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# CREATING A CULTURE OF COLLABORATION

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The International Association  
of Facilitators Handbook

Sandy Schuman  
Editor

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## Collaborative Values, Principles, and Beliefs

*Meaning is what we want. Understanding is what we need. Choices are what we make. Relationships are what we have.*

Creating a culture of collaboration requires more commitment and change than, say, working collaboratively during a single meeting or project. For such relatively short-term activities it might be sufficient for the prevailing norms to be temporarily suspended or ignored, but to create a culture of collaboration requires norms that are consistent with and supportive of collaboration. The chapters in *Creating a Culture of Collaboration* address, implicitly or explicitly, the values, principles, and beliefs underlying collaboration. In addition, various organizations have issued formal statements (as shown in the book's Appendix, Collaborative Values, Principles, and Beliefs). At their root, these statements share much in common. Each says something about our role in making decisions or choices, the information we need to make those decisions in a meaningful context, and how the individuals and organizations involved should relate to each other.

The act of making choices is fundamental to human nature and the health of individuals and society. This is reflected in the Declaration of the Rights of Man, which states, "Every citizen has a right to participate personally, or through his representative, in [the Law's] foundation" (National Assembly of France, 1789). One could say that the right to participate in decision making is not limited to the law or public sector issues. For example, the journal, *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, "focuses on the study of initiatives designed to enhance the quality of working life through extending the democratic control of workers over the workplace and the economy." A recent article noted:

One of the consequences [of recent corporate scandals] has been the emergence of an employee rights movement that advocates greater employee participation in corporate decision-making. ... Workplace democracy exists when employees have some real control over organizational goal setting and strategic planning, and can thus ensure that their own goals and objectives, rather than only those of the organization, can be met. ... We feel it is difficult to contest employees' right to have a say not only in the conduct of their jobs, but also in the wider organization of work and the company's strategic direction, when employees will potentially be most negatively affected by the decisions made [Foley and Polanyi, 2006, 174].

Nobel Laureate Herbert Simon found decision making to be the central function of organizations (Simon, 1997), and some scholars view choice as central to human experience: "All students like to believe that their particular subject is the center of the universe. Doubtless, students of judgment and decision making are no different, but they may have a good argument for their view. After all, they can claim that the great moments of history all turned on someone's judgment as to what should be done and someone's decision to do it" (Hammond and Arkes, 1986, p. 1).

These views and my own experience lead me to support the claim that all individuals and interest groups, in all sectors of society, have the right to meaningful participation in decisions that affect them.

To participate in decision making inherently requires that participants have pertinent information. A choice without information is hardly a choice at all. In the words of Thomas Jefferson, "I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education" (Lipscomb and Bergh, 1904, vol. 15, p. 278).

Technical, objective facts are necessary, but not sufficient. The social and personal context of facts is what gives them meaning. Following World War II, Victor Frankl wrote, "... striving to find a meaning in one's life is the primary motivational force of man" (1962, p. 99). In recent years researchers in positive psychology have identified meaning – "attachment to something larger, and the larger the entity to which you can attach yourself, the more meaning in your life" (Seligman, 2002, p. 14) – as critical to human fulfillment and happiness. Even when there is no argument about objective facts, their meaning – their implications and the preferences and subjective judgments related to them – can vary for different individuals and groups. How those differences come to be known and how they are communicated and understood relies on the relationships among the individuals and groups involved.

Margaret Wheatley observed, "None of us exists independent of our relationships with others. ... What is critical is the relationship created between two or more elements" (Wheatley, 1999, p. 35-36). Relationships provide the social context in which we exchange information and make choices. The dynamic health of our relationships affects, and is in turn affected by, the quality of our information and choices. Through our relationships, the knowledge, wisdom, and understanding of each individual have the potential to contribute to greater shared meaning and choices that provide greater mutual benefit. Meanings, choices, and relationships are inextricably and dynamically interdependent and are at the core of collaboration.

## Collaborative Values, Principles, and Beliefs

### International Association of Facilitators:

#### *Statement of Values and Code of Ethics for Group Facilitators*

##### **Statement of Values**

As group facilitators, we believe in the inherent value of the individual and the collective wisdom of the group. We strive to help the group make the best use of the contributions of each of its members. We set aside our personal opinions and support the group's right to make its own choices. We believe that collaborative and cooperative interaction builds consensus and produces meaningful outcomes. We value professional collaboration to improve our profession.

##### **Code of Ethics**

*Note: For each statement below, only the title and brief description is given here. Refer to the source publication for the complete description.*

##### **Client Service**

We are in service to our clients, using our group facilitation competencies to add value to their work.

##### **Conflict of Interest**

We openly acknowledge any potential conflict of interest.

##### **Group Autonomy**

We respect the culture, rights, and autonomy of the group.

##### **Processes, Methods, and Tools**

We use processes, methods and tools responsibly.

##### **Respect, Safety, Equity, and Trust**

We strive to engender an environment of respect and safety where all participants trust that they can speak freely and where individual boundaries are honoured.

##### **Stewardship of Process**

We practice stewardship of process and impartiality toward content.

##### **Confidentiality**

We maintain confidentiality of information.

##### **Professional Development**

We are responsible for continuous improvement of our facilitation skills and knowledge.

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## Collaborative Values, Principles, and Beliefs

### International Association for Public Participation:

#### *Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation*

The public should have a say in decisions about actions that could affect their lives.

Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.

Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.

Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.

Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.

Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.

Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

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## Collaborative Values, Principles, and Beliefs

### Public Conversations Project: *Our Observations and the Spirit Behind Our Practices*

What We've Learned	Spirit	What We Do
People are more invested in a dialogue when they have been consulted in its design.	<b>Collaborative</b>	We respect participants' knowledge, including them in our planning and consulting them throughout the dialogue process.
People are more likely to have a constructive conversation when they do not attack, are not defensive, and abstain from polarizing ways of speaking.	<b>Preventive</b>	We ask participants to agree in advance to set aside accusation and argument and avoid communication patterns that impeded previous conversations.
Equal respect for everyone enhances trust and collaboration.	<b>Fair</b>	We use structure to provide equal airtime and agreements to promote respectful speaking.
In an affirming, exploratory, future-oriented atmosphere, people are more open to new ways of communicating.	<b>Hopeful</b>	We elicit participants' visions and wishes for the future and highlight the appearance of promising, new interactions among them.
When people share personal stories, their uniqueness and complexity emerge. Personal exchanges diminish stereotyping and promote caring.	<b>Rehumanizing</b>	We discourage depersonalized debate. We invite participants to share life experiences that they associate with their current views.
When people are open with one another, they more easily develop relationships of trust, respect, collaboration, and mutual empowerment.	<b>Candid</b>	Participants are encouraged to speak openly about themselves. We explain why we do what we do, if asked. We express no opinion on the divisive issues at hand.
People learn more and relate better when they listen carefully and attentively to each other.	<b>Receptive</b>	We listen attentively. We use structures and agreements that promote respectful listening.
When people have an inquiring attitude about themselves and others, they interact more constructively than when they speak from certainty.	<b>Inquiring</b>	We encourage participants to ask instead of assuming or advocating. We invite participants to be open-minded toward themselves and others.
When each person in a conversation considers varied perspectives, new ideas emerge and build on one another, dispelling simplistic polarizations.	<b>Expansive</b>	Our questions and tasks are designed to stimulate reflections and conversations that generate clarifying distinctions and fresh ideas.

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### Round Tables on the Environment and Economy in Canada: *Building Consensus for a Sustainable Future: Guiding Principles*

#### Consensus Processes

Consensus processes enjoy some inherent advantages over other decision making processes in addressing the challenges of a sustainable future.

Consensus processes are designed to:

- ensure that all significant interests are represented and respected
- enable participants to deal with each other directly
- give an effective voice to all participants
- allow the parties involved to design a process appropriate to their special circumstances and needs
- provide a forum that forges new partnerships and fosters co-operative problem solving in the search for innovative solutions that maximize all interests and promote sustainability

In terms of results, consensus processes can:

- improve the working relationships between all interests participating in the process
- help build respect for and a better understanding of different viewpoints among the participants
- lead to better informed, more creative, balanced and enduring decisions because of the shared commitment to and responsibility for the process, results, and implementation
- often be used to complement other decision making processes

Even if all matters are not resolved through consensus, the process can crystallize the discussion, clarify the underlying issues, identify the options for dealing with outstanding disagreements, and build respect and understanding among the parties affected.

#### Guiding Principles of Consensus Processes

Consensus processes are participant determined and driven - that is their very essence. No single approach will work for each situation - because of the issues involved, the respective interests and the surrounding circumstances. Experience points to certain characteristics which are fundamental to consensus - these are referred to as the guiding principles. These principles are described in detail on the following pages.

*Note: For each principle, only the title and brief description is given here. Refer to the source publication for the complete description.*

##### Principle #1 - Purpose Driven

- People need a reason to participate in the process.

##### Principle #2 - Inclusive not exclusive

- All parties with a significant interest in the issues should be involved in the consensus process.

##### Principle #3 - Voluntary Participation

- The parties who are affected or interested participate voluntarily.

##### Principle #4 - Self Design

- The parties design the consensus process.

##### Principle #5 - Flexibility

- Flexibility should be designed into the process.

##### Principle #6 - Equal Opportunity

- All parties have equal access to relevant information and the opportunity to participate effectively throughout the process.

##### Principle #7 - Respect for Diverse Interests

- Acceptance of the diverse values, interests, and knowledge of the parties involved in the consensus process is essential.

##### Principle #8 - Accountability

- The participants are accountable both to their constituencies and to the process that they have agreed to establish.

##### Principle #9 - Time Limits

- Realistic deadlines are necessary throughout the process.

##### Principle #10 - Implementation

- Commitment to implementation and effective monitoring are essential parts of any agreement.

Excerpted from: Building Consensus for a Sustainable Future: Guiding Principles. *Round Tables on the Environment and Economy in Canada, 1993*, pp. 7-17. [nrtee-trnee.ca/building-consensus-for-a-sustainable-future-guiding-principles](http://nrtee-trnee.ca/building-consensus-for-a-sustainable-future-guiding-principles).

Adapted from *Creating a Culture of Collaboration*, S. Schuman, Ed. pp.449-468, Jossey-Bass/Wiley, 2006.

### The Co-Intelligence Institute:

#### *Principles to Nurture Wise Democratic Process and Collective Intelligence in Public Participation*

Wise democratic processes are those which utilize a community's or society's diversity to deepen shared understanding and produce outcomes of long-term benefit to the whole community or society. Not all public participation serves this purpose. Public participation can either enhance or degrade the collective intelligence and wisdom involved in democratic processes such as making collective decisions, solving social problems, and creating shared visions. The principles below offer some guidance for designing wise democratic processes.

#### 1. Include All Relevant Perspectives

- The diversity of perspectives engaged in a wise democratic process will approximate the diversity of the community of people affected by the outcome. In addition, community wisdom and buy-in come from the fair and creative inclusion of all relevant perspectives – all related viewpoints, cultures, information, experiences, needs, interests, values, contributions and dreams. Furthermore, those who are centrally involved, peripherally involved or not involved in a situation each have – by virtue of their unique perspectives – uniquely valuable contributions to make toward the wise resolution of that situation. Creative inclusion of perspectives generates more wisdom than mechanical inclusion of people.

#### 2. Empower the People's Engagement

- To the extent people feel involved in the creation or ratification of democratic decisions – either directly or by recognized representatives – they will support the implementation of those decisions. This is especially true to the extent they feel their agency and power in the process – i.e., that they clearly see the impact of their diverse contributions in the final outcome. Thus, it serves democracy and collective intelligence when expertise and leadership are on tap to – and not on top of – the decision-making processes of “We, the People” and anyone democratically mandated by the people to care for the common welfare.

#### 3. Invoke Multiple Forms of Knowing

- Community wisdom arises from the interplay of stories (with their full emotional content), facts, principles, reason, intuition and compassion. To the extent any one of these dominates or is missing, the outcome will be less wise.

#### 4. Ensure High Quality Dialogue

- The supreme test of dialogue is its ability to use commonality and diversity (including conflict) creatively. There are three tests for the quality of dialogue towards desirable outcomes: Is it deepening understanding? Is it building relationships? Is it expanding possibilities? Most public forums need good facilitation to ensure high quality dialogue. For approaches to dialogue see “A toolbox of co-intelligent processes for community work.” [www.co-intelligence.org/CIPol\\_CommunityProcesses.html](http://www.co-intelligence.org/CIPol_CommunityProcesses.html)

#### 5. Establish Ongoing Participatory Processes

- Since intelligence is the capacity to learn, and learning is an ongoing process, collective intelligence can manifest most powerfully in democratic processes that are ongoing, iterative, and officially recognized by the whole community or society. One-time events (such as public hearings and conferences that are not part of a larger ongoing democratic process) are limited in their capacity to generate collective intelligence for a whole community or society. The institutionalization of official periodic citizen deliberations according to these principles maximizes collective intelligence. For examples, see “Citizen Deliberative Councils.” [www.co-intelligence.org/P-CDCs.html](http://www.co-intelligence.org/P-CDCs.html)

#### 6. Use Positions and Proposals as Grist

- Early focus on positions and proposals can prevent the emergence of the best possible outcomes. In general, collective intelligence is supported by beginning with an exploratory approach which notes existing positions, proposals and solutions as grist for exploring the situations they were created to handle. Exploring the assumptions, interests, needs, values, visions, experiences, etc., that gave birth to these particular proposals tends to deepen understanding and relationship so that new and better solutions can emerge. See “Beyond Positions: a Politics of Civic Co-creativity.” [www.co-intelligence.org/CIPol\\_beyondpositions.html](http://www.co-intelligence.org/CIPol_beyondpositions.html)

#### 7. Help People Feel Fully Heard

- To the extent people feel fully heard, they will be able to hear others and, ultimately, join in collaborative deliberation and co-creative problem-solving. Among the approaches to helping people feel fully heard are Active Listening [www.va.gov/adr/active.html](http://www.va.gov/adr/active.html) Nonviolent Communication [www.co-intelligence.org/P-nonviolentcomm.html](http://www.co-intelligence.org/P-nonviolentcomm.html), and Dynamic Facilitation [www.co-intelligence.org/P-dynamicfacilitation.html](http://www.co-intelligence.org/P-dynamicfacilitation.html).

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## Collaborative Values, Principles, and Beliefs

### Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development:

#### *Ten guiding principles for successful information, consultation and active participation in policy-making*

##### 1. Commitment

- Leadership and strong commitment to information, consultation and active participation in policy-making is needed at all levels, from politicians, senior managers and public officials.

##### 2. Rights

- Citizens' rights to access information, provide feedback, be consulted and actively participate in policy-making must be firmly grounded in law or policy. Government obligations to respond to citizens when exercising their rights must also be clearly stated. Independent authorities for oversight, or their equivalent, are essential to enforcing these rights.

##### 3. Clarity

- Objectives for, and limits to, information, consultation and active participation during policy-making should be well defined from the outset. The respective roles and responsibilities of citizens (in providing input) and government (in making decisions for which they are accountable) must be clear to all.

##### 4. Time

- Public consultation and active participation should be undertaken as early in the policy process as possible. This allows a greater range of policy solutions to emerge. It also raises the chances of successful implementation. Adequate time must be available for consultation and participation to be effective. Information is needed at all stages of the policy cycle.

##### 5. Objectivity

- Information provided by government during policy-making should be objective, complete and accessible. All citizens should have equal treatment when exercising their rights of access to information and participation.

##### 6. Resources

- Adequate financial, human and technical resources are needed if public information, consultation and active participation in policy-making are to be effective. Government officials must have access to appropriate skills, guidance and training. An organisational culture that supports their efforts is highly important.

##### 7. Co-ordination

- Initiatives to inform citizens, request feedback from and consult them should be coordinated across government. This enhances knowledge management, ensures policy coherence, and avoids duplication. It also reduces the risk of "consultation fatigue" – negative reactions because of too much overlapping or poorly done consultation – among citizens and civil society organisations. Co-ordination efforts should not reduce the capacity of government units to ensure innovation and flexibility.

##### 8. Accountability

- Governments have an obligation to account for the use they make of citizens' inputs received – be it through feedback, public consultation or active participation. To increase this accountability, governments need to ensure an open and transparent policy-making process amenable to external scrutiny and review.

##### 9. Evaluation

- Evaluation is essential in order to adapt to new requirements and changing conditions for policy-making. Governments need tools, information and capacity to evaluate their performance in strengthening their relations with citizens.

##### 10. Active citizenship

- Governments benefit from active citizens and a dynamic civil society. They can take concrete actions to facilitate citizen's access to information and participation, raise awareness, and strengthen civic education and skills. They can support capacity building among civil society organisations.

Excerpted from Gramberger, M. "Put principles into practice!" In *Citizens as Partners: OECD Handbook on Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy-Making*. Paris, France: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, © OECD 2001, p. 83-88. 2001 [www1.oecd.org/scripts/publications/bookshop/redirect.asp?pub=422001141P1](http://www1.oecd.org/scripts/publications/bookshop/redirect.asp?pub=422001141P1).



## Collaborative Values, Principles, and Beliefs

### Society for Organizational Learning: *Guiding Principles and Ideals*

#### Guiding Principles of SoL

##### Drive to Learn

- All human beings are born with an innate, lifelong desire and ability to learn, which should be enhanced by all organizations.

##### Learning is Social

- People learn best from and with one another, and participation in learning communities is vital to their effectiveness, well-being and happiness in any work setting.

##### Learning Communities

- The capacities and accomplishments of organizations are inseparable from, and dependent on, the capacities of the learning communities which they foster.

##### Aligning with Nature

- It is essential that organizations evolve to be in greater harmony with human nature and with the natural world.

##### Core Learning Capabilities

- Organizations must develop individual and collective capabilities to understand complex, interdependent issues; engage in reflective, generative conversation; and nurture personal and shared aspirations.

##### Cross-Organizational Collaboration

- Learning communities that connect multiple organizations can significantly enhance their capacity for profound individual and organizational change.

#### Ideals of the SoL Community - Our Commitments to Each Other

##### Subsidiarity

- Make no decision and perform no function at a higher or more central level than can be accomplished at a more local level.

##### Inclusiveness

- Conduct all deliberations and make all decisions by bodies and methods which reasonably represent all relevant and affected parties.

##### Shared Responsibility

- Advance the Purpose in accordance with these Principles in ways which enhance the capacity of the community as a whole, as well as that of each member.

##### Openness

- Transcend institutional and intellectual boundaries and roles that limit or diminish learning.

##### Adaptive Governance

- Continually conceive, implement, and practice governance concepts and processes which encourage adaptability, diversity, flexibility, and innovation.

##### Intellectual Output

- Use research generated by the community in ways that most benefit society.

##### Acknowledgment

- Openly and fairly acknowledge intellectual contributions to Concepts, Theories, and Practices, both from within and from outside the community.

##### Participation & Quality

- Contribute to and/or participate in research, capacity building, and practice, striving for the highest standards of quality.

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## Collaborative Values, Principles, and Beliefs

### New York State Forum on Conflict and Consensus Inc.: *Bylaws Preamble*

[F]acilitated consensus building techniques can be applied to a wide variety of public policy decisions such as: site specific problems, development of legislation and regulations, and restructuring of government services. A broad range of techniques can be used, such as policy dialogues, regulatory negotiation, mediation, citizen participation, risk communication, and analytical modeling. The common theme that ties these techniques together is collaboration – an emphasis on face-to-face dialogue facilitated in a way that invites interested parties and communities to participate, addresses the full range of issues and values, illuminates points of agreement and disagreement, develops a shared understanding of the problem, fosters joint problem solving and builds consensus.

**More than just a collection of techniques, these methods reflect a set of values and assumptions:**

That all citizens – individuals, public interest groups, the business community, and other sectors of society – have the right to meaningful participation in decisions that affect them;

and that consensual, participatory decision making can

Result in higher levels of satisfaction among all participants including individuals and government officials;

Improve relationships among the various sectors of society;

Increase public confidence in government;

Lead to more innovative, stable, and in the long-run more cost-effective and timely solutions to complex public policy problems.

Excerpted from: New York State Forum on Conflict and Consensus Inc. Bylaws, 1993.

## Collaborative Values, Principles, and Beliefs

### Office of Management and Budget and Council on Environmental Quality: *Memorandum on Environmental Conflict Resolution - Basic Principles for Agency Engagement in Environmental Conflict Resolution and Collaborative Problem Solving*

#### Informed Commitment

Confirm willingness and availability of appropriate agency leadership and staff at all levels to commit to principles of engagement; ensure commitment to participate in good faith with open mindset to new perspectives

#### Balanced, Voluntary Representation

Ensure balanced, voluntary inclusion of affected/concerned interests; all parties should be willing and able to participate and select their own representatives

#### Group Autonomy

Engage with all participants in developing and governing process; including choice of consensus-based decision rules; seek assistance as needed from impartial facilitator/mediator selected by and accountable to all parties

#### Informed Process

Seek agreement on how to share, test and apply relevant information (scientific, cultural, technical, etc.) among participants; ensure relevant information is accessible and understandable by all participants

#### Accountability

Participate in process directly, fully, and in good faith; be accountable to the process, all participants and the public

#### Openness

Ensure all participants and public are fully informed in a timely manner of the purpose and objectives of process; communicate agency authorities, requirements and constraints; uphold confidentiality rules and agreements as required for particular proceedings

#### Timeliness

Ensure timely decisions and outcomes

#### Implementation

Ensure decisions are implementable; parties should commit to identify roles and responsibilities necessary to implement agreement; parties should agree in advance on the consequences of a party being unable to provide necessary resources or implement agreement; ensure parties will take steps to implement and obtain resources necessary to agreement

## Collaborative Values, Principles, and Beliefs

### Voluntary Sector Initiative (Canada)

#### *A Code of Good Practice on Policy Dialogue: Principles Underpinning the Code*

##### The Voluntary Sector's Value

A healthy and active voluntary sector plays an important role in helping the federal government identify issues and achieve its public policy objectives. By its very nature and particularly because of its connection to communities, the voluntary sector brings a special perspective and considerable value to its activities, including those it undertakes with the Government of Canada.

##### Mutual Respect

Both sectors will listen to and consider the views of all participants and respect their legitimacy and input.

##### Inclusiveness

Both sectors will involve the broadest possible range of groups or individuals who may be affected by a policy or who can make a meaningful contribution to the debate. Increasingly, policy development must take account of the specific needs, interests and experiences of the diversity of the voluntary sector including, for example, groups representing women, visible minorities, persons with disabilities, Aboriginal people, linguistic minorities, sexual orientation, remote, rural and northern communities and other hard-to-reach subsectors. Policies must also respect the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Canadian Human Rights Act, the Employment Equity Act, the Official Languages Act, the Multiculturalism Act and the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as Canada's obligations as a signatory of relevant international treaties and conventions, for example, on the rights of children, women and indigenous peoples. Policies must also respect all amendments, extensions or replacements to these laws and policies.

##### Accessibility

Both sectors will take the appropriate measures to ensure that all those invited to participate in a dialogue have access to the process. This will take account of factors such as language, region, distance, ethno-culture, religion, socio-economic background, age, knowledge or capabilities.

##### Clarity

Recognizing that a clear mutual understanding of the objectives, purpose and process of participation and feedback is vital, both sectors will establish the terms of the policy dialogue in advance and communicate them to participants.

##### Transparency

To build trust, both sectors will establish open lines of communication, provide information readily and invest in working relationships. Participants must clearly understand the context within which each decision will be made, including the scope of and limitations on dialogue.

##### Responsibility

Both sectors will participate in good faith and recognize that adequate resources and time are required for an effective process.

##### Accountability

Both sectors will provide feedback to their respective constituencies on the full range of views expressed, and clearly communicate how this input has been considered in the public policy process.

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