

Co-Creating a Collaborative Structure

This is part of a series of Guidance notes designed to assist users of the Effective Collaborative Action methodology. You can find the [full methodology here](#)

This Guidance note provides advice and examples for both the stakeholders and Backbone Support Team on co-creating a governance structure and process that is suitable for the collaborative action.

Often when we start a collaborative effort - an alliance, partnership, a multi-stakeholder platform or dialogue – we don't spend enough time together defining HOW we are going to collaborate, how we want to work together and what structure to put in place so our effort can be successful. This oversight can lead to delays, loss of trust, and conflict.

So, this guidance note is designed to help you come together and co-create processes and structure for the collaborative effort, so that it can be as effective and purposeful as possible throughout the process.

We recommend that the Backbone support team and facilitator design and coordinate this co-creation process with an early group of champion stakeholders.

Recommended Principles

We recommend the following principles be at the heart of your collaborative structure:

1. Smart and inclusive representation.
 - o How are organisations represented over time by individuals?
 - o What tools and support do people need to bring their organisations along?
 - o How the balance of representation is ensured, including marginalized people?
 - o How do we bring new folks up to speed so they feel fully part of it?

2. Systems Leadership
 - o How can we empower leadership across the collaborative effort?

- How will the smooth running of this co-creative process be managed?
 - Capacity to manage through conflict or disagreement
 - Understand the needs of different stakeholders (Government; Private Sector; Civil Society; Academy; Others)
3. Establish transparent decision-making processes.
- What kind of governance is needed to support the vision?
 - Who will lead the work? An individual, a group, a pair?
 - Who can make decisions about what?
 - How will decisions be made? By consensus, vote?
 - How are power dynamics addressed so as not to affect decision-making?
4. Design appropriate communication strategies and collaboration processes to engage stakeholders at various levels.
- In what formations do we meet? As a whole group, in smaller interest groups, in technical groups, both or all in parallel?
 - Who do we keep informed, versus consult, versus co-create with?
 - How do we ensure marginalized voices are uplifted?
 - See more detailed guidance for alignment with the [Stakeholder Engagement Strategy](#).
5. Embed ability to be agile and adaptable
- Embed in the co-creation process and resulting governance structure a way to monitor, reflect and capture learning along the way.
 - Set time aside for this and to adapt the process and structure as needed.
6. Frequency and type of meetings (virtual and/or in-person) match the pace of the work for different stakeholders needs.
- Decisions are timely to support the speed of the collaborative effort.

- o The design of the meeting is appropriate to the needs and conditions of the stakeholders

7. Preserve collective learning and intelligence.

- o Keep records of all meetings to support building trust and maintain a history of the journey.
- o A scribe / record keeper is essential and prioritises sharing a record the same week that a meeting takes place.
- o Consider using video/recordings to capture the essence of collaborative sessions, that can be easily accessed by those who miss it.
- o A virtual repository of meeting notes is available to all stakeholders.

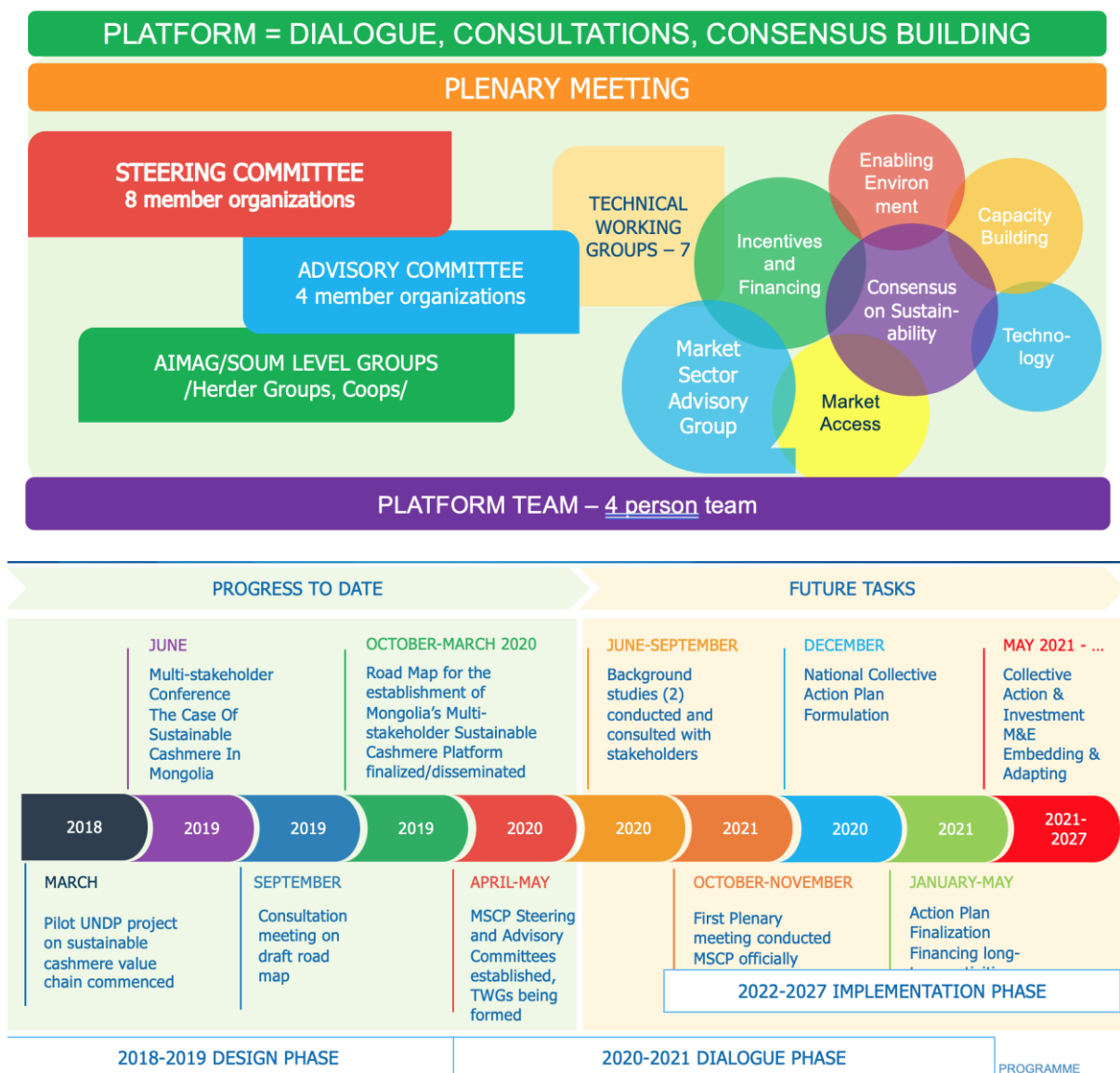


Example Collaborative Structures

Below are examples of structures used in National Commodity Platforms to support our thinking in co-designing what is possible for collaborative action efforts.

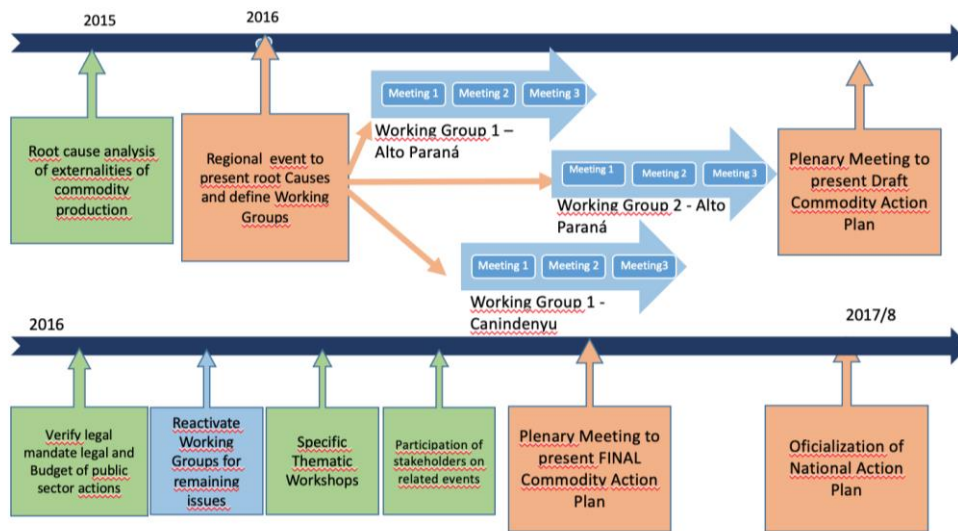
Mongolia Sustainable Cashmere Platform

- Started with a pilot project and set up a market sector advisory group.

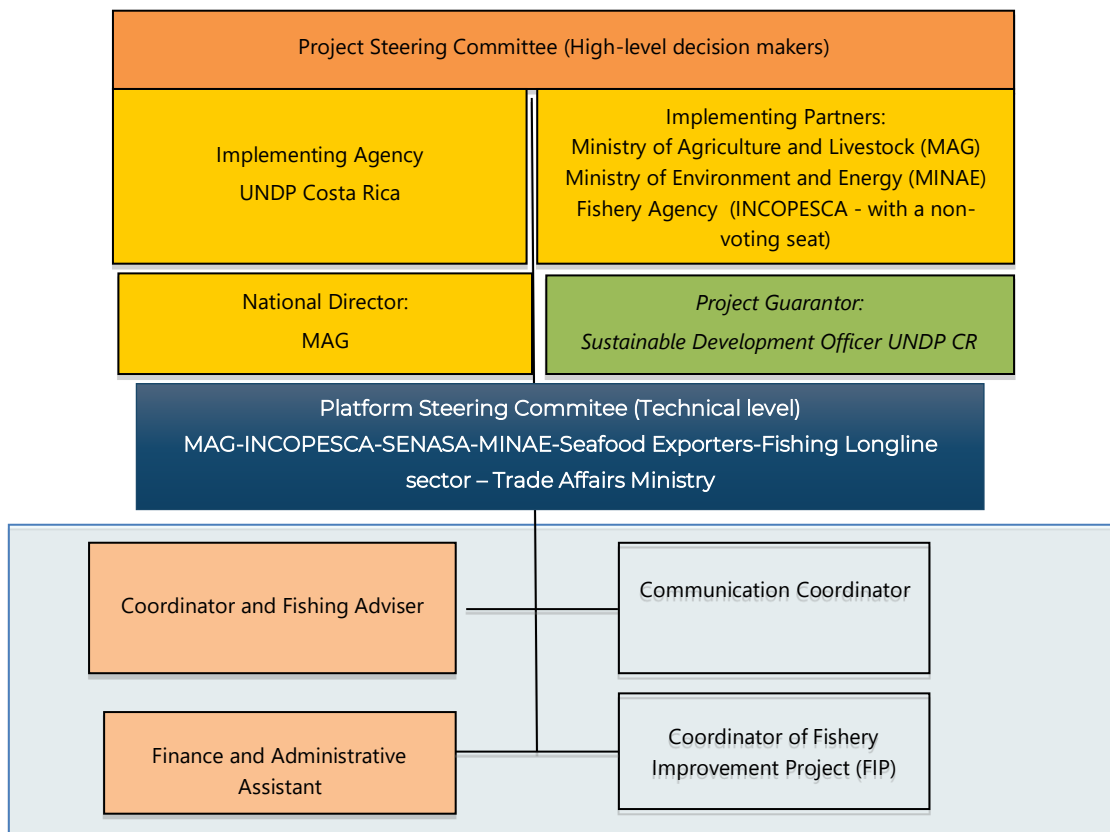


Paraguay Soy Platform

- Started with regional collaboration.



Costa Rica National Platform for Sustainable Fisheries for Large Pelagics



Previous Guidance for a National Commodity Platform

Below is previous Guidance for a National Commodity Platform. An option.

CONSENSUS BUILDING & DECISION-MAKING

PROJECT BOARD

- One Government Ministry and UNDP
- As per Project Document and UNDP requirements

PLATFORM STEERING COMMITTEE

- Operates on the basis of consensus-based decision-making, which means all efforts are taken to reach agreement.
- **ROLE:** is to drive platform work forward, take practical decisions about process and take formal decisions based on the input of platform / committee participants e.g. officialise the National Action Plan.
- **FORM:** maximum 5 organisations, from UNDP, Project Board Ministry, other engaged Ministries and (if possible) a national level producer or industry association.
- Appointed by agreement of the Project Board.

PLENARY

- Consensus building forum
- **ROLE:** to provide inputs on a draft National Action Plan
- **FORM:** multi-stakeholder participation (requirement for representation from 4 categories, best practice is for balanced representation from 4 categories)
- **PROCESS:** participation is not restricted and size is unlimited
- Participation requires written commitment after the public launch and before the first plenary; additional stakeholders may attend as observers.
- Technical committee participants are automatically plenary participants.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEES (TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS, TECHNICAL TASK FORCES)

- Multi-stakeholder composition
- **ROLE:** is to provide expertise, learning, research and recommended solutions/actions for the National Action Plan within their specific technical area, after agreeing on root causes of unsustainable production – all within their specific technical area.
- **FORM:** ideally 15 people, with minimum 10 and maximum 30 people per working group
- Participation is formalised with a written commitment in advance of the first or second meeting.
- May set up sub task forces

DRAFTING OPTIONS

- This is an essential activity and therefore quality resources, selected with political sensitivity, are needed to complete it.
- **RECOMMENDED:** Contract independent organisation / person
- Option: PMU delivers
- Option: Set up Drafting Committee