning. Many of these people have had little opportunity to discuss their ideas with others.

Others with longer experience in the ACE sector have described the desirability of a more professional and focused approach and have also expressed the need for TEC and ACE providers to show a positive, leadership role in working with others to improve learner outcomes. These practitioners, including those from TEIs, PTEs, CEPs, schools and other community education organisations, were keen to define and develop their ideas on how a collaborative approach can be of benefit to them and their learners.

### **Collaborative Governance**

In the fieldwork – both at regional meetings and in one-to-one discussions - there was interest in the role and position of ACE in relationship to other community level services such as health, welfare and community development. There were also some observations on the potential relationships that could be developed between ACE organisations and Councils (territorial local authorities) and the potential role of Councils in encouraging and supporting ACE learning in their local communities.

As a result, ACE Aotearoa brought forward a discussion document to the Project Oversight Group that proposed a strategic approach to developing collaborative governance arrangements through the Project:

*What is collaborative governance?*

Collaborative governance<sup>17</sup> is emerging in New Zealand as a way for stakeholders coming together in deliberative processes to find consensus on the way ahead.

Collaborative governance has been described as "*a way of working with diverse stakeholders to co-create enduring solutions to our most complex issues, problems and dilemmas*".<sup>18</sup> Basically the process of developing collaborative governance involves building readiness, building relationships and building capability. This works through key stakeholders committing to collaboration, co-

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<sup>17</sup> For background, typologies and taxonomy, see:

- Ansell C, Gash A, 'Collaborative Governance in Theory and Practice', *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*; JPART 18:543-571, (2007) and
- Donahue, John, 'On Collaborative Governance', Working Paper no. 2, Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative, Harvard University (2004).

<sup>18</sup> Twyfords Consulting, <http://www.twyfords.com.au/consult.html>

defining the dilemma, co-designing the process, co-creating the solution and co-delivering the actions. There are check points after each phase.<sup>19</sup>

Collaborative governance:

- can be implemented in a way that addresses all the principles: focusing the purpose of collaboration and learner benefit; flexibility; building relationships; having an agency responsible for the process; joining up providers; helping to create a learning community with learner pathways; and fostering an attitude of collaboration in a community
- allows communities to look at – and keep a continuing focus on – the ‘big’ picture; creates a system which allows agencies to support each other – eliminating silos and building capacity; and helps get cost effective services – by allowing agencies to work to their strengths and in the spirit of collaboration to work through competitive funding issues
- creates a system which is not reliant on a few individuals – the aim is for ‘enduring solutions’ to dilemmas.

Essentially, in terms of ACE, a collaborative governance model could involve:

- city or District Councils agreeing that they do have a role in terms of facilitating learning communities<sup>20</sup> (if the process works this may – at a later date – involve a formal agreement at the national level and possibly changes to the requirements of the LTCCP)
- key national agencies (for example health and social development) having Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) in place – and getting this information out to community providers (the formal MoU could be developed as the process is tested/rolled out)
- improved liaison and collaboration between community-based providers and tertiary institutions
- councils – along with local leaders in community education – getting information out to the key stakeholders – in a way that inspires and excites
- having a skilled facilitator to work with the key stakeholders.

### *Implementation*

Collaborative governance might – initially – be implemented in communities which meet established ‘readiness’ criteria. The roll out across the country would therefore be staged.

### *Readiness criteria*

A community that is ready for working through the collaborative governance process might have:

- a local City or District Council which is already engaged with adult and community learning

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<sup>19</sup> The approach described here summarises Twyford's Consulting's development model.

<sup>20</sup> Koia! Koia! Towards a Learning Society (2001) noted in its recommendations that: "To achieve an equitable distribution throughout the country, funding may be allocated using territorial local authority and iwi boundaries to set population based funding with equity ratings based on Health Authority Funding criteria" (Goal 4, pp39)

- an existing network which includes all local ACE providers, and includes Māori and other community NGOs delivering health and welfare services
- a keen interest in trialling collaborative governance.

### **Conclusion**

The experiences, opportunities and ideas that have been shared through the field-based research have helped with the development of the framework, and have reflected and validated the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of collaborative activities considered in the project's early stages.

Across New Zealand, there are a range of initiatives, both small/local and larger/more significant that can usefully be supported in the next phase of this project.

Shared, explicit governance and management arrangements should be a key feature for any sustainable collaborative initiatives in the ACE sector. As such, it is a fundamental element of the Collaborative Activities Project Framework.

The discussion around collaborative governance highlights its potential strategic significance in embedding ACE principles and provision in wider community goals.

The Collaborative Activities Project is therefore a platform through which the principle of shared governance – and specifically the testing of collaborative governance arrangements – can be encouraged in addition to a range of local initiatives.

The second part of this document describes the Collaborative Activities Project Framework.

## The ACE Collaborative Activities Framework

*“Collaboration is harder than doing it alone: it needs passion and a payoff – there has to be a balance of realism and incentive”*

Local ACE Manager

The Framework facilitates the strategic development of relationships that will enable the ACE sector to play a key role in helping individual learners to engage successfully with effective learning opportunities in their communities.

It is important that the Collaborative Activities Project Framework is enabling and inclusive rather than prescriptive, so that ACE organisations can see a range of approaches and options that are in line with their own kaupapa.

Equally, the Collaborative Activities Project Framework needs to be sufficiently enduring for ACE organisations to feel confident that the contribution they have made through discussion is valued for the longer term.

### Principles

The following principles have been developed from the contributions made by the ACE sector:

- *Learner benefit*: Collaboration must improve learner outcomes.
- *Purpose*: There must be a clear purpose for collaboration.
- *Flexibility*: The framework must be enabling not prescriptive – ‘organic’ rather than structured; it must be able to be adapted to fit community needs.
- *Whakawhanaungatanga*: Everyone must be kept in the loop to facilitate learner pathways.
- *Responsibility*: a person or agency has to be responsible for fostering any collaboration. All collaboration partners share responsibility for maintenance of the collaborative relationship.
- *Being part of the solution*: Collaboration arrangements/agreements must be designed to include other relevant agencies - such as those working in health and welfare. Such inclusion is considered fundamental to success for learners, sustainability of the collaborative initiative and to remove ACE ‘silos’ that would otherwise limit the effectiveness of the collaboration.
- *Value*: Funding is scarce - collaboration must aim to give the best value possible for learners and funders, through having determined an achievable business case for the collaboration and a realistic time frame for the return to be realised.
- *A learning community*: The focus should be beyond individual learners towards a learning community where learners can (if they wish) find appropriate learning pathways.
- *Attitude*: Collaboration is a way of thinking and acting in concert with other committed parties to support learners to achieve outcomes that may otherwise remain beyond their reach.

### Aims

- To foster and sustain an approach that will enable ACE providers themselves to achieve the best possible outcomes and benefits for the learners they engage with and support.
- To foster and support collaborative activity and networking led by ACE practitioners, to achieve goals at both individual/organisational level within ACE organisations and between ACE organisations and their collaborative partners where there is common purpose.
- To foster both collaboration capability and collaboration quality among ACE organisations, through an organic and evolving approach, to realise the best possible infrastructure through which effective provision of ACE learning can be provided.
- To foster a collective capability to develop new and innovative practice in meeting the needs of ACE learners.
- To foster sustainable governance and management arrangements that underpins long term partnership.

### Approach

TEC expects the priority focus for the Collaborative Activities Project Framework to be TEC contracted ACE organisations.<sup>21</sup> It is proposed that TEC utilise the funding associated with the Collaborative Activities Project Framework to enable ACE organisations to build long term partnerships that develop sustainable collaborative capability and quality across the ACE sector, leading to improved benefits and outcomes for learners.

The following categories are proposed within the Collaborative Activities Project Framework, from which the aims described above can be supported:

1. Collaboration Capability
  - a) *Developing relationships*: To strengthen current or future delivery; identifying the nature of the relationships needed for long term, high quality service; engaging with potential organisations that TEC contracted ACE providers need to work with; forming new, enduring, structured relationships.
  - b) *Developing organisations*:<sup>22</sup> Including both bodies working from local bases, and emergent organisations of national or sector strategic significance; developing appropriate collaborative governance arrangements.
2. Collaboration Quality
  - a) *Adding value* to collaboration activities: Facilitating activities that extend the collaborative process (e.g. workshops, seminars, hui, exchanges/visits).

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<sup>21</sup> This could be seen as including sub-contractors and other community organisations that the TEC contractor works with to deliver its contracted ACE outcomes.

<sup>22</sup> Differentiated from individual professional development, which is the kaupapa of the ACE Professional Development Fund. The Fund more recently has also more recently taken a wide definition of ACE providers. The TEC Collaborative Activities Framework instead will focus on supporting ACE *organisations* that are *TEC funded*. The funding would sit alongside other sector resources, including Ako Aotearoa project funding, for example.

- b) *Sharing good practice*: Identifying and enabling inter-organisation collaboration to share best practice, including by those recognised within the sector as lead practitioners.

This matrix can be shown as follows:

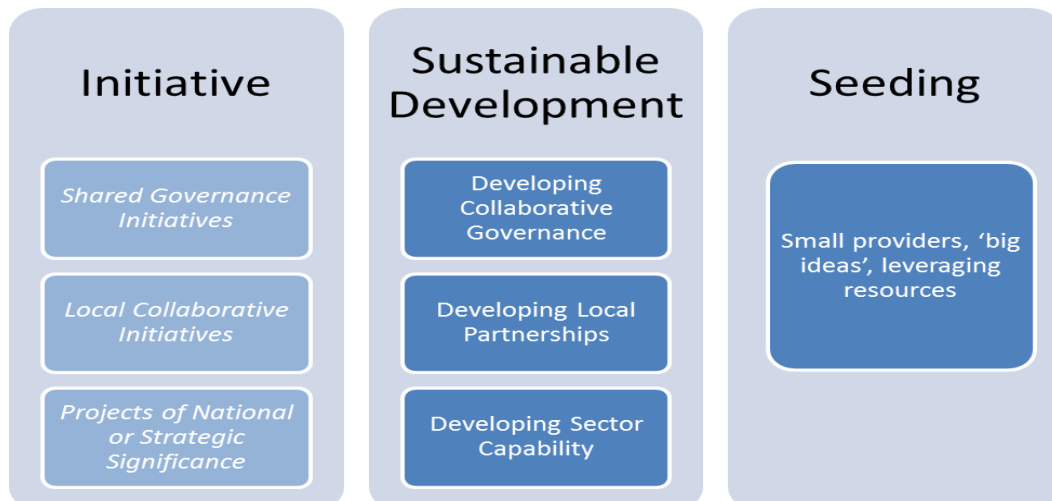


The approach supports incremental, project-based, ground-up actions that reinforce strategic goals for the sector and that will impact positively on learner outcomes through:

- enhancing the ability to reach and engage potential learners
- expanding the range and coordination of services offered
- developing mechanisms to manage consistency and quality of service, including through effective governance and management
- exploring potential mechanisms to improve efficacy and value for money
- providing consistent evidence of benefits from the processes used and outcomes of collaboration.

Through discussion with ACE organisations in the field and the Project Oversight Group, it is felt that the following prioritisation should be given in terms of the generic types of projects that should be supported in order to reflect the need

- for ACE organisations to be able to develop collaboration capability and quality to meet their own objectives; and
- to develop strategic collaboration capability across the sector.



With the exception of seeding projects (see 'scale' below), all activities should include a specific element that develops sustainable governance/management arrangements to embed a long term relationship. The purpose of seeding projects should also include objectives for long term, sustainable collaboration.

A key objective of the ACE Collaborative Activities Project is to align and enhance other support available, such as the Ako Aotearoa funds and the ACE PD Fund. An important aspect of the Project will be to make *early, proactive* referrals to other existing sources where these are best placed to provide the support needed.

### Scale

It is proposed that resources from the Collaborative Activities Project Framework be made available at two levels of support:

- a) *Seeding* of new projects and ideas. In particular, seeding support should recognise the wide range of local situations faced by ACE practitioners and support ACE organisations to explore and enter into collaborative ventures based on their own local circumstances and conditions.
  - Short term projects up to 6 months duration...
  - Projects are based on strategic intent to develop sustainable collaborations or models.
  - Primarily for scoping and early development.
  - Also to support one-off activities.
  - Can cover direct wage/contractor costs.
  - Can be used for collaboration capability and/or collaboration quality development.
  - Can be used for research and/or action purposes.
  - Up to \$5,000 per project.
  
- b) *Sustainable Development* of existing projects/ideas and of projects with national or sector strategic significance.
  - Building sustainable collaboration capability to address national or sector strategic objectives.
  - Developing robust, sustainable shared governance and management arrangements that will support enduring relationships between the collaborators.
  - Developing collaboration capability to:
    - i. improve the overall quality of outcomes for ACE learners
    - ii. contribute to strategic capability of the ACE sector
    - iii. improve operational capability in sub-sectors of ACE delivery.
  - Focus on implementing collaboration capability goals (including exploration of collaboration quality needs in each partner) to ensure sustainable outcomes for learners and for relationships.
  - Action oriented.
  - 12 months plus duration (subject to milestones, funding availability, review/evaluation).
  - Can cover direct wage/contractor costs.
  - Up to \$30,000 per annum per project.

## Proposal Process

It is important to have a simple and streamlined proposal and reporting process for ACE sector organisations, particularly for seeding projects.

- *Seeding*: A high level of delegated, discretionary authority should be given for this scale of project. Optimally, the fund manager will have discretion to approve funding on the basis of a costed summary proposal, supported by telephone interview.
- *Sustainable Development*: A standardised proposal process with an open submission timetable that does not present barriers to applicants. Proposals for sustainable development projects should indicate who the main collaborators are and provide written plans for both the intended processes and outcomes, together with budgets and milestones for each phase of the project (and for each year for projects longer than 12 months duration). There should also be a clear risk assessment and mitigation plan.

## Reporting

Four reporting arrangements should be adopted:

1. For seeding projects, a short, process and outcome focused report format to minimise administrative burden.
2. For sustainable development projects, milestone and final reports should be provided, including process and outcomes.
3. For all projects a standardised (2 pages A4 format) themed case study report will be required, briefly outlining:
  - purpose and objectives for the project (*what are we going to do?*)
  - planned approach (*how will we do it?*)
  - summary of experience/project process including strengths, weaknesses, lessons learned (*what happened?*)
  - summary of outcomes and achievements against initial objectives,<sup>23</sup> including a summary of evidence from which these outcomes are drawn (*what was the result?*).<sup>24</sup>
4. Appropriate financial reports for all projects against contract.

## Management

TEC already has functioning arrangements in place for overall management of funding resources relating to Collaborative Activities. In light of this framework TEC should determine and confirm that:

- contracting parameters and arrangements are appropriate for objective and independent allocation of Framework resources and for monitoring and reporting on activity and outcomes

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<sup>23</sup> It is envisaged that with some journalistic editing, all case study reports would be publicly available so that practice can be shared throughout the sector.

<sup>24</sup> A condition of funding would be that the lead ACE organisation would retain data and evidence of outcomes for use in programme level evaluations at a later date.



- guidance and support required to facilitate the implementation of the Framework meets TEC objectives in addition to those of sector peak bodies.

### **Implementation**

A two phase implementation programme is suggested to ensure that there is both good understanding among the ACE community of the purposes of the Project and to demonstrate the types of processes and outcomes that are possible:

- By end June 2011: invitation for a series of 'pathfinder' projects of 3-12 months duration, covering each project category and also giving reasonable geographic and sub-sectoral spread. This could be achieved through a 'Closed' bid invitation to a sample of participants in the recent regional meetings and individual discussions.
- July 2011 –June 2012: rollout of full funding programme, building on the experiences of the 'pathfinder' series.

### **Outcome**

As a result of implementing the Collaborative Activities Project Framework there will be:

- less variability in the extent of engagement and collaborative effort among ACE organisations
- improved cooperation and collaboration between ACE organisations in delivering quality, effective services locally in New Zealand
- improved capability at individual organisational level and at a collective level (sector, sub-sector, geographic locality) to promote, engage and support ACE learners to achieve their desired outcomes
- improved collaborative governance and management arrangements that enable ACE organisations to develop the effectiveness and quality of their provision and to contribute to wider learning and community objectives
- an improved sense of community and coherence in the ACE sector both in terms of sharing best practice and information and in terms of working proactively and collaboratively to promote the aims of ACE learning.

*Venture Group (New Zealand) Ltd*

*ACE Aotearoa Inc.*

*Project Oversight Group (Chair, Peter McNeur)*

*30 May 2011*