

Collaborative Engagement Strategy

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the Collaborative Engagement Strategy is to help the Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG) refine its governance structure, policies and procedures, and to acquire the tools and resources necessary to increase the group's collaborative capacity.

ACCG Background

The ACCG is a collaboration among diverse stakeholders that was formed in 2008. The group works to promote fire safe communities, healthy forests and watersheds, and sustainable local economies. In 2012, the ACCG was awarded Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration (CFLR) Program funding for ten years. Since that time, much of the ACCG's collaborative efforts have focused on United States Forest Service managed public lands in the Amador Ranger District on the Eldorado National Forest and the Calaveras Ranger District on the Stanislaus National Forest. Additionally, the ACCG serves as an information sharing and networking forum for a broad group of stakeholders who are committed to an all-lands, landscape approach in pursuit of the triple bottom line mission of the group.

Facilitation Support Services

Through the United States Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution (USIECR), the [Consensus Building Institute \(CBI\)](#) was contracted in late 2018 to provide independent, third party neutral facilitation to assist with continued implementation of the ACCG's collaborative process. The goals of facilitation services are to assist members of the ACCG establish and implement an effective engagement strategy, including helping the group identify and resolve differences in order to reach agreement on topics where consensus has been difficult to achieve.

Stakeholder Interviews & The Strategic Plan

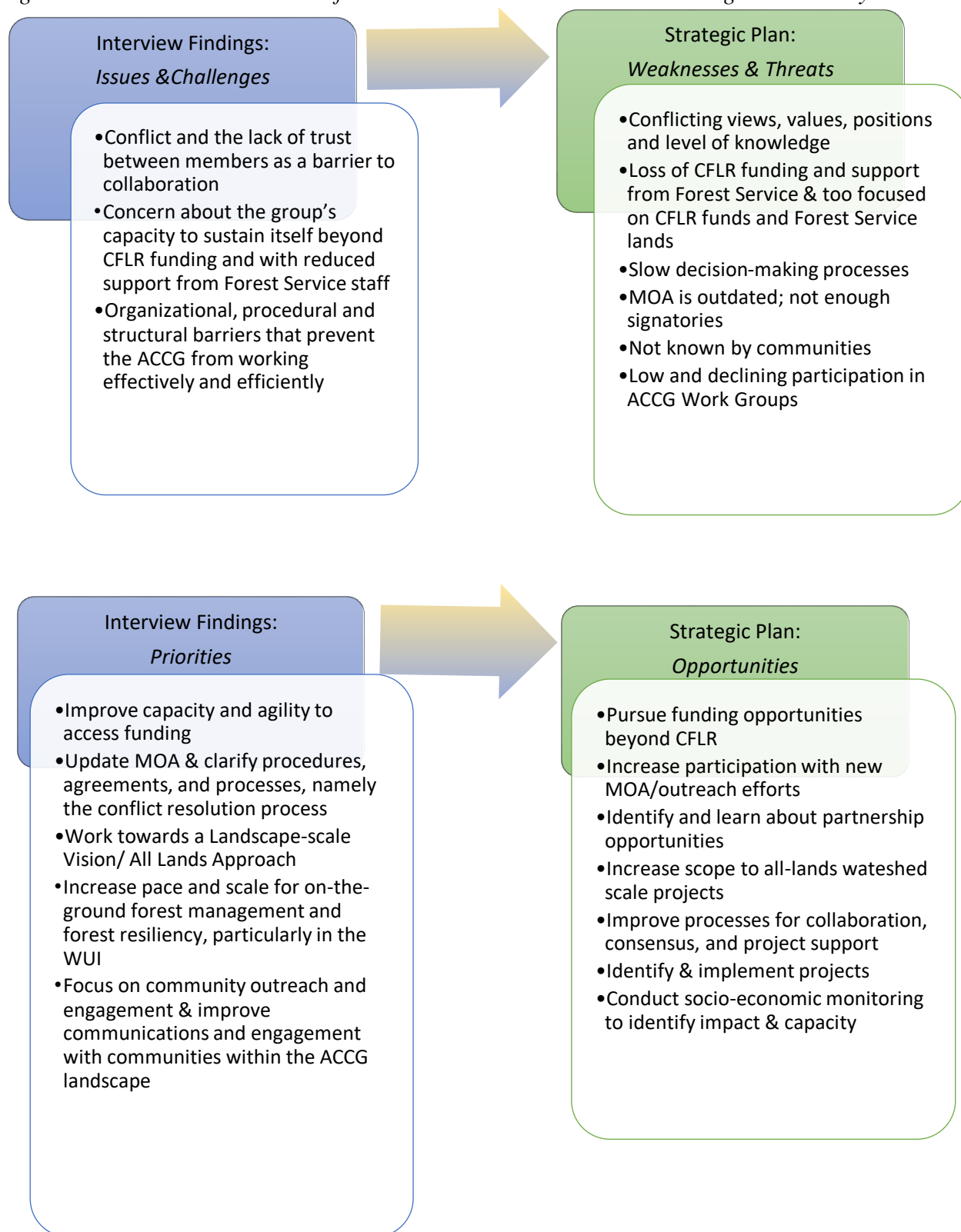
CBI conducted interviews with 29 ACCG members to identify the key issues, challenges, and priorities of the group to inform the development of the Collaborative Engagement Strategy. [Interview results](#) were presented to the full ACCG membership on February 20, 2019. Once the interview results were compiled, CBI compared the results with the ACCG's 2018-2023 strategic plan. The central impetus for the strategic plan was to examine the group's current conditions and to position the ACCG for future success, after the expiration of the CFLR funds. CBI found that the stakeholder interview results were consistent with the strategic plan's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis as well as the goals and objectives identified in plan. As a result, CBI attempted to integrate the strategic plan, where appropriate, into the Collaborative Engagement Strategy. While the Collaborative Engagement Strategy is not intended to serve as an implementation or action plan for the entire strategic plan, it does provide a pathway to successfully achieve several goals and objectives of the strategic plan, as further described below.

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Figures 1 & 2. Consistent Results from Stakeholder Interviews and Strategic Plan Analysis.



Strategies for Collaborative Engagement

During stakeholder interviews, CBI asked ACCG members what they considered the most important contributions a facilitator could make towards improving the collaborative engagement of the group and in helping overcome barriers to success for the ACCG. Recurring themes from ACCG member responses were used to develop collaborative engagement strategic elements. The following table: 1) identifies those elements aimed at improving the group's collaborative engagement; 2) indicates the priorities that the strategic elements address; and 3) links those elements to the relevant corresponding goals and objectives in the ACCG's strategic plan.

Table 1. Collaborative Engagement Strategy Relationship to Stakeholder Interview Findings and Strategic Plan.

Collaborative Engagement Strategic Elements (SE)	Interview Findings Priorities/ Strategic Plan Opportunities	Linkage to Strategic Plan Goals/Objectives
SE 1: Refine governance & organizational structure to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify procedures, agreements, and processes Improve processes for collaboration, consensus, and project support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Goal 1/Objective 5:</u> Forging tighter connections among work groups. <u>Goal 3/Objective 3:</u> Redefine work groups to achieve future objectives.
SE 2: Establish collaboration best practices to create the conditions to build trust, improve communications, and reach consensus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify procedures, agreements, and processes Improve processes for collaboration, consensus, and project support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Goal 2/Objective 5:</u> Develop ACCG member's "Zone of Agreement" to increase understanding of the many perspectives represented by the group and to use as a basis for project selection. Hire professional facilitator to implement this action.
SE 3: Develop and implement a process that results in the strategic pipeline of projects to realize an all-lands, landscape-scale vision and achieve the ACCG's triple bottom line mission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve capacity and agility to access funding Institute landscape-scale vision/ All Lands approach Increase pace and scale for on-the-ground forest management and forest resiliency, particularly in the WUI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Goal 2/Objective 2:</u> ACCG works through public and private entities to identify and support public and private lands projects. <u>Goal 2/Objective 3:</u> ACCG is an active and welcome partner in local

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue funding opportunities beyond CFLR • Identify and learn about partnership opportunities • Increase scope to all-lands water scale projects • Improve processes for collaboration, consensus, and project support • Identify & implement projects • Conduct socio-economic monitoring to identify impact & capacity 	<p>forest management projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Goal 2/Objective 4:</u> ACCG provides expertise, resources, and consensus from critical partners. • <u>Goal 3/Objective 1:</u> Conduct a landscape assessment for all lands with the ACCG footprint. • <u>Goal 3/Objective 2:</u> Develop processes to identify and support a wide variety of projects; rapid-turnaround process for support of grant applications and a more rigorous process for long-term project engagement. • <u>Goal 1/Objective 4:</u> Produce an annual report of ACCG projects and successes.
<p>SE 4: Conduct education and outreach at multiple levels, including statewide and among land management leaders, residents, and businesses within the ACCG landscape.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on community outreach and engagement & improve communications and engagement with communities within the ACCG landscape • Increase participation with new MOA/outreach efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Goal 1/Objective 1:</u> Increasing attendance at the monthly general meetings. • <u>Goal 1/Objective 2:</u> Making the ACCG website more relevant. • <u>Goal 1/Objective 3:</u> Conducting surveys of ACCG members and community to assess impact. • <u>Goal 2/Objective 1:</u> Increase participation at all levels through improved media and outreach activities.

Recommended Actions for Collaborative Engagement

The following table illustrates CBI's recommended actions and lead persons or work groups required to successfully implement the strategies for collaborative engagement.

Table 2. Recommended Actions to Implement Collaborative Engagement Strategy.

Collaborative Engagement Strategic Elements (SE)	Recommended Actions	Lead Person(s)/Working Group(s)
SE 1: Refine governance & organizational structure to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the group.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update MOA to reflect a governance structure, principles, policies, and procedures to increase the effectiveness of the group and to achieve the ACCG's priorities/ to pursue opportunities. 2. Redefine work group structure, charge, and the interactions (including communications and coordination) between and among work groups as a part of the MOA update. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admin Work Group* (*work group recommendations forwarded to full ACCG for consideration and adoption) • All Working Groups • ACCG Administrator • CBI Facilitator
SE 2: Establish collaboration best practices to create the conditions to build trust, improve communications, and reach consensus.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Refine ACCG groundrules in MOA update in addition to incorporating process agreements introduced by CBI. 2. Articulate and consistently implement clear policies and procedures as defined in the updated MOA that reflect and promote collaboration best practices, Including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • documentation of all meeting proceedings • mechanisms for coordination between and among work groups, and • adherence to the conflict resolution protocols, etc. 3. Conduct training on mutual gains negotiation, strategic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admin Work Group* • Planning Work Group* • ACCG Administrator • CBI Facilitator

	<p>collaboration, and effective communication, particularly as it relates to difficult conversations.</p> <p>4. Develop a project evaluation tool which delineates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • areas of fundamental agreement (green light) • areas of situational agreement/disagreement (yellow light) • areas of fundamental disagreement (red light) <p>and create protocols for how to proceed in each category.</p>	
<p>SE 3: Develop and implement a process that results in the strategic pipeline of projects to realize an all-lands, landscape-scale vision and achieve the ACCG's triple bottom line mission.</p>	<p>1. Create a project development and approval process that is consistently applied and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a flow chart graphically illustrating the process • project guidelines • project principles • request form for project support from the ACCG. <p>2. Establish a Landscape Vision Work Group as a subcommittee to the Planning Work Group to help the ACCG establish a landscape-level plan.</p> <p>3. Landscape Vision Work Group will draft a proposal to develop, maintain, and regularly update a landscape mapping tool to assist in planning, coordinating, and tracking projects in the ACCG area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Work Group* • Landscape Vision Work Group • Monitoring Work Group • CBI Facilitator
<p>SE 4: Conduct education and outreach at multiple levels, including statewide and among land management leaders,</p>	<p>1. Develop a comprehensive outreach, communications and engagement plan that focuses on the following principal audiences: 1) local ACCG</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admin Work Group • Public Relations and Media Ad hoc Work Group • ACCG Administrator

residents, and businesses within the ACCG landscape.	<p>communities/stakeholders; 2) regional landscape collaboratives in the Sierra Nevada; 3) policy makers and local, state and federal government agencies and tribal organizations relevant to the ACCG landscape; 4) general public statewide.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Continue to refine website as resource hub for interested parties.3. Create an orientation protocol for new members and establish ACCG member succession planning best practices/expectations in the MOA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CBI Facilitator
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Next Steps Brief

CBI will work directly with the Admin Work Group, Planning Work Group, and with the full ACCG membership to implement the Collaborative Engagement Strategy within the context of regularly scheduled meetings, conference calls, and webinars through September 15, 2019 when CBI's period of performance under the USIECR contract ends. The below table reflects the suggested timeline for implementation of the recommended actions identified in Table 2.

Table 3. Implementation Schedule for Collaborative Engagement Strategy.

Recommended Actions by Strategic Element (SE)	Implementation Schedule
SE 1: Refine governance & organizational structure to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the group.	
1. Update MOA to reflect a governance structure, principles, policies, and procedures to increase the effectiveness of the group and to achieve the ACCG's priorities/ to pursue opportunities	May-July 2019
2. Redefine work group structure, charge, and the interactions (including communications and coordination) between and among work groups as a part of the MOA update.	May-July 2019
SE 2: Establish collaboration best practices to create the conditions to build trust, improve communications, and reach consensus.	
1. Refine ACCG ground rules in MOA update in addition to incorporating process agreements introduced by CBI.	May- July 2019
2. Articulate and consistently implement clear policies and procedures as defined in the updated MOA that reflect and promote collaboration best practices, including, but not limited to: documentation of all meeting proceedings; 2) mechanisms for coordination between and among work groups; 3) adherence to conflict resolutions protocols.	April- June 2019 and ongoing implementation
3. Conduct a training on mutual gains negotiation, strategic collaboration, and effective communication, particularly as it relates to difficult conversations.	June-August in three modules at Planning

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	Work and/or General meeting
4. Develop a project evaluation tools which delineates: 1) areas of fundamental agreement (green light); 2) areas of situational agreement/disagreement (yellow light); 3) areas of fundamental disagreement (red light) and create protocols for how to proceed in each category.	May-July 2019
SE 3: Develop and implement a process that results in the strategic pipeline of projects to realize an all-lands, landscape-scale vision and achieve the ACCG's triple bottom line mission.	
1. Create a project development and approval process that is consistently applied and includes: 1) a flow chart graphically illustrating the process; 2) project guidelines; 3) project principles; 4) request form for project support from the ACCG.	April- June 2019
2. Establish a Landscape Vision Work Group as a subcommittee to the Planning Work Group to help the ACCG establish a landscape-level plan.	May 2019
3. Landscape Vision Work Group will draft proposal to develop, maintain, and regularly update a landscape mapping tool to assist in planning, coordinating, and tracking projects in the ACCG area.	May-August 2019
SE 4: Conduct education and outreach at multiple levels, including statewide and among land management leaders, residents, and businesses within the ACCG landscape.	
1. Develop a comprehensive outreach, communications and engagement plan that focuses on the following principal audiences: 1) local ACCG communities/stakeholders; 2) regional landscape collaboratives in the Sierra Nevada; 3) policy makers and state and federal government agencies relevant to the ACCG landscape; 4) general public statewide.	July-September 2019 with ongoing updates and implementation
2. Continue to refine website as resource hub for interested parties.	Ongoing
3. Create an orientation protocol for new members and establish ACCG member succession planning best practices/expectations in the MOA.	May-July 2019