

Types of Collaboration

All of the cases met our general definition of collaboration, although they represented three different types.

Definition of Collaboration in Our Research Study:

"A reciprocal and voluntary agreement between two or more distinct public sector agencies, or between public and private or non-profit entities, to deliver government services."

Our preliminary research demonstrated that the arrangements among the parties in these collaborations often rest on a formal agreement which specifies the purpose of the collaboration, and the sharing or allocation of associated responsibilities, risks, benefits, and resources. Often, these formal agreements exist in the form of contracts for a specified period of time. In general, the following characteristics are present in each collaboration project we selected:

- A minimum of two distinct organizations
- A formal agreement about roles and responsibilities
- A common objective, activity, or project aimed at the delivery of a public service
- The sharing or allocation of risks, benefits, and resources - both tangible and intangible

Our case studies represent three different types of collaborations:

Public-Public Collaborations: This category includes both horizontal agreements between two agencies or departments at the same level of government, and vertical agreements or intergovernmental alliances between or among federal, state, and local levels. These collaborations go beyond the traditional legal frameworks that tie public agencies together through the operation of single programs. They represent voluntary relationships often driven by the need to solve mutual problems.

Public-Private Collaborations : Sub-contracting and outsourcing are the most common collaboration methods between the public and private sectors. In these cases, the government remains accountable for a service which is totally or partially operated by the private sector. Public-private partnership (PPP or P3) is currently the method of collaboration that generates the most debate. A PPP implies a sharing of resources, risks and benefits associated with project operations. In these cases, government hands over part of its management responsibilities while retaining enough control to ensure the protection of the public interest. Government control is ensured by contract or by laws and regulations governing the activities of the corporation.

Public-Non profit Collaborations : In certain service sectors, most notably health and human services, non profit service organizations are a major (sometimes sole) channel of service delivery at the community level. In the past, these relationships have been characterized by fee-for-service or annual contracts specifying the conditions under which a government agency will pay the non profit agency to deliver those services. Today, we are beginning to see joint development of service programs in which the public and non profit participants share responsibility for program design, performance, and evaluation.

Each of the twelve cases can be classified as primarily falling into one of these types.

Type of Collaboration	Case Studies	Government Levels
Public-private	IRS E-file	Federal, state
	First Gov	Federal, state
	Ontario Business Connect	Federal, state
	Cadastre Reengineering	State, local
	Access Indiana	State
	HotJob.be	State
	Partners in Change	State
	Bremen Online	Local
Public-public	GIS Coordination Program	State, local
	Service Canada	Federal, state
Public-nonprofit	One-Stop Business Registration	Federal, state, local
	Ambassadeur	State, local