Implementing Cross-Agency Collaboration

A Guide for Federal Managers

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IBM Center for
The Business of Government

Table of Contents

Foreword

On behalf of the IBM Center for The Business of Government, we are pleased to present this report, *Implementing Cross-Agency Collaboration: A Guide for Federal Managers,* by Jane Fountain, professor of political science and public policy at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Federal agencies and academics have long discussed the importance of cross-agency collaboration. But recent changes in law and advances in technology have led to a new environment that makes cross-agency management far more achievable. The GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 requires the development of government-wide priority goals and greater coordination among agencies. This report provides useful insights into how the government can proceed in creating effective cross-agency collaborations that can improve outcomes significantly.

Dr. Fountain has been an astute observer of cross-boundary relationships in a wide range of policy areas over the past two decades. She offers practical advice and a way forward by summarizing the collaboration literature that has evolved in recent years. She notes that effective collaboration consists of two dimensions—people skills and organizational processes—and that successful leaders make strategic use of both elements to manage in a networked government. People skills are key to developing trust, norms, and connections essential to effective multi-agency initiatives. But leaders must also create in parallel the institutional and organizational processes that allow cross-agency actions to be sustained over time, such as formal agreements, defined roles and responsibilities, pooled resources, and shared performance goals.

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Dr. Fountain offers a series of recommendations for action for leaders of cross-agency initiatives. She recommends that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) develop guidance that frames the key process design issues so that agencies can move forward quickly. She also recommends that leaders of cross-agency initiatives put in place clear organizational processes that create the environment for effective programs, such as developing shared operations with other agencies.

We hope that federal executives find the lessons and recommendations in this report useful as they consider the design and implementation of current and future collaborative cross-management initiatives.

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Introduction

This guide is meant to help government managers develop and sustain effective cross-agency collaboration in the United States federal government. The Government Performance and Results Act Modernization Act (GPRAMA) of 2010 requires collaboration across agencies, from consultation and knowledge-sharing to joint policy making and operations. Public managers now need to increase their understanding of how to effectively implement cross-agency collaboration.

The passage of GPRAMA recognizes contemporary political realities. First, complex policy problems, such as export promotion, disaster preparedness, and food safety, cannot be addressed by a single agency. Second, economic constraints make it increasingly problematic to continue spending on redundant and overlapping programs, services, and systems. Third, collaboration across agencies allows the federal government to streamline, simplify, and improve policy making and implementation. Collaboration has the potential to:

- Save money

- Simplify government for citizens and business

- Make public managers more productive

The basic message of the guide is this: Interagency collaboration is sustainable if, and only if, managers operate strategically within their institutional environments and develop two types of cross-agency collaboration:

- **Collaboration through people:** Relationship skills must be developed for effective managers and teams. Team-building skills are those used by managers willing and able to work across jurisdictional boundaries to develop effective professional relationships and cohesive working groups. Skills needed by effective managers include active listening, fairness, and respect—qualities that produce trust in a cross-agency collaborative initiative. In cross-boundary teams, managers build informal relationships outside regular hierarchical channels. Teams function well when productive communities based on trust and professional experience form around a problem, project, or practice.

- **Collaboration through processes:** In addition to effective managers and effective teams, cross-agency collaborative initiatives need effective organizational processes which include a focus on strategy, operations, systems, and their management. Effective organizational processes demand an organizational skill set that emphasizes rigor and clarity in setting goals, designing systems, building in milestones, attracting resources, and framing an organization that lies across agency boundaries.

Public managers effective at cross-agency collaboration need to use both their relationship skills and organizational structures strategically, working within their institutional constraints. The lessons reported here bring together a wide range of practical research and more than two decades of studying cross-boundary relationships and working with government managers in the U.S. and other countries. This guide provides a comprehensive approach to cross-agency

collaboration. It is not enough for a manager to develop interpersonal skills of persuasion or negotiation. Nor is it enough for a manager to focus exclusively on organizational processes such as performance and measurement.

Managers who concentrate exclusively on passing new laws and budgets will miss other key dimensions of cross-agency collaboration. Management advice and research on collaborative governance, networked governance, joined-up governance, and more abound. Some advice emphasizes individual leadership skills in developing collaboration. Other studies emphasize building networks for innovation. Still others focus on social media and technologies that should somehow make self-organization possible. And others stress performance management with an emphasis on clear goals, measures, and accountability. Cross-agency collaboration demands all of these skills and more.

Part I of this report outlines the new institutional environment for cross-agency collaboration and identifies institutional constraints that are likely to remain in place for the foreseeable future. Part II focuses on relationship skills for effective managers and team building for working across boundaries. Part III examines the organizational processes needed to work across agencies for joint policy making and implementation. The report ends with recommendations for the second term of the Obama administration.

Part I: A New Environment for Cross-Agency Collaboration

"… we cannot win the future with a government built for the past. We live and do business in the information age, but the organization of the federal government has not kept pace. Government agencies have grown without overall strategic planning and duplicative programs have sprung up, making it harder for each to reach its goals.

Now is the time to act to consolidate and reorganize the executive branch of the federal government in a way that best serves this goal."

— President Barack Obama, March 11, 2011.[1]

The founding fathers designed the American system of government to emphasize checks and balances, fragmented authority, competition of ideas, and competition for resources. The organizational arrangements and culture stemming from these foundations are intensely vertical, rewarding agency-centric behavior. As the Industrial Revolution paved the way for a professional civil service, one way for elected officials to maintain authority over a permanent class of officials in the executive branch was to divide and conquer by organizing to reinforce agency autonomy and congressional oversight, and to limit the influence of career experts in the civil service.

In practice, public officials in federal departments and agencies have cooperated across boundaries for decades via interagency working groups, internal procedures for managing shared services, and other arrangements. But over the past several years, official mandates requiring cross-agency collaboration as a strategic imperative for government performance have grown, driven by urgent needs for:

- Solutions to pressing, complex policy problems that cross traditional boundaries

- Cost savings and efficiency

- Reduction of duplication and overlap of programs, systems, and expenditures

- Improved service to citizens and business by building coherence and streamlining

- Leveraging technological capacity for agencies to share platforms, systems, applications, and information

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1.   Executive Office of the President. Presidential Memorandum. "Government Reform for Competitiveness and Innovation." March 11, 2001. http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/03/11/presidential-memorandum-government-reform-competitiveness-and-innovation, accessed June 12, 2012.

The Government Performance and Results Act Modernization Act of 2010

On January 4, 2011, the Government Performance and Results Act Modernization Act (GPRAMA) of 2010 (H.R. 2142) became law. It extends the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993 by requiring among its provisions stronger development of government-wide priority goals and greater use of cross-agency coordination.

The law requires the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to include cross-cutting, government-wide priority goals in its formulation of the annual government-wide performance plan, mandated originally under GPRA.[2] Agency strategic plans, also required originally under GPRA, must include a description of how the agency is working with other relevant agencies to achieve its goals. A report from the Congressional Research Service notes that "GPRAMA's provisions [for quarterly reviews of agency priority goals, or APGs] appear to be modeled on the Obama administration's 'high-priority performance goal' (HPPG) initiative, where reviews were conducted as in-person meetings."[3]

Historically, areas of shared responsibility for multiple government agencies have been resistant to real progress. Success in these areas requires a new kind of management approach—one that brings people together from across and outside the federal government to coordinate their work and combine their skills, insights, and resources. The cross-agency priority (CAP) goals represent presidential priorities for which this approach is likeliest to bear fruit.

—Performance.gov

The explicit and frequent mention of government-wide goals and cross-agency coordination for policy making and implementation clearly indicate that Congress endorses interagency and government-wide activities. This language demonstrates that cross-agency collaboration is increasingly being institutionalized into formal law and mandated by Congress as part of the required management practice of OMB and federal agencies. Several sections of the legislation direct agencies to undertake and improve interagency coordination.

The law also calls for the Office of Personnel Management to identify key skills and abilities of public managers. These skills include several that are included in this guide. Appendix I contains the memorandum that sets forth the 34 competencies needed for the implementation of GPRAMA.

GPRAMA requires establishment of a performance improvement council, an interagency body directed by law to share best practices across agencies and to facilitate cross-agency coordination. In stark contrast to traditional bureaucratic perspectives, GPRAMA makes clear that many strategies, priorities, and goals of the government *inherently* lie across agencies.[4]

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2. For a concise explanation of GPRAMA in five blog posts, see John Kamensky, "GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 Explained," IBM Center for The Business of Government blog. Series begins on January 6, 2011. The first post is at http://www.businessofgovernment. org/blog/business-government/gpra-modernization-act-2010-explained-part-1, accessed March 20, 2012.

3. Clinton Brass. "Changes to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA): Overview of the New Framework of Products and Processes." Congressional Research Service, February 29, 2012.

4. U.S. Congress. Senate Report 111-372. "GPRA Modernization Act of 2010: Report of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, United States Senate, to accompany H. R. 2142." December 16, 2010. http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CRPT-111srpt372/pdf/CRPT-111srpt372.pdf, accessed March 5, 2012.

In a review of GPRAMA, John Kamensky observes that Congress has a key role in improving cross-cutting and government-wide performance. He writes:

> ... for the law to be effective, Congress may have to change its behavior as well. For example, the law requires greater consultation with Congress in the designation of cross-cutting and agency-level priority goals, as well as in the development of agency strategic plans. But to do this, Congress will have to find new ways to coordinate its own efforts across committee jurisdictions. EPA and Homeland Security, for example, each report to over 70 committees and subcommittees, often with differing priorities, so Congress will likely have to find a way to coordinate internally in order to provide meaningful input. This will only increase when the law's provisions for obtaining congressional input on cross-agency goals become effective.[5]

Cross-Agency Priority (CAP) Goals

Key provisions of GPRAMA require OMB officials to work with agencies to develop two types of cross-agency priority (CAP) goals:

- Outcome-oriented goals in a limited number of policy areas that cut across agency boundaries

- Goals for management improvements across the government including financial, human capital, information technology, procurement and acquisition, and property management

- For each priority goal, OMB must name "a lead government official" responsible for coordinating efforts to achieve the priority goal. Thus, legal requirements determine the leadership of these cross-agency collaborative initiatives.

President Obama's FY 2013 budget named 14 cross-agency priority goals, the first such goals in the nation's history. Seven projects are mission-related, while seven others focus on mission-support goals. The projects grew out of existing administration priorities, but also responded directly to GPRAMA's requirements.[6] The CAP goals are meant to be in effect for four years, thus the same list of goals is presented in the President's FY 2014 budget and will remain active until February 2014 when a new set of goals will be announced for the FY 2015 budget. A list of each of the 14 goals, including the corresponding lead government official, is presented in Appendix II.[7]

In accordance with the GPRA Modernization Act, interim CAP goals were published concurrent with the FY 2013 President's budget on Performance.gov in February 2012 and will be active until February 2014, when a new set of goals must be established as part of the FY 2015 budget. The White House established Performance.gov to provide the public with quarterly updates and other information concerning the CAP goals.

Clearly, these developments deepen the use of federal government cross-agency initiatives and call for a knowledge base to help public managers implement the intent of GPRAMA. The CAP outcome-oriented cross-agency goals seek to build collaboration across agencies to advance key policy priorities such as energy, sustainability, skills gaps, and job training. While agency

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5.   Kamensky, see above.
6.   For more information on the CAP goals see Executive Office of the President, OMB, "Using Goals to Improve Performance and Accountability." http://goals.performance.gov/goals_2013, accessed March 20, 2012. See also GAO, "Managing for Results: GAO's Work Related to the Interim Crosscutting Priority Goals under the GPRA Modernization Act." GAO-12-620R. May 31, 2012. http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-12-620R accessed June 23, 2012.
7.   The FY 2013 goals as well as the FY 2012 goals are technically interim goals, since the CAP goal cycle is designed to coincide with a presidential term. The actual CAP goals will be named in February 2014, as part of the FY 2015 budget.

2012–2014 Cross-Agency Priority (CAP) Goals
(February 2012–February 2014)

Outcome-Oriented Goals

- Exports

- Entrepreneurship and Small Business

- Broadband

- Energy Efficiency

- Veteran Career Readiness

- STEM Education

- Job Training

Management Improvement Goals

- Cybersecurity

- Sustainability

- Real Property

- Improper Payments

- Data Center Consolidation

- Closing Skills Gaps

- Strategic Sourcing

Note: *See Appendix II for a more detailed description of each of the above goals.*

officials work together across agencies in a variety of ways, the CAP projects represent an institutional and structural shift to deepen such cross-agency connections.

Cross-agency collaboration is not new to the federal government. Interagency task forces, working groups, and councils have a long history. During the Clinton administration, virtual agencies such as Students.gov, Seniors.gov, and Business.gov sought to leverage the Internet to integrate services in one-stop shops, or online portals, for key customer or client groups. The Clinton administration made an explicit decision not to try to reorganize agencies and programs but to use virtual reorganization of information to streamline and improve services.[8]

During the Bush administration, a set of 25 cross-agency e-government initiatives, originally known as the Quicksilver projects and carried over from their inception during the Clinton administration, sought to consolidate information systems and streamline standard business functions such as travel, payroll, and authentication across the government. They ranged across policy domains as diverse as disaster management, rulemaking, grants, benefits, and government loans. Both types of efforts continue, but the mission-oriented CAP goals extend and deepen cross-agency collaboration—at least in legislative intent—to recognize that "wicked" policy problems defined by complexity and interdependency lie inherently across agency boundaries and require multiple-agency policy making and implementation.

Goal leaders for the interim CAP projects are presidential or OMB staff, not agency executives. The Bush administration cross-agency projects used a lead agency or managing partner approach, one that continues to function for several ongoing cross-agency initiatives. The Clinton administration virtual agencies, which were pioneering efforts, had not yet worked out standard policies for leadership and operations but represented important experimentation and innovation-producing models that continue to be used today.

Although the CAP goals and projects are new, the capacity to undertake such large, complex cross-agency collaborative efforts has been under development in the federal government over the course of at least the last three presidential administrations. The difference is an emphasis on goals and their potential power as a catalyst for performance improvement.

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8.   See Jane Fountain. *Building the Virtual State: Information Technology and Institutional Change.* Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2001.

Case Example of a CAP Goal: The National Export Initiative

The challenge? Nearly 95 percent of the world's consumers live outside the United States and, during the next five years, the International Monetary Fund estimates that almost 87 percent of global economic growth will take place outside the U.S.

The National Export Initiative (NEI), the first CAP goal launched in January 2010, is designed to double U.S. exports over five years by the end of 2014. This would result in exports going from $1.8T to $3.6T. Streamlining and efficiency gains through cross-agency collaboration are part of the initiative, but the major challenge lies in efforts to develop more effective policy making by working across boundaries. Four themes demonstrate the critical role of cross-agency collaboration in the NEI:

- Strengthen interagency information-sharing and coordination

- Develop unified goals for Trade Policy Coordinating Committee (TPCC) member agencies to support the NEI's implementation

- Leverage and enhance technology across agencies to reach potential exporters and provide U.S. business with tools to export successfully

- Leverage combined efforts of state and local governments and public-private partnerships

The CAP exports working groups include public managers from 20 agencies. Michael Froman, assistant to the President and deputy national security advisor for international economic affairs, is the goal leader.

In 1992 Congress established the Trade Policy Coordinating Committee (TPCC) to be based in the Department of Commerce International Trade Administration. The TPCC developed collaboration in several areas, including cross-agency staff training and improved outreach to potential exporters. However, it lacked a focused, cohesive strategy with a clear set of goals, adequate funding, and continuity of direction. In October 2009, President Obama convened the TPCC as the first cabinet-level interagency group in his administration and decided to use the TPCC as the primary coordinator for export promotion, one of the administration's key policy goals.

Institutional challenges to cross-agency collaboration for export promotion include multiple and competing budgets, lack of alignment between the Department of Commerce and OMB in terms of strategy and budgets, and fragmentation of oversight and authority for international trade across congressional committees and subcommittees. Essentially, the structure of congressional committees with oversight for trade does not align with a cohesive national strategy to increase exports. Agencies develop and submit agency budgets to OMB and are measured in terms of agency-level statutes. The scale and scope of the exports cross-agency collaboration highlights the challenges of focusing policy making and implementation across agencies and programs in a range of countries and regions, industry sectors, and exporting processes from initial research to financing and in-country support.

In March 2010, the President formed the Export Promotion Cabinet, a cross-agency executive group including secretaries, directors, and leaders of 16 departments and agencies. The

President directed the cabinet to develop recommendations to implement the NEI. The recommendations were presented to the President in September 2010. Thus, a cross-agency collaborative initiative was tasked by the President to formulate a set of cross-agency objectives.

The President used his executive authority to order the NEI to launch a one-stop website for exports. The TPCC agencies have developed one website, Export.gov, as the single portal for all export information for businesses. Like the portals developed by virtual agencies, Export. gov should give its users the sense that they are dealing with a seamless government. Moreover, like earlier cross-agency initiatives, agencies are streamlining processes for trade activity by reducing the number and variety of forms, inconsistent terminology, and steps required for businesses to engage in exporting. By 2011, the TPCC agencies had developed "a standard set of cross-cutting interagency metrics to measure this administration's progress on implementing the NEI over the next four years."

The President also directed establishment of the Interagency Trade Enforcement Center in the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. In February 2012, former Department of Commerce Secretary John Bryson remarked on the Commerce blog that the new trade enforcement center would "institute a 'whole-of-government' approach to getting tough on trade enforcement …"

In May 2012, bills were introduced in the House and Senate to amend the Export Enhancement Act of 1988 to include greater attention to cross-agency collaboration including "identifying opportunities to consolidate or co-locate offices of agencies involved in such activities." The amendments would also clarify the roles of TPCC members, institutionalize progress reports on development of Export.gov as the single window for export promotion, and develop a small business interagency task force on export financing and other topics.

Cross-agency collaboration of many types is critical to the success of the exports goal. Specific examples include:

- Leveraging multiple agencies' assistance in the advocacy process and extending outreach efforts to raise the awareness of U.S. companies of the federal government's advocacy program

- TPCC agencies "developed an interagency review process to evaluate high-level advocacy issues that merit White House attention …"

- Streamlining applications and other processes in the government's credit programs to make it easier for exporters and other customers to access credit

- Stronger coordination of services to strengthen export promotion efforts

- The International Trade Administration (ITA) and the Small Business Administration (SBA) have developed a consistent, cross-agency method to refer new clients to the right TPCC agency based on degree of experience with exporting.

- ITA developed an enhanced client intake registration process on www.export.gov. The registration form went live on December 17, 2010.

- ITA developed a new online free trade agreement tariff search application. If a user enters a product code, the application displays the tariff in force for a given year.

- The Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Export Initiative (RE4I) a cross-agency initiative to increase energy and energy efficiency exports, began in December 2010 and includes "23 commitments from eight separate government agencies to better" serve RE & EE firms.

Exports Cross-Agency Priority Goal Partners

Department of Agriculture

- Foreign Agricultural Service
- Foreign Market Development Program
- Market Access Program
- Export Credit Guarantee Program
- Emerging Markets Program
- Supplier Credit Export Program
- Agricultural Marketing Service

Department of Commerce

- International Trade Administration
- Market Access and Compliance
- Import Administration
- Manufacturing and Services
- U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service
- Trade Promotion Programs
- District Export Councils
- SelectUSA
- Strategic Partnership Programs
- Market Development Cooperator Program
- Advocacy Center

Department of State

- U.S. Embassies and Consulates
- Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs
- Trade Policy and Programs
- Commercial and Business Affairs

Export-Import Bank

- Working Capital Guarantee Program
- Export Credit Insurance
- Loan Guarantee & Direct Loan Program
- Finance Lease Guarantees Program

Overseas Private Investment Corporation

- Small and Medium-Enterprise Financing
- Structured Financing
- Investment Insurance
- Investment Funds
- Enterprise Development Network

Small Business Administration

- Office of International Trade
- Small Business Development Centers
- Export Legal Assistance Network
- Export Express and International Trade Loan Programs
- Export Working Capital Program
- State Trade and Export Promotion Grants

U.S. Trade and Development Agency

- Project Development Program
- Feasibility Studies
- Pilot Projects
- Technical Assistance
- International Business Partnership Program
- Reverse Trade Missions
- Conferences
- Workshops

Office of the U.S. Trade Representative

Institutional Constraints on Collaboration

Paradoxically, recent legislation requiring interagency collaboration arises out of an institutional environment seemingly designed to inhibit interagency coordination. For example, several laws prohibit specific agencies from sharing data with other agencies to protect personal privacy or national security. Legislation requires agencies to secure the permission of Congress before developing shared interagency budgets for joint projects or operations.[9]

Laws and regulations specify "the rules of the game" for departments and agencies that in turn shape the behavior of government officials. The structure of congressional committees and subcommittees fragments jurisdiction and oversight of cross-agency efforts.[10] Sunshine laws require agencies to make information available to the public. Formal contracts usually specify performance criteria, dispute resolution mechanisms, and some of the ways that government actors will be expected to interact, including written disclosures, notices of intent, verbal representations, and the like. In short, contracts describe and prescribe the structures and processes of information flows. Clearly, institutions circumscribe the environment for cross-agency collaboration in the federal government and specify many of the ways those collaborations will be designed and managed. Legal impediments can slow forward motion of interagency working groups. To counteract strong agency-centric tendencies, interagency collaboration often moves forward as part of a presidential agenda with strong support and coordination from OMB, the White House, or other executive offices.

At least four institutional processes serve as constraints to effective cross-agency collaboration:

- Stovepipes, the vertical structure of bureaucracy which is the fundamental organizational form of the executive branch of government

- A legislative process that sends mixed messages

- Blurred lines of accountability

- A budget process that inhibits shared resources

Constraint One: Stovepipes

Throughout much of the 20th century, bureaucracies had well-defined jurisdiction and authority relations ordered through a clear chain of command. Max Weber, one of the fathers of the concept of bureaucracy, argued that it was the only form of organization capable of coordination and control in industrializing societies. (Note that bureaucracy here refers not to red tape but to an organizational form.) Traditional bureaucratic design is deeply institutionalized in the U.S. government, exhibited by relatively autonomous government agencies accountable to specific congressional committees and subcommittees.

Over the past 30 years, public managers and management experts have sought to forge more flexible, innovative, and productive forms than traditional bureaucracy. Markets and increased use of contracting provide one alternative; networks, partnerships, and collaboration another. Yet the basic structure of bureaucracy persists—and with good reason.[11] Collaborative governance, networks across agencies, and other cross-boundary arrangements are layered over traditional bureaucratic organizations. They do not replace them.

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9. This section is based on Fountain, 2007.
10. See Beryl Radin. *Federal Management Reform in a World of Contradictions.* Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press. 2012.
11. For a related discussion, see Donald Kettl, "Managing Boundaries: The Collaboration Imperative," *Public Administration Review,* 2006. Re: Weberian bureaucracy, see Jane Fountain, "Toward a Theory of Federal Bureaucracy in the 21st Century." In *Governance. com: Democracy in the Information Age*, eds. E. Kamarck and J. S. Nye, Jr. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press. 2001.

In the schematic drawings below, the traditional hierarchical model is sketched as part of an organization chart with boxes representing autonomous departments (Model A). A limited form of collaboration is sketched using slightly overlapping ovals to represent overlapping goals and business processes across agencies (Model B). The third, a network diagram, is an actual depiction of the connections among 25 Bush administration cross-agency projects. It gives a starkly different view, emphasizing connection rather than separation (Model C).

To move from one model to another, a public manager must decide to achieve at least some goals through cross-agency cooperation. To do this, decision-makers must be able to imagine a positive-sum calculation (win-win), rather than viewing decisions as zero-sum calculations in which one department's gain is another's loss. Institutionally, for cross-agency collaboration to work, systems of accountability, budgeting, and legislation have to be aligned to allow for shared jurisdiction, resources, and operations.

The main structural barrier to collaboration is the departmental model (Model A), an enduring feature of the modern federal government. Central oversight agencies can use control measures to promote interdepartmental collaboration, but such an approach runs counter to a tradition of

From Agency Autonomy to Networked Agencies

Model A: Traditional Hierarchical Structure: Agency Autonomy

Model B: Shared Goals, Processes, and Systems Across Agencies

Model C: Cross-Agency Collaboration as Networked Governance
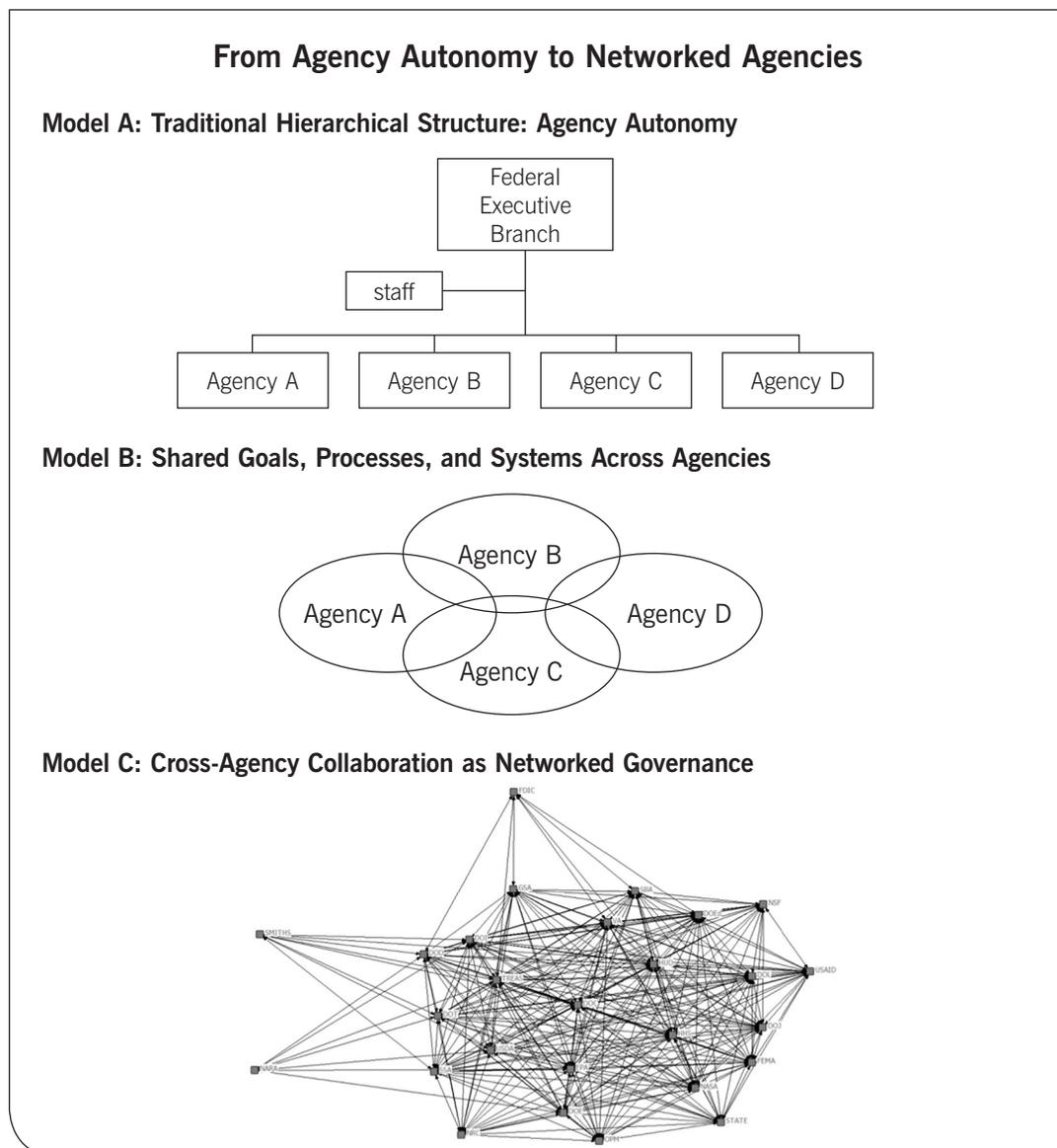
agency autonomy. As a key executive branch oversight and management agency, OMB has played an increasing role in shaping incentives to promote cross-agency collaboration. Over time, it has expanded its relationship with agencies as controller to include that of facilitator and knowledge-broker in an effort to catalyze, rather than simply to order, more collaboration across agencies. If oversight bodies could simply order cooperation, they would do so—and in fact have done so with varying success. But the information and incentive structures to support interagency collaboration are too complex to yield to simple fiat, even from legitimate authorities.

Constraint Two: Legislative Processes Send Mixed Messages

In recent years, legislators have mandated agencies and programs to cooperate to achieve public ends. In fact, interagency relationships, including intergovernmental arrangements, have been written into legislation throughout the nation's history.[12] To be sure, legislation often mandates agency behavior without providing needed authority or resources. In other cases, legislation reinforces departmental autonomy.

Law and legitimacy are closely related, so cross-agency collaborative performance requires new forms of institutional legitimacy, typically encoded in law or regulation. In many cases of collaboration, informal negotiations, planning, and actual collaborative practices proceed before formal authority and arrangements change to accommodate them.[13]

Constraint Three: Blurred Lines of Accountability

In the federal government, accountability flows directly from the vertical structure of bureaucracy. An agency director is directly accountable to Congress for the actions of his or her agency. A vivid example of accountability in action followed the inadequate response of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to Hurricane Katrina. Its former director, presidential appointee Michael D. Brown, was forced to resign due to the poor performance of his agency.

Underlying the traditional concept of departmental accountability is the assumption that one organization, and its leader, are responsible for one policy—or that every policy is the responsibility of just one organization. The idea flows from the supposed clarity of bureaucratic organization and hierarchical accountability. The law typically assigns specific and unique responsibility for implementing a policy to one organization. Moreover, in this view one should be able to identify precisely the individual responsible for each program within an agency. Thus one individual is ultimately accountable for each component of a policy.

Cross-agency collaboration blurs lines of authority and accountability. Public managers are challenged when asked to maintain vertical accountability in their agency activities while supporting horizontal or networked initiatives for which lines of accountability are less direct and clear. The risk in interagency arrangements is not the same as the risk involved in contracting out to private entities because a contract clearly delineates the requirements imposed on the contractor and the penalties for failure to perform. But interagency collaborative arrangements, until recently, have rarely clarified division of labor, authority, and responsibility in such detail. Moreover, the developing stages of interagency collaboration typically require public managers

12.   See, for example, Daniel Elazar, *The American Partnership: Intergovernmental Cooperation in the Nineteenth Century*. University of Chicago Press, 1962; Thad E. Hall and Laurence J. O'Toole, "Structures for Policy Implementation: An Analysis of National Legislation, 1965-66 and 1993–94." *Administration & Society* 31:6 (2000): 667–86; Hall and O'Toole, "Shaping Formal Networks through the Regulatory Process," *Administration & Society* 36:2 (2004): 186–207.

13.   Sharon S. Dawes and Lise Prefontaine. "Understanding New Models of Collaboration for Delivering Government Service." *Communications of the ACM* 46, no. 1 (2003): 40-42; Kenneth Kernaghan. "Integrated Service Delivery: Beyond the Barriers." Prepared for the Chief Information Officer, Government of Canada, 2003. Kernaghan reports in the results of a study of integrated service delivery projects in Canada that "legislative and regulatory barriers are of the show-stopper variety and require political consent for their removal. It is clear, for example, that privacy acts restrict the sharing of some kinds of data" (17–18).

to engage in experimentation, trial and error, and provisional systems as a group of decision-makers negotiates and learns what will work in their context. As implemented during the past few decades, in some cross-agency collaborations either the lead agency, the managing partner or, more recently with respect to CAP goals, OMB and EOP executives, have been accountable for the performance of a network of agencies and programs.

In spite of these challenges, for nearly 30 years a cadre of federal public managers has gained practical experience with the development of sustainable cross-agency operations. Although pockets of good practice have developed, institutional systems and policies to support inter-agency collaboration have lagged behind.[14]

Constraint Four: The Budget Process Inhibits Shared Resources

Shared resources form a significant source of cohesion for interagency collaboration, in part because they change the nature of the relationship from multiple exchanges to a shared system. In fact, researchers have found that the amount of resources shared by the group is one of the determinant factors for partnership effectiveness. (Not clear, though, is whether the shared resources are the cause or an effect of collaboration.)

In contrast, the federal budget system traditionally has restricted the use of funds in ways that constrain interagency collaboration. More generally, in most industrialized democracies, the budget process is organized to authorize and appropriate funds to individual departments for department-specific programs reinforcing the vertical structure of government.[15] In fact, as cross-agency collaborative initiatives began to develop during the past decade, Congress enacted a law to prohibit federal agencies from developing shared interagency budgets without advance permission from Congress.

Public management innovations often collide with entrenched institutions. Eventually, innovators must address and resolve these tensions or find their activities prohibited by formal rules. When such tensions can be resolved, new institutional processes may be developed, gain legitimacy, form the basis for new legislation and, subsequently, become new constraints for decision-makers. Institutions can and do change, but the logics and timing by which they change differ from changes in practice in more fluid professional networks and more flexible operating procedures and routines. When public managers ignore the institutional and political context, or fail to manage effectively within it, they miss key dimensions that influence cross-agency collaboration.

Is Cross-Agency Management Different from Within-Agency Management?

There are striking similarities between managing across boundaries and managing within an agency.[16] The management skill sets and the organizational processes are similar. Working within agencies or across their boundaries, effective managers must:

14.   Barbara Allen et al. "E-Government as Collaborative Governance: Structural, Accountability and Cultural Reform." In *Practicing E-Government: A Global Perspective,* edited by Mehdi Khosrow-Pour. New York: Idea Group, 2005, 1–15; Donald G. Lenihan, et al. *What is Shared Accountability? Policy, Politics and Governance.* Vol 5. Ottawa, Ontario: KTA Centre for Collaborative Government, 2003; Craig Millar and Daniel Rubenstein. *Government Response to the Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans: Report on the Oceans Act.* Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Government of Canada, 2002; Peter Wilkins. "Accountability and Joined Up Government." *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 61:1 (2002), 114–119; Fountain 2001.
15.   Eugene Bardach and Cara Lesser. "Accountability in Human Services Collaboratives—For What? and to Whom?" *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 6, no. 2 (1996): 197–224; Allen et al. 2001.
16.   See Eugene Bardach, 1998, and Michael McGuire, 2006, among many other studies, for more detailed descriptions of hierarchy within networks.

- Marshal expertise and talent

- Find and sustain resources

- Develop appropriate problem-solving, decision-making, and conflict resolution structures

- Develop and enforce rules

The structures and processes that constitute management capacity are themselves similar whether a manager is working within or across agencies. For example, many cross-agency collaborations are hierarchical in their design and of necessity use formal roles and structures, coordination mechanisms, and other design elements of traditional hierarchical organizations.[17] The lead agency and managing partner network approaches are two federal government examples where one agency is clearly in charge. Under GPRAMA, the CAP priority goals are led by law by government executives and supported by performance improvement officers mandated to build a more-or-less temporary organization that will function across agency boundaries.

What is different? Indirect management—using persuasion, negotiation, conflict resolution, and similar tools of horizontal management—is typically highlighted as key to collaboration. It is necessary but not sufficient. In addition to collaborative management skills and cohesive cross-boundary teams, interagency projects require rigorous, systematic management systems and processes. Ultimately, government executives and managers working across boundaries have to develop and sustain authority, legitimacy, and credibility across jurisdictions and often across cultures. What holds the actors together in a network are perceptions that joint gains will be produced that will exceed the costs of forgoing some measure of agency autonomy.

Working across agencies is demanding, takes extra communication and persuasion, and extracts high transaction costs. Size, complexity, and interdependence of collaborative arrangements make the job much more challenging than most within-agency management as well. Lack of regularized flows of resources, expertise, and authority has to be negotiated and the legitimacy of the enterprise sustained. Managers have to exert additional effort to build processes across formal organizations, to establish and maintain communications in a network, to secure legitimacy for the project, and to secure and share resources in a sustainable way.

To build and sustain cross-agency collaborative management, managers need three sets of skills:

- First, understand and work strategically within the institutional environment.

- Second, develop and use interpersonal skills to build strong professional relationships and teams.

- Third, build capacity across boundaries through rigorous structures and processes with the extra commitment and coordination required to work across agency boundaries.

Coordination and collaboration are costly in time, effort, and additional capacity building. But as an expert recently noted: "Many problems we face … cannot be addressed unless we cross boundaries and create networks to deal with them … The question is not what it costs to solve them; the question is what it costs if we do not."[18]

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17.   McGuire, 2006; Milward and Provan, 2001.
18.   Roberts, Nancy C. "Beyond Smokestacks and Silos: Open-Source, Web-Enabled Coordination in Organizations and Networks," *Public Administration Review*. September-October 2011, 677–693. Quotation from p. 686. Michael McGuire, Robert Agranoff, and Chris Silvia. "Collaborative Public Management," Foundations of Public Administration Series, *Public Administration Review*. 2011. Rosemary O'Leary, Catherine Gerard, and Lisa Blomgren Bingham, eds. 2006. Symposium on Collaborative Public Management. *Public Administration Review* 66.

Part II: Collaboration through People—Relationship Skills for Effective Managers and Teams

Key attributes, skills, and practices can be used by managers to promote successful collaboration across agencies. The critical message is this: effective managers working across agencies must use interpersonal and team-level skills, while simultaneously working with others to develop rigorous management processes and systems robust enough to be sustained across formal bureaucratic boundaries.

Strong interpersonal skills are important, but they are not sufficient in themselves. Rigorous performance management and other processes are critical, but they fail when relationship skills are neglected. Building trust does not mean that rigorous systems are not needed. But rigorous systems underperform when managers don't trust one another's authority, expertise, and reliability. So we first discuss the skill set of the collaborative manager, the key dimensions of effective teams, and the underlying elements of collaboration across boundaries: trust, norms, and networks.

The Collaborative Manager

Collaboration depends critically on the interpersonal skills of individual managers. Successful cross-agency collaborations always involve policy entrepreneurs with skill at facilitation and brokering among individuals and agencies with different perspectives and interests.[19] Some researchers suggest that the selection of public managers with such skills is critical to the success of networked organizational projects. Other studies recommend that organizations foster the formation of "collaborative pairs" by linking key individual brokers across agencies.[20] In building interagency capacity, individual incompatibilities among managers translate to structural weakness as processes are distorted.

The skills and processes that make agencies successful are similar to those that make cross-agency collaborations successful. The key difference is the need to design and manage *across* rather than *within* jurisdictional boundaries and operate without the formal authority present in hierarchical relationships. Managers who are effective across boundaries use the big picture, framing, persuasion, negotiation, and other dimensions of influence to set direction, gain commitments, build trust, and motivate and coordinate others outside their direct chain of command.

The director of a successful, large cross-agency initiative describes his management style as the conductor model. Far from the stereotype of the charismatic leader, this executive has a

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19.   Early research on collaboration includes Robert Huggins, "Inter-Firm Network Policies and Firm Performance, Evaluating the Impact of Initiatives in the United Kingdom." *Research Policy* 30, no. 3 (2001): 443–458; James L. Hoel. *Cross-System Collaboration: Tools that Work*. Washington, D.C.: Child Welfare League of America, 1998; and Thomas J. Hoban. "Barriers to Interagency Cooperation." *Journal of Applied Sociology* 4, (1987): 13–29.

20.   Susan G. Cohen and Don Mankin. "Complex Collaborations in the New Global Economy." *Organizational Dynamics* 31, no. 2 (2002): 117–133.

background in electrical engineering and transportation logistics with a preference for giving the limelight to others. Like musicians in a symphony, his staff and partners must all be reading from the same sheet of music, while their artistic expression is encouraged.

Key skills of network brokers typically include:

- Ability to work with other professionals whose perspectives differ from their own

- Demonstrating fairness

- Practicing active listening

- Sharing

- Flexibility

- Ability to envision new ways of operating

- Capacity to build strong professional relationships

- Ability to communicate openly

- Ability to take calculated risks

Public managers interviewed during the past decade repeatedly mention the above attributes when they describe successful program leaders and note the absence of one or more skills when projects have failed. A recent IBM report by Rosemary O'Leary and Catherine Gerard echoes these findings.[21] In a survey of more than 300 members of the Senior Executive Service asking about key skills for collaboration, the most surprising result was that interpersonal skills topped the list as prerequisites for building collaboration across agencies.

Studies of collaborative governance uncover similar lists of the collaborative manager's skills and attributes, including communication to create shared meaning, understanding, empathy, conflict resolution, networking, creativity, innovation, and empowerment. Others have noted the importance of a manager's impartiality; that is, a commitment to joint problem-solving and a willingness to forgo bargaining for a particular solution.[22]

Interpersonal skills are critical. But ultimately, setting direction always involves risk and the use of authority. The risk is that establishing a clear direction makes plain what the team will not do, which is sure to bruise feelings and ambitions and to arouse intense resistance. Team leaders have to be able to absorb and manage the emotions and politics that come with resistance to change.

A large cross-agency project was tasked with streamlining architecture and systems in a line of business, although many partners strongly resisted change. A senior public manager observed of the leadership:

> They have provided continuity in the management of the project. The project team literally had to slug it out over many months [to build the initial version of the system]. They showed integrity of leadership. The crunch came when they had to decide on architecture. Sunk investments [by agencies] are important. It became clear that they did not flinch at the point of decision. They held firm and didn't flinch when it came time to make a decision.

21.   Rosemary O'Leary and Catherine Gerard. *Collaboration across Boundaries: Insights and Tips from Federal Senior Executives*. IBM Center for The Business of Government, 2012.

22.   Michael McGuire. "Collaborative Public Management: Assessing What We Know and How We Know It." *Public Administration Review* 66, no. s1 (2006): 33–43; John M. Bryson, Barbara C. Crosby, and Melissa Middleton Stone. "The Design and Implementation of Cross-Sector Collaborations: Propositions from the Literature." *Public Administration Review* 66, no. s1 (2006): 44–55.

Characteristics of an Effective Collaborative Manager

- Good interpersonal skills
- Builds strong professional relationships
- Builds trust
- Fairness
- Flexibility
- Impartiality
- Sees the big picture
- Creates shared meaning
- Sets direction
- Propensity to envision new ways of operating
- Framing problems for joint problem-solving
- Empowerment
- Brokering

- Persuasion
- Negotiation
- Active listening
- Motivation
- Facilitation
- Sharing
- Open communications
- Empathy
- Conflict resolution
- Networking
- Creativity
- Innovation

Source: *Jane Fountain*

Effective Teams

It may seem like heresy to claim that teams consistently underperform. We are a country that deeply values teamwork and the power of teams. Yet they rarely work as expected. One of this author's first research projects, in 1984, examined the effectiveness of cross-boundary teams in the budget preparation division of OMB. Richard Hackman, one of the nation's experts on teams, led the study working with Pete Modlin, former OMB assistant director for budget review. What was surprising even at that time was the lack of connection between management research on teams and the reality of working across boundaries in the federal government.

Over hundreds of studies, five conditions hold for effective team performance that demonstrates that a group is really a team:

- Teams have clear boundaries, members who are interdependent, and stable membership over time.

- Teams have a clear, compelling direction focusing on ends to be achieved, not simply means.

- The team structure—its task, composition, and the central norms and processes in use—facilitates the work of the team.

- Resources and support are sufficient and available from the team's broader environment.

- A champion is available to resolve difficulties, to leverage new opportunities and to help with major transitions.[23]

Team members need time to orient themselves and learn about one another. The pace of change and constant substitutions of those on detail in many cross-agency initiatives erode

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23.   Ruth Wageman, Richard Hackman, and E. V. Lehman, 2004. "The Team Diagnostic Survey: Development of an Instrument." Unpublished manuscript. http://www.apa.org/science/about/psa/2004/06/hackman.aspx

team effectiveness unless a core group can maintain coherence. Researchers and public managers have observed the adverse impact on projects when a champion moves on.[24] This is a particular dilemma for those cross-agency projects championed by political appointees because their average tenure tends to last about 18 months. Compounding the problem are cross-agency projects staffed by detailees on short-term assignments.

Team composition itself is often a problem. Members who detract from the work of the team are added for political or other reasons. (The worst situation occurs when an agency details a low performer to a cross-agency project.) Some very talented managers are not good team players. They don't belong on teams even though they will have to remain in the loop for projects that require their expertise.

Often, innovators in the federal civil service pay a stiff price for their courage to differ with others in suggesting new directions. But teams need such individuals to broaden perspectives and alternative solutions and to come up with new solutions to problems.[25]

The CAP priority goal projects will encompass so many agencies and programs that the teams to be formed are likely to be large. But the larger the team, the more difficult it is to manage. Leaders of these priority goal projects will have to find ways to construct and coach effective teams.

What are the management skills for team leaders? Team leaders help their team create the conditions for performance and work with their teams to leverage opportunities in the environment. For the federal government, this may mean finding opportunities in budgets, in new initiatives, and through knowledge of who is doing what in the government. Team leaders, especially those working across agency boundaries, need emotional and professional maturity, attributes seldom discussed in public management. Richard Hackman observes: "Emotionally, mature leaders move toward anxiety-arousing states of affairs in the interest of learning about them, rather than move away to get anxieties reduced as quickly as possible." Robert Agranoff also has noted the avoidance of such risk as a way to avoid conflict in the collaborative initiatives he studied.

Team leaders for the CAP goals and other cross-agency collaborative initiatives will have to demonstrate personal courage because they are tasked with moving a group from its collective agreement to a new level. Leaders often have to challenge norms and routines, calling for new ones in order to address challenges. These moves invite resistance and anger. Skills can be taught and developed. But emotional maturity and personal courage are not as amenable to training.[26]

Trust, Norms, and Networks Are Keys to Effective Relationships

Public managers require time to build relationships across boundaries. Allocation of time by busy managers signals commitment.[27] The practical work of operating in a network is typically carried out through interpersonal interactions.[28] Repeated interactions, when productive, allow

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24.   Kenneth Kernaghan, 2003.
25.   Richard Hackman, 2009.
26.   See Richard Hackman, "What Makes for a Great Team?" *Psychological Science Agenda*, June 2004; "Why Teams Don't Work," *Harvard Business Review*, May 2009
27.   Lawrence J. Johnson, et al., "Stakeholders' Views of Factors that Impact Successful Interagency Collaboration." *Exceptional Children* 69, no. 2 (2003): 195–209; Hoel 1998; Huggins 2001.
28.   Huggins 2001; Akbar Zaheer, Bill McEvily, and Vincenzo Perrone. "Does Trust Matter? Exploring the Effects of Interorganizational and Interpersonal Trust on Performance." *Organization Science* 9, no. 2 (1998): 141–159. According to Huggins, "although networks are a group endeavor, the 'on-the-ground practicalities' of 'networking' necessarily consists [sic] of behavior that is often dyadic in nature" (p. 449). Similarly, Zaheer, McEvily, and Perrone distinguish between interorganizational and interpersonal trust.

reciprocity, and thus trust, to develop. Trust is a critical element of successful collaborative teams and correlates strongly with team capacity, flexibility, and adaptability. Interpersonal trust affects interagency trust, which in turn has a significant influence on relational exchange, that is, the type and quality of negotiations among organizations in a network.[29]

Social Capital

In Nobel Prize-winning research, policy experts have demonstrated the emergence of cooperation in situations where the probability of non-cooperative outcomes is high. They show that when individuals engage in repeated interactions over time they increase the likelihood of cooperation. Repeated interaction, when productive, can increase the expectation that others can be trusted not to strategize for gain at the expense of the other parties.[30]

What is the glue that holds together a network of government officials across agency boundaries? Researchers have found that networks of relationships, characterized by trust and effective norms of behavior, produce social capital, or the ability of groups to engage in joint productive work outside traditional bureaucratic structure. A revolution in research on social networks in management has produced important insights for public managers seeking to build collaboration. Networks are effective information processors:

> "social networks affect the flow and the quality of information. Much information is subtle, nuanced and difficult to verify, so actors do not believe impersonal sources and instead rely on people they know."[31]

Even in an information age, managers rely on trusted sources for current information and its interpretation.

Trust emerges in situations where individuals have incentives to exploit others in their network but refrain from doing so to gain longer-term, broader benefits. This dynamic is critical in cross-agency relationships because managers are constantly torn between seeking gains for their agency at the expense of other agencies, and working collaboratively across agencies. Public managers who shortchange their counterparts in other agencies quickly gain reputations that spread throughout their network. These reputational factors underline the importance for network brokers to engage in behaviors that build trust across agencies if cross-agency relationships are deemed important. And reputation plays a strong role in controlling exploitative behavior.

Public managers stress the importance of open and effective communication for successful cross-agency collaboration. This finding echoes a robust result of social network analysis: Network density is proportional to the influence of norms in the network. The more connections there are as a percentage of all possible connections among individuals in a network, the more powerful the influence of norms. Agreements about appropriate behavior are clearer, reinforced more often, and sanctioned more quickly if behavior deviates from the norm in high-density networks.[32] On the other hand, larger groups, which tend to have lower network

29. Eugene Bardach. "Developmental Dynamics: Interagency Collaboration as an Emergent Phenomenon." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 11, no. 2 (2001): 149–164. Biedell et al. "Facilitating Cross-Agency Collaboration." Smith School of Business, University of Maryland. 2001; Zaheer, McEvily, and Perrone 1998; Christine Oliver, "Determinants of Interorganizational Relations: Integration and Future Directions." *Academy of Management Review* 15, no. 241 (1990): 265.
30. See Robert Axelrod. *The Evolution of Cooperation*. New York: Basic Books, 1984; Elinor Ostrom. *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
31. Mark Granovetter. "The Impact of Social Structure on Economic Outcomes." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 19, no. 1 (2005), p. 33.
32. Ibid., p. 34.

density, must have champions and brokers willing to work harder to sustain effective communication. The implications for cross-agency collaboration in the federal government are clear: establish strong communication throughout the network, not simply among leaders, and continue to communicate throughout the initiative. As networks grow in size and scale, devote greater resources to establish and sustain effective and open communication channels.

Trust, norms, and networks are the building blocks of social capital, a compelling concept that provides a powerful explanation for interagency collaboration when one might expect competition or free riding.[33] Public managers who develop effective joint production capacity in a network have developed social capital, the capacity to work together cooperatively to produce joint benefits. Moreover, social capital is associated with innovative capacity.[34] Cross-agency networks have distinct advantages over smaller intra-agency networks in the areas of generating innovation and learning. New information tends to flow through weak, rather than strong, ties between individuals.[35] In other words, establishing connections across disparate sources of information and expertise leads to greater learning and knowledge-sharing. Innovation, fresh ideas, and critical perspectives tend to flow in networks with bridges connecting individuals and agencies with different expertise, outlooks, and experiences.

Linking across Networks

The actors in interagency networks are individuals, often working in and across teams. Public managers in such multi-team networks typically play critical linking, or bridging, roles between working groups. Research on social networks demonstrates the critical role played by those who bridge, or link, disparate groups. Much is written about the importance of champions, but middle managers also often play key roles in cross-agency arrangements, often sustaining interactions with decision-makers at other levels in their home agency and across organizational boundaries. And "radical," or creative and far-reaching, innovations tend to be championed first by managers and executives at the lower levels of the management hierarchy—in federal agencies the GS-14 and 15 managers—before gaining greater visibility at higher levels.[36] Bridging and linking across agencies are labor- and energy-intensive activities. Robert Agranoff, an expert on interagency and intergovernmental networks, has documented the extraordinary time commitment required for managers with linking and bridging roles, observing that many spent 10 to 20 percent of their time in boundary-spanning activities added to their ongoing management obligations.[37]

Networks of Professionals

Networks of professionals in the federal government are a source of collaborative strength across agencies that are too often invisible. For example, environmental, food safety, cybersecurity, and human services professionals form natural communities of practice; as do financial,

33.   James S. Coleman. "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital." *American Journal of Sociology* 94, no. supplement (1988): S95–121; and Robert D. Putnam. *Making Democracy Work. Civic Traditions in Modern Italy.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993.

34.   Janine Nahapiet and Sumantra Ghoshal. "Social Capital, Intellectual Capital, and the Organizational Advantage." *The Academy of Management Review* 23, no. 2 (1998): 242–266; Jane Fountain. "Social Capital: A Key Enabler of Innovation in Science and Technology." *Science and Public Policy* 25, no. 2 (1998): 103–115.

35.   Mark Granovetter. "The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited." *Sociological Theory* 1, (1983): 201–233; Granovetter. "The Strength of Weak Ties." *American Journal of Sociology* 78, no. 6 (1973): 1360–1380. This is the well-known "strength of weak ties" argument.

36.   Yves L. Doz. "The Evolution of Cooperation in Strategic Alliances: Initial Conditions Or Learning Processes?" *Strategic Management Journal* 17, (1996): 55–83; and Diana Day, "Raising Radicals: Different Processes for Championing Innovative Corporate Ventures." *Organization Science* 5, no. 2 (1994): 148–172.

37.   Robert Agranoff, R. 2007. *Managing within Networks: Adding Value to Public Organizations.* Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press. Although Agranoff focused on intergovernmental networks based outside Washington, D.C., his findings resonate with the experiences of federal managers.

logistics, budgeting, human resources, and information technology management professionals. They share similar education and training, professional associations, terminology, methods of practice, codes of conduct, professional networks, and experiences. They also possess reputational knowledge; that is, members of the network tend to know the reputations of their peers. So trusted peers with strong reputations are in excellent positions to build cross-agency collaboration because they are already credible and trusted. Their professional advice, support, and communication networks often fly under the radar of agency leadership. But they form an important source of cohesion, expertise, and knowledge that should be tapped to deepen and exploit cross-agency collaboration. The growing list of interagency councils—of chief information officers, chief financial officers, etc.—demonstrates cohesion at the leadership level that extends more deeply through the civil service through networks of professionals.

Part III: Collaboration through Processes—Enhancing Cross-Agency Capability

The design of cross-agency collaboration should flow from a clear, compelling statement of mission and goals; and a strategy that engages key stakeholders. This section focuses on seven organizational processes that foster cross-agency collaboration.

Setting Significant Goals

Clear, important goals energize and focus public managers. Managers are more likely to identify with and commit to a collaboration that has clear and significant goals. In fact, many cross-agency initiatives have stalled or failed because managers could not (or would not) reach fundamental agreement on goals even though a policy issue of importance—for example, interoperability among first responders or authentication processes in the federal government—formed the original impetus for the cross-agency group. The goal or mission of the cross-agency collaboration must be important enough to justify the effort required to develop and manage cross-agency processes.

> **Key Organizational Processes for Enhancing Cross-Agency Capability**
>
> • Setting significant goals
>
> • Specifying roles and responsibilities
>
> • Formalizing agreements
>
> • Developing shared operations
>
> • Obtaining adequate resources
>
> • Creating effective communication channels
>
> • Adapting through shared learning

Emphasis on goals is part of a long-term trend toward government reform through performance management and away from static, process-driven bureaucratic perspectives. The White House has developed Performance.gov, a series of web pages that include all of the cross-agency priority goals of the federal government and the priorities of several federal departments and major agencies.[38] Transparency in publishing goals informs the public and puts pressure on agencies to focus performance on priorities.

The benefits of goals, however, can be overstated. For instance, agencies might neglect important issues that have not been prioritized in the goal statement. Agency managers might shift resources away from areas of nearly equal importance. Agencies have broad missions that cannot be completely concentrated into narrow, specific goals. Public managers can all too easily focus myopically on short-term gains that sacrifice longer-term purpose. When goals drive performance, those objectives that are easier to measure and achieve might tend to be pursued at the expense of more critical objectives. Moreover, a focus on quarterly or other short-term gains may unintentionally produce performance that shortchanges longer-term investments such as development of human capital, succession planning, and scanning to

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38.   See www.performance.gov.

identify and respond to emerging issues. The short-term targets can become the goals themselves, dampening a broader sense of mission and purpose.

A focus on excessively ambitious "stretch" goals can promote risky behavior, a tendency experts have identified as destructive goal pursuit. Strategically setting targets that appear challenging but are, in fact, easy to achieve is another danger in driving performance through goals. And developing a culture of fear and anxiety can lead to distortions in performance. In agencies with weak ethics, pressure to achieve goals might result in risky, even unethical, behavior.[39]

Specifying Roles and Responsibilities

Organizations exist to accomplish tasks that individuals alone cannot accomplish. To do so, organizations use division of labor to exploit gains from specialization of functions and tasks. Interagency arrangements, by extension, exist to accomplish tasks that single agencies alone cannot accomplish. They, too, use division of labor and functional specialization. This means dividing agencies by roles and responsibilities and assigning tasks associated with those roles. Role clarity and formalization make clear to those in the interagency arrangement what needs to get done and who will do it.

Among the key structures public managers must build are those for governance, task performance, and communication. Successful cross-agency collaboration is built through effective development and management of a variety of governance and coordinating groups, typically including a steering committee—an advisory group composed of technical or specialized staff such as legal or financial experts, external stakeholder groups, and cross-departmental work teams. One manager describes the governance structure of his cross-agency collaboration as agile and light. In this example, the lead agency can make executive and operating decisions without the approval of the board as long as performance and budget are within agreed-upon limits. The board is convened only when decisions outside the base parameters are required.

Lessons learned from managers of successful cross-agency collaboration echo researchers who have found that clear agreement at the outset is essential to putting the partnership on a successful path. Specification of roles, tasks, and responsibilities clarifies expectations and forces discussion of division of labor, dispute-resolution mechanisms, and decision-making authority. When leaders clarify objectives and roles, they dampen the negative effects on collaboration of power differentials among agencies. Similarly, interorganizational network partners require shared performance evaluation processes and measures. Among many other systematic studies of collaborative governance, Brown, O'Toole, and Brudney (1998) found that formality, including formalized procedures, improved performance and customer service in a government project to promote shared development and use of geographical information systems.[40]

While clear roles and responsibilities are important, good ideas can come from anywhere in the network. So designs that bring together different sources of expertise and experience are critical. As one successful cross-agency managers recommends:

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39.   Among several critiques, see Lisa D. Ordóñez, Maurice E. Schweitzer, Adam D. Galinsky, and Max H. Bazerman, "Goals Gone Wild: The Systematic Side Effects of Over-Prescribing Goal Setting," Working Paper 09-083, Harvard Business School, 2009.

40.   Brown, O'Toole, and Brudney. 1998; W. D. Leach, N. W. Pelkey, and P. A. Sabatier. "Stakeholder Partnerships as Collaborative Policymaking: Evaluation Criteria Applied to Watershed Management in California and Washington." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 21, no. 4 (2002): 645–667; Adam Crawford. "Social Values and Managerial Goals: Police and Probation Officers' Experiences and Views of Inter-Agency Collaboration." *Policing and Society* 4, (1994): 323-339; Kernaghan 2003; Cohen and Mankin 2002.

Take the best ideas no matter where they come from in the network. Give every partner an equal vote. Give every partner a voice. It may be that this is necessary to build something new. But once the form and practices are developed for a particular type of network—for example, shared services or shared functional management across agencies—then a more top-down approach to "replicate" the collaborative network needed might work. I say "might" because collaboration will require joint commitment and joint problem solving, which take time and repeated interaction to develop.

Formalizing Agreements

Cross-agency partners should articulate and formalize roles, tasks, and responsibilities, including decision-making authority. In some cases, they should develop formalized agreements that specify the objectives, roles, and reporting relationships at the outset of the project.[41] Interagency networks in government often use more formal instruments than those in business, not because there is less trust among the individuals, but because the culture and, in fact, institutionalized requirements for oversight and accountability are more formalized.[42]

Observations drawn from business alliances show that formalization in successful network partnerships tends to decrease over time, but this is not the case for government alliances—yet another example of the need to translate private business best practices carefully to mesh with the institutional environment of government.[43] Emphasis on goals and objectives, milestones, and deliverables is required so that partners understand their role, deliverables, and the timeline and pace of the initiative.

In the federal government, cross-agency collaboration typically has been formalized through the use of memoranda of understanding (MOUs) among agencies, which must be developed, reviewed, and approved by each agency. The commitment to develop MOUs is itself an integrative activity and part of a joint strategic planning process. The act of specifying joint goals, processes, and systems implies commitment to a network and necessarily involves learning and joint problem-solving rather than simply negotiation and bargaining. The CAP goals are formalized under the directives of GPRAMA and so require less development of agreement by agency managers themselves.

Developing Shared Operations

Strong project and operations management is critical to keep the moving parts of multiple agency groups aligned. Managers of successful interagency projects report that their work groups are well organized and meet frequently. Whether they use a stat meeting model based on CompStat and CitiStat, or other models, the challenges are similar:

- What are the problems we have to solve?

- What is our plan?

- How do we build a plan of action that will accommodate all relevant agencies and programs?

- What do our customers need from us?

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41.   Shelley H. Metzenbaum. *Performance Accountability: The Five Building Blocks and Six Essential Practices*, IBM Center for The Business of Government, 2006.

42.   Kimberly Roussin Isett and Keith G. Provan. "The Evolution of Dyadic Interorganizational Relationships in a Network of Publicly Funded Nonprofit Agencies." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 15, no. 1 (2005): 149–165.

43.   Ranjay Gulati. "Does Familiarity Breed Trust? The Implications of Repeated Ties for Contractual Choice in Alliances." *Academy of Management Journal* 38, (1995): 85–112; Gulati, Ranjay and Harbir Singh. "The Architecture of Cooperation: Managing Coordination Costs and Appropriation Concerns in Strategic Alliances." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (1998): 781–814.

- What are the milestones and deadlines?

- How will shared resources and budgets work?[44]

Public managers must often find the minimal common areas on which to begin to build shared operations. This shared space, even if small at the outset, provides a basis for further development. The agencies involved in the Exports Cross-Agency Priority Initiative initially developed several modest but important projects. For example, development and publication of brochures that encompass the offerings of multiple agencies have begun to define the community of programs associated with export promotion. Small projects that are successful often lead to more ambitious endeavors as managers build social capital.

Developing interagency collaboration often includes streamlining and standardizing information collection, storage, communication, and use. Public managers develop routines, standard operating procedures, and performance programs for information sharing to make it easier for citizens, business, and other government officials to search for and use government information, systems, and procedures. Organizations typically develop routines, standard operating procedures, and performance programs that can then be matched against situations and deployed as needed. As James March and Herbert Simon wrote long ago: "Organizational actors deal with each other by creating and using systems of rules, procedures and interpretations that store understanding in easily retrievable form."[45]

Public managers generally try to change routines and operating procedures at the margins, rather than whole-cloth, because it is much more efficient and feasible and less risky to make small changes. Unanticipated consequences of organizational change often stem from second-order effects on routines, procedures, and communication channels that were impossible for managers to foresee. Disjunctive change, occasioned by new technologies, makes change at the margin less feasible because new technologies enable fundamental changes in information flows. For example, when an agency or a cross-agency partnership such as the Exports Initiative adds an open comment feature to its website, managers may have little ability to incrementally increase feedback from the public as they build internal resources.

When the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds were made available, there was no possibility for agencies to act gradually. The Grants.gov cross-agency system was taxed to its limit to handle the grants management requirements of ARRA, but the system and deeply committed managers involved succeeded. When the eRulemaking Program tried to move gradually to introduce public comment features, they were roundly criticized by transparency and civic engagement groups who wanted much more dramatic change. In spite of disjunctive technological change, many department and agency procedures and routines have changed slowly, in part due to inertia but also to avoid political and operational risk.

As public managers formalize and codify interagency structures and processes they build stability and relative permanence not possible through more informal professional relations across agencies.

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44. The Obama administration increasingly requires agencies to use the "stat" model, performance reviews based on group problem-solving, measurement, and analysis—first developed in policing as CompStat, and later for city management as CitiStat—to increase cross-boundary performance. See Robert D. Behn, "The Varieties of CitiStat," *Public Administration Review*, 24 May 2006, 332–340; Behn, "What All Mayors would Like to Know about Baltimore's CitiStat Performance Strategy," Washington, D.C.: IBM Center for The Business of Government, 2007; and Harry Hatry and Elizabeth Davis, "A Guide to Data-Driven Performance Reviews," Washington, D.C.: IBM Center for The Business of Government, 2011.
45. March and Simon, p. 2.

Obtaining Adequate Resources

Adequate budget and staff are critical to interagency collaboration.[46] During the initial stages of a collaboration, staff and budget constraints may present considerable challenges to agencies and managers as they try to regularize resource flows and develop equitable shared arrangements. For example, when Congress passed the E-Government Act of 2002, they authorized substantial funding for e-government initiatives to build cross-agency capacity, but much of the funding was never appropriated, and managers of cross-agency projects required considerable resourcefulness and perseverance to find and share funding across agency budgets.

Lack of funding or staff hampers cross-agency collaboration by reducing the time that staff, many of whom are on temporary detail from their home agencies, can spend on projects, reducing the ability of agencies to contract for technical development, and making it difficult for agencies to maintain existing processes while simultaneously building new ones. Given that resources are likely to remain scarce for the foreseeable future, the bootstrapping efforts and other resourceful practices developed by successful cross-agency projects are vital to harvest and re-use throughout the federal government.

Managers with experience working across agencies stress the importance of developing a shared budget with norms of equity to ensure sustainability. Ensure sufficient resources to carry out goals. If budgetary resources are constrained, develop an equitable formula for a shared budget or an equitable fee-for-service structure that reflects actual use.

Information systems have proven to be one of the most expensive new resources. Many services and systems can be outsourced, but successful managers warn: don't outsource your core thought processes and strategic decisions. Use a small internal team supplemented by contractors for support. Don't try to outsource government or administrative processes with high asset specificity, that is, requiring deep understanding of the government or particular policy domains. Do not try to procure a service that will have to be shoehorned to fit customers' needs. Focus on sound IT investments, flexible arrangements, and avoiding contractual "lock-in" that might not serve future needs as the environment and technology change over time. Make it cheaper than if the government bought it.

Creating Effective Communication Channels

Effective communication channels are critical for prospective interagency partners.[47] Communication is not simply a means to build group coherence and identity; it is a vital tool of coordination, particularly when network actors are building new capacity and lack established operating routines and coordination. In addition, establishing a culture of open communication helps to ensure that promising ideas, emergent problems, and varying perspectives receive open, frank discussion in an environment where differences are respected and conflicting views can be reconciled to produce workable solutions.

Communication with external stakeholders and clients is also critical. For example, the cross-agency Exports Initiative began with concerted communication and a system for eliciting feedback from business in order to ensure that the direction of the initiative would be responsive to business needs. Formalized advisory groups of external stakeholders are a typical feature of successful cross-agency collaborations to ensure continued communication from and to key stakeholders.

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46. M. Jae Moon. "The Evolution of E-Government among Municipalities: Rhetoric or Reality?" *Public Administration Review* 62:4 (2002): 424–433; Johnson et al. 2003; Kernaghan 2003.
47. Johnson et al. 2003; Cohen and Mankin 2002; Bardach 1998.

Adapting through Shared Learning

Interagency collaboration implies that partners across agencies can engage in shared learning. Initial alliance conditions and interorganizational design either "facilitate or hamper the partners' learning about the environment of their alliance, how to work together to accomplish the alliance task, their respective skills, and each other's goals."[48] During the Bush administration, public managers involved in the Grants Center of Excellence (COE) developed a consultative partnership strategy meant to leverage differences across partner agencies in terms of grants management practices into innovations for the entire partnership network.

Grants COE leaders worked directly and consultatively with potential partners to identify the core needs of their grants management systems; they did not require partners to adopt the existing system. In some cases, partners redesigned their processes because Grants COE offered a superior option. In other cases, Grants COE built a new module into their system to incorporate an innovation already developed by a new partner. In economic terms, this type of consultative partnership strategy optimizes search and implementation of Pareto optimal solutions across the entire network, increasing positive network externalities.

The Grants COE is one example of the need for managers to make reasonable adjustments to evolving situations and to involve stakeholders in adjustments. Even within the rigors of performance management under GPRAMA, managers should have the ability to maintain flexibility and creativity to adapt to changing situations without losing focus on the strategic vision and goals.

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48.   Doz, 1986, p. 64.

Part IV: Recommendations

Government executives and managers should recognize institutional challenges to cross-agency collaboration and develop strategies to address them. Effective government executives are skilled at working around, or in spite of, institutional barriers. But with the passage of the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 and the Obama administration's public commitment to a set of cross-agency priority goals, a critical mass has been achieved in understanding the growing importance of cross-agency efforts. As a result, there may be opportunities to directly address institutional-level changes. The recommendations that follow are of two types: those for policy makers in the Office of Management and Budget in the White House, and those for managers in agencies engaged in implementing cross-cutting collaborative initiatives.

Recommendations for OMB

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) should provide leadership in creating the institutional incentives and environment that foster cross-agency collaboration as a way of doing business, instead of the traditional approach, which has been to treat cross-agency initiatives as exceptions to the rule.

Recommendation One. Develop management guidance for cross-agency collaboration. In 2012, OMB developed useful guidance to agencies on the use of evidence and evaluation. It should develop similar guidance to agencies encouraging the use of collaborative approaches. A knowledge and experience base exists among federal managers and executives, but it has not been well-articulated and shared. Agency managers require lessons learned, best practice, guidance, and training to support cross-agency collaboration. OMB should produce templates for shared budgets based on successful cross-agency experience. GAO has begun to identify mechanisms and processes used in cross-agency collaborative projects, but these have not been codified or evaluated. Having a toolkit that includes templates and models of processes that have worked—including shared budgets—would help leaders of cross-agency initiatives navigate new waters.

Recommendation Two. Continue to play the dual roles of facilitator and enforcer. OMB plays multiple catalytic roles with respect to cross-agency collaboration. It acts as a facilitator for cross-agency collaborations and often disseminates promising practices and innovations but, when necessary, may play a forceful role—aka "dropping the hammer"—in demanding compliance with an administration's directives to agencies. Collaboration does not mean that tough political situations and conflicts will not occur. OMB and other oversight agency managers, as well as political appointees, inevitably have to manage serious and intractable differences among agencies.

Recommendation Three. Political appointees at OMB (and in agencies) should continue to engage with key members of Congress and their staffs to inform institutional directives that would support cross-agency collaboration. Legislative change is a long-term process, but the

GPRA Modernization Act and its provisions show promise for legislation that promotes cross-agency collaboration around results that matter. Traditionally, cross-agency initiatives can face barriers in sharing resources and legal authority because of the jurisdictional boundaries of various congressional committees. Proactively identifying and addressing them should be on the agenda.

Recommendation Four. Continue to search for ways to "build once, use many." The OMB Office of E-Government and Information Technology should identify shared systems and cyber infrastructure that could be reused, with modifications, to further cross-agency streamlining and collaboration. A recent example is the use of e-Rulemaking information systems that have been modified to develop the new Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) online system that tracks FOIA requests and their status across agencies. This reuse has saved millions of dollars in new system development costs and sped its implementation.

Recommendation Five. OMB, working with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and agencies, should add cross-agency capacity building into the performance evaluation systems of the Senior Executive Service (SES). OMB should work with OPM and agencies to proactively certify performance appraisal systems, including pay for performance, that recognize and reward participation in cross-agency collaborative efforts. In keeping with the GPRA Modernization Act's legislative directive that OPM develop a list of skills and competencies required for sustainable cross-agency collaboration, those skills should be incorporated into performance appraisal, training, rewards, and selection criteria for the SES. Cross-boundary and relationship management skills should be core skills for the SES.

Recommendations for Cross-Agency Leaders

For executives who are assigned to build a major cross-agency effort, what do they do? The six recommendations below present key actions that government executives leading cross-agency initiatives should undertake.

Recommendation Six. Set and communicate clear, compelling direction and goals. Build commitment to a cross-agency vision, mission, long and near-term goals, and objectives. Frame the effort, set the direction, and establish the culture as one that requires collaboration. Convince key managers that the new collaboration will produce better results than the status quo. An important overarching goal, a vision of the future, is a strong motivator and provides the initial logic for organizing the initiative. Keep the overarching goal and its benefits at the forefront through communication and framing.

Recommendation Seven. Fit the working group structure to the task. Collaborative initiatives require different types of authority structures and division of labor, depending upon scale, scope, urgency, and core task dimensions. Decide on an appropriate structure and define exactly what that will mean in terms of authority, resources, and division of labor. For example, some cross-agency collaborations are organized with a lead agency that supplies services on a fee-for-service basis to other agencies. The cross-agency priority (CAP) goals by law are led by a White House official, but the organizational structure of the cross-agency relationships is left undetermined. The lead agency or managing partner approach differs across projects with respect to how much joint decision-making and problem-solving will be used.

Recommendation Eight: Establish specific roles and responsibilities. Who will do what? Who is responsible for what? Develop clear decision-making processes including conflict resolution measures. Cross-agency collaborations require strong executive and management groups and well-organized working groups.

Key Ingredients to Successfully Implementing a Cross-Agency Initiative

- **Relationship skills.** Build and use relationship skills to be effective across agency boundaries. Be prepared to use persuasion, influence, and negotiation. Managers engender trust and commitment by delivering on promises and treating collaboration members with respect. Active listening, empathy, and respect are required to be sure that all relevant partners are heard and their particular constraints are acknowledged and understood. Invest the time required to build strong professional relationships.

- **Teams.** Build teams that work. Develop and sustain shared commitment among a core group of managers who will be central to the effort. A cross-agency program consists of executive, management, and several working group teams. Working groups will model their behavior on the tone set by core executive and management teams.

  As part of building teams, managers must resolve or buffer conflicts so that the collaboration can do its work. Sometimes, officials at an executive level must act to resolve conflict or change leadership or structure. Replace those who will not commit to the collaboration and its strategy.

- **Professional networks.** Leverage existing professional networks where they exist, rather than trying to build a network from scratch. They are found in every functional area of management: finance, budget, IT, loans, grants management, procurement, etc., and in many policy domains. Members of these networks tend to know who the natural leaders are and know reputations based on past performance.

- **Shared learning.** Adapt the work and scope of teams and networks through real-time shared learning. Continue to incorporate perspectives and feedback but manage (or deny) requests for change that would be costly or shift direction. Adapt to changes in the environment. Cross-agency collaborations must continue to improve, refine, and adapt to changing technologies, legislation, stakeholder needs, and other environmental dimensions. So keep cross-agency management and executive groups intact and meeting intermittently.

Recommendation Nine: Develop formal agreements. Codify in writing what is to be accomplished, the principal means and the timeline for accomplishment. Formalize the collaborative arrangement. Revisit this document frequently. Making formal agreements public provides accountability and transparency. It exerts pressure on cross-agency members to fulfill commitments. As part of the formal agreement, create a work plan working backward from major goals to establish interim goals and milestones. Establish and enforce clear deadlines.

Recommendation Ten: Develop shared operations and shared resources that support achieving the goal. These range from production of shared brochures and web pages to development of shared systems and standards; co-location, shared services and information; fee-for-service operations; standardizing and streamlining to produce consistent operations across agencies; and consolidation. For joint policy making efforts, coordination across agencies that share responsibility for key policy challenges—such as the CAP goals—may mean communication and joint planning to align strategies that are then implemented in parallel.

Many cross-agency projects have had to generate their own resources through sharing, borrowing, or otherwise leveraging existing resources. Similarly, many have been staffed with those on short-term details from several agencies. Canny federal managers are excellent at bootstrapping until more consistent resources are available. Moreover, cross-agency collaborations must explicitly develop and include key internal stakeholders and external stakeholders (clients and constituents) to mobilize support.

Recommendation Eleven. Build shared performance metrics. The Exports cross-agency collaboration has developed cross-agency performance metrics for exports. These may provide an impetus for other efforts. Performance measures are needed to enable tracking, monitoring, and measurement/evaluation of output and outcomes across agencies and programs. Measurement is important, but without consequences, measurements lack force. Align incentives, rewards, and sanctions.

Appendix I: Memorandum for Chief Human Capital Officers on Functional Competencies for GPRAMA

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

JAN 3 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICERS

FROM: JOHN BERRY
              DIRECTOR

Subject: Government Performance and Results Act Modernization Act of 2010
              Functional Competencies

The Government Performance and Results Act Modernization Act (GPRAMA) of 2010 required the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to identify the competencies needed to perform the following three functions: developing goals, evaluating programs, and analyzing and using performance information for the purpose of improving Government efficiency and effectiveness. In May 2011, OPM, working with the Performance Improvement Council and the Office of Management and Budget's Office of Performance and Personnel Management, initiated a study to identify these critical competencies. Subject matter experts provided insights into the competencies needed and worked with us to identify the competencies associated with the key roles of Performance Improvement Officer, Performance Improvement Staff, and Goal Leader. Over the next year, as specified in the GPRAMA, OPM will provide guidance on how to incorporate the skills and competencies into positions descriptions and will work with the Chief Learning Officers to incorporate the key skills and competencies into agency training programs.

If you have any questions regarding the competency model, please contact Andrea Bright, Manager of Classification and Assessment Policy, at (202) 606-3600, or e-mail **competency@opm.gov**.

Attachment

cc: Human Resources Directors

GPRAMA 2010 Functional Competencies

Thirty-four competencies were found to be important for performing work in the GPRAMA functions of developing goals, evaluating programs, and analyzing and using performance information. The table below identifies the core subset of competencies essential for the performance of this work within each role. All other competencies are supplemental and may be useful or enhance the function. Definitions of the competencies follow the table.

Functional Role Core Competencies		
Performance Improvement Officer	**Performance Improvement Staff**	**Goal Leader**
▪ Accountability ▪ Creativity and Innovation ▪ Decision Making ▪ External Awareness ▪ Influencing/Negotiating ▪ Leadership ▪ Oral Communication ▪ Organizational Awareness ▪ Partnering ▪ Performance Measurement ▪ Political Savvy ▪ Problem Solving ▪ Strategic Thinking ▪ Technical Credibility ▪ Vision ▪ Written Communication	▪ Accountability ▪ Attention to Detail ▪ Customer Service ▪ Influencing/Negotiating ▪ Information Management ▪ Oral Communication ▪ Organizational Awareness ▪ Organizational Performance Analysis ▪ Partnering ▪ Performance Measurement ▪ Planning and Evaluating ▪ Problem Solving ▪ Reasoning ▪ Technical Competence ▪ Written Communication	▪ Accountability ▪ Creativity and Innovation ▪ Customer Service ▪ Decision Making ▪ External Awareness ▪ Influencing/Negotiating ▪ Leadership ▪ Oral Communication ▪ Organizational Awareness ▪ Partnering ▪ Planning and Evaluating ▪ Problem Solving ▪ Strategic Thinking ▪ Vision ▪ Written Communication

GPRMA 2010 Functional Competencies

Accountability - Holds self and others accountable for measurable high-quality, timely, and cost-effective results. Determines objectives, sets priorities, and delegates work. Accepts responsibility for mistakes. Complies with established control systems and rules.

Attention to Detail - Is thorough when performing work and conscientious about attending to detail.

Change Management - Knowledge of change management principles, strategies, and techniques required for effectively planning, implementing, and evaluating change in the organization.

Compliance - Knowledge of procedures for assessing, evaluating, and monitoring programs or projects for compliance with Federal laws, regulations, and guidance.

Conflict Management - Encourages creative tension and differences of opinions. Anticipates and takes steps to prevent counter-productive confrontations. Manages and resolves conflicts and disagreements in a constructive manner.

Creativity and Innovation - Develops new insights into situations; questions conventional approaches; encourages new ideas and innovations; designs and implements new or cutting edge programs/processes.

Customer Service - Works with clients and customers (that is, any individuals who use or receive the services or products that your work unit produces, including the general public, individuals who work in the agency, other agencies, or organizations outside the Government) to assess their needs, provide information or assistance, resolve their problems, or satisfy their expectations; knows about available products and services; is committed to providing quality products and services.

Decision Making - Makes sound, well-informed, and objective decisions; perceives the impact and implications of decisions; commits to action, even in uncertain situations, to accomplish organizational goals; causes change.

External Awareness - Understands and keeps up-to-date on local, national, and international policies and trends that affect the organization and shape stakeholders' views; is aware of the organization's impact on the external environment.

Financial Analysis – Knowledge of the principles, methods, and techniques of financial analysis, forecasting, and modeling to interpret quantitative and qualitative data; includes data modeling, earned value management, and evaluating key financial indicators, trends, and historical data.

Flexibility - Is open to change and new information; rapidly adapts to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles.

Influencing/Negotiating - Persuades others; builds consensus through give and take; gains cooperation from others to obtain information and accomplish goals.

Information Management - Identifies a need for and knows where or how to gather information; organizes and maintains information or information management systems.

Interpersonal Skills - Shows understanding, friendliness, courtesy, tact, empathy, concern, and politeness to others; develops and maintains effective relationships with others; may include effectively dealing with individuals who are difficult, hostile, or distressed; relates well to people from varied backgrounds and different situations; is sensitive to cultural diversity, race, gender, disabilities, and other individual differences.

Leadership - Influences, motivates, and challenges others; adapts leadership styles to a variety of situations.

Legal, Government and Jurisprudence - Knowledge of laws, legal codes, court procedures, precedents, legal practices and documents, Government regulations, Executive orders, agency rules, Government organization and functions, and the democratic political process.

Mathematical Reasoning - Solves practical problems by choosing appropriately from a variety of mathematical and statistical techniques.

Oral Communication - Expresses information (for example, ideas or facts) to individuals or groups effectively, taking into account the audience and nature of the information (for example, technical, sensitive, controversial); makes clear and convincing oral presentations; listens to others, attends to nonverbal cues, and responds appropriately.

Organizational Awareness - Knows the organization's mission and functions, and how its social, political, and technological systems work and operates effectively within them; this includes the programs, policies, procedures, rules, and regulations of the organization.

Organizational Performance Analysis - Knowledge of the methods, techniques, and tools used to analyze program, organizational, and mission performance; includes methods that deliver key performance information (for example, comparative, trend, diagnostic, root cause, predictive) used to inform decisions, actions, communications, and accountability systems.

Partnering - Develops networks and builds alliances; collaborates across boundaries to build strategic relationships and achieve common goals.

Performance Measurement - Knowledge of the principles and methods for evaluating program or organizational performance using financial and nonfinancial measures, including identification of evaluation factors (for example, workload, personnel requirements), metrics, and outcomes.

Planning and Evaluating - Organizes work, sets priorities, and determines resource requirements; determines short- or long-term goals and strategies to achieve them; coordinates with other organizations or parts of the organization to accomplish goals; monitors progress and evaluates outcomes.

Political Savvy - Identifies the internal and external politics that impact the work of the organization. Perceives organizational and political reality and acts accordingly.

Problem Solving - Identifies and analyzes problems; weighs relevance and accuracy of information; generates and evaluates alternative solutions; makes recommendations.

Project Management - Knowledge of the principles, methods, or tools for developing, scheduling, coordinating, and managing

projects and resources, including monitoring and inspecting costs, work, and contractor performance.

Reasoning - Identifies rules, principles, or relationships that explain facts, data, or other information; analyzes information and makes correct inferences or draws accurate conclusions.

Resilience - Deals effectively with pressure; remains optimistic and persistent, even under adversity. Recovers quickly from setbacks.

Strategic Thinking - Formulates objectives and priorities, and implements plans consistent with the long-term interests of the organization in a global environment. Capitalizes on opportunities and manages risks.

Team Building - Inspires and fosters team commitment, spirit, pride, and trust. Facilitates cooperation and motivates team members to accomplish group goals.

Technical Competence - Uses knowledge that is acquired through formal training or extensive on-the-job experience to perform one's job; works with, understands, and evaluates technical information related to the job; advises others on technical issues.

Technical Credibility - Understands and appropriately applies principles, procedures, requirements, regulations, and policies related to specialized expertise.

Vision - Takes a long-term view and builds a shared vision with others; acts as a catalyst for organizational change. Influences others to translate vision into action.

Written Communication - Writes in a clear, concise, organized, and convincing manner for the intended audience.

Appendix II: Cross-Agency Priority Goals, FY 2013

OMB has identified 14 cross-agency priority goals (CAP goals). Seven focus on mission-related functions. Seven focus on mission-support. All are existing initiatives but now have a higher profile.

A statutory requirement, as part of the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010, directs OMB to designate a senior government official to serve as the lead for each of the goals and to conduct quarterly reviews on the progress toward these goals, which are supposed to span a two- to four-year timeframe. These goals are not supposed to represent new policy initiatives or require new monies but are rather a focus on implementing existing policies within existing monies.

The FY 2013 goals are technically interim goals, since the CAP goal cycle is supposed to be co-terminus with a presidential term. The "real" CAP goals are not due until February 2014, and will appear in the FY 2015 budget.

OMB posted the FY 2013 CAP goals on its Performance.gov website. The goal statements are accompanied by a description that provides some context for the goal, the name of the goal leader, a summary of the action plan, and a list of the agencies and programs that will contribute to the action plan.

CAP GOALS FOR MISSION-RELATED FUNCTIONS:

CAP Goal 1: Exports: Double U.S. exports by the end of 2014.

Goal Leader: Michael Froman, assistant to the president and deputy national security advisor for international economic affairs.

CAP Goal 2: Entrepreneurship and Small Business. Increase federal services to entrepreneurs and small businesses with an emphasis on 1) startups and growing firms and 2) underserved markets.

Goal Leaders: Jason Furman, deputy director, White House National Economic Council, and Tom Kalil, deputy director for policy, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

CAP Goal 3: Broadband. As part of expanding all broadband capabilities, ensure 4G broadband coverage for 98 percent of Americans by 2016.

Goal Leader: Todd Park, U.S. chief technology officer, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

CAP Goal 4: Energy Efficiency. Reduce energy intensity (energy demand/$ real GDP) 50 percent by 2035 (with 2010 as the base year).

Goal Leader: Heather Zichal, deputy assistant to the President for energy and climate change, Domestic Policy Council.

CAP Goal 5: Veteran Career Readiness. By September 30, 2013, increase the percent of eligible service members who will be served by career readiness and preparedness programs from 50 percent to 90 percent in order to improve their competitiveness in the job market.

Goal Leader: Rosye Cloud, White House policy director of veterans, wounded warriors and military families.

CAP Goal 6: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Education. Work with education partners to improve the quality of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education at all levels to help increase the number of well-prepared graduates with STEM degrees by one-third by 2022, resulting in an additional one million graduates with degrees in STEM subjects.

Goal Leaders: Steve Robinson, special assistant, White House Domestic Policy Council.

CAP Goal 7: Job Training. Ensure our country has one of the most skilled workforces in the world by preparing two million workers with skills training by 2015 and improving the coordination and delivery of job training services.

Goal Leader: Portia Wu, special assistant to the President for labor and workforce policy, White House Domestic Policy Council.

Significantly, some existing cross-cutting initiatives, such as food safety, are not on the list. This might be because these functions were seen as well underway and not needing the prominence of being named a CAP Goal.

CAP GOALS FOR MISSION-SUPPORT FUNCTIONS:

CAP Goal 8: Cybersecurity. Increase federal information system cybersecurity. By 2014, achieve 95 percent utilization of critical administration cybersecurity capabilities on federal information systems, including strong authentication, Trusted Internet Connections (TIC), and Continuous Monitoring.

Goal Leader: J. Michael Daniel, special assistant to the President and cybersecurity coordinator.

CAP Goal 9: Sustainability. By 2020, the federal government will reduce its direct greenhouse gas emissions by 28 percent and will reduce its indirect greenhouse gas emissions by 13 percent by 2020 (from 2008 baseline).

Goal Leader: Nancy Sutley, chair, Council on Environmental Quality.

CAP Goal 10: Real Property. The federal government will manage real property effectively to generate $3 billion in cost savings by the end of 2012.

Goal Leader: Danny Werfel, controller, Office of Management and Budget.

CAP Goal 11: Improper Payments. The federal government will reduce the government-wide improper payment rate by at least two percentage points by FY 2014.

Goal Leader: Danny Werfel, controller, Office of Management and Budget.

CAP Goal 12: Data Center Consolidation. Improve IT service delivery, reduce waste and save $3 billion in taxpayer dollars by closing at least 1200 data centers by fiscal year 2015.

Goal Leader: Steven VanRoekel, federal chief information officer.

CAP Goal 13: Closing Skill Gaps. Close critical skills gaps in the federal workforce to improve mission performance. By September 30, 2013, close the skills gaps by 50 percent for three to five critical federal government occupations or competencies, and close additional agency-specific high risk occupation and competency gaps.

Goal Leader: John Berry, director, Office of Personnel Management.

CAP Goal 14: Strategic Sourcing. Reduce the costs of acquiring common products and services by agencies' strategic sourcing of at least two new commodities or services in both 2013 and 2014, that yield at least a 10-percent savings.

Goal Leader: Joseph Jordan, acting administrator for federal procurement policy, Office of Management and Budget.

In addition to the 14 CAP goals, the major agencies also developed priority goals, as required by the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010. There are 103 agency priority goals in the FY 2013 budget. About half are continuations of goals that were set administratively by the Obama administration when it came into office. The remainder are new or are a step beyond the original goals set in 2009.

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