TOOLBOX ESTABLISHING COLLABORATION

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TOOLBOX

FOR ESTABLISHING COLLABORATION

In the toolbox you will find specific tools and practical examples to inspire when planning and facilitating a kick-off workshop.

The tools and examples are based on collaboration between designers and contractors, but they can easily be used with minor modifications at other stages in the process. However, you should always consider your particular situation and adapt the tools to the needs of your project.

CONTENTS

EXTRACT FROM CASE-STUDY

Many of the tools are supplemented with extracts from the case-study on the Disabled People's Building, as an example of how the tools can be used in practice, and with what effect. The whole case-study can be downloaded from www.vaerdibyg.dk

1 INTRODUCTION OF THE PROJECT TEAM

WHO ARE WE?

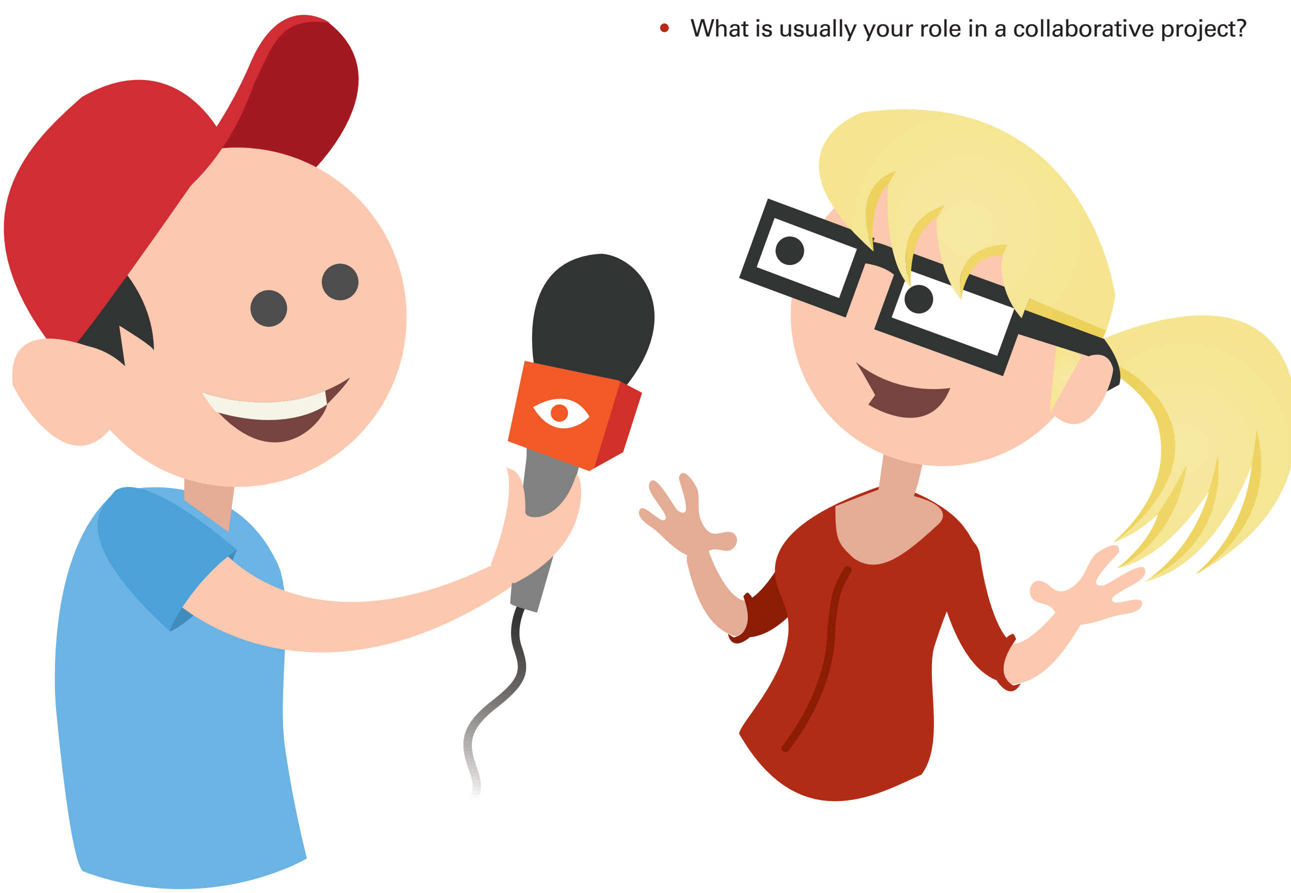
WHY?
For a collaboration to work well, the project team members must get to know each other. It is important to create positive relationships between people who are to work together on the project, in order to build an understanding, trust and respect.

WHO?
At the kick-off workshop, all the relevant people from the client's organisation, the designers and contractors should be present. Depending on the project, it could also take in a number of people from many different levels in the different companies. It is important for all of them to be introduced to each other.

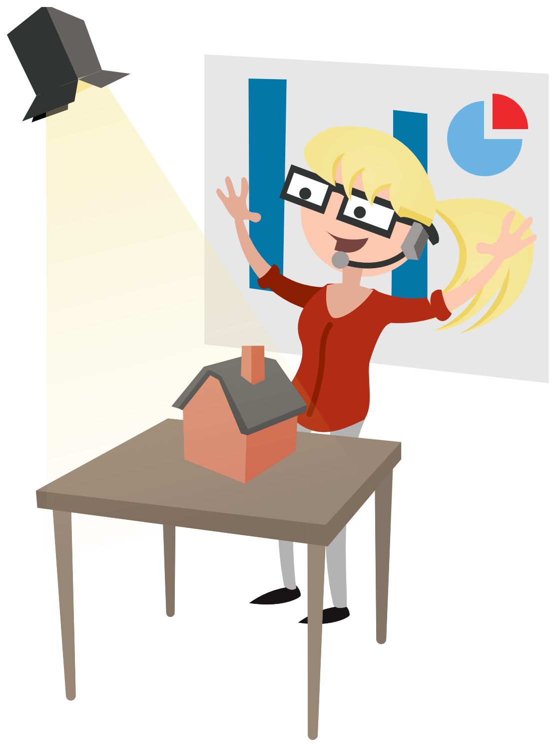
HOW?
In some cases, a name-check may be sufficient – many of them may know each other in advance – but a simple exercise can often help to reveal more aspects of the project team members. A good example is to have team members interview each other in pairs and then present each other to the group.

Possible questions to ask are:

- Name, age, occupation?
- How long have you been with the company?
- What do you like about your job?
- What is your motivation for working on this project?
- Tell me about a good construction process you have been part of.
- What made it good?
- What is usually your role in a collaborative project?



2 PROJECT PRESENTATION
WHAT ARE WE BUILDING?



WHY?
The project presentation should provide an overview of *what* is to be built, *how*, *why* and *for whom*. This is to help the project team to understand what is special about the forthcoming project.

WHO?
Everybody needs to know what sort of construction project they are embarking on. It may often be necessary to give several project presentations as more technical groups get involved in the project over time.

It will often make sense for the client to give a project presentation, alone or in collaboration with consultants and/or contractors. It is important for the person/people presenting the project to be good and committed communicators and to know the project in detail.

HOW?
Some people in the project team will understand the project best through visualisation, while others prefer spoken or written words. It is important to organise the presentation for everyone to get an understanding. We recommend that an oral project presentation should be supported with relevant visual elements such as a slide show, photos, 3D renderings, wall charts, cardboard models, a walking tour of an existing site etc.

As with the form, the content should also be adapted to the diversity that often exists within a project group. There may often be different areas of the project that are of interest to specific consultants and contractors, so it is important to cover the whole project so everyone becomes engaged.

A project presentation should touch on the following topics, and could take the following form:

• Who is building? • Why are we building? • Who are we building for? • What is the purpose/vision for the building?	• Client presents
• What should the project be like? • What can the project achieve? • How is it to be built?	• Architect presents • Engineer presents • Architect, engineer and/or contractor presents:
• What will be the future process? • What milestones are we working towards? • What is the timetable?	• Discussed by the project team – possibly in small working groups, followed by presentation to the whole team

3 THE CLIENT'S SUCCESS CRITERIA

WHAT DO WE AIM TO ACHIEVE WITH THE PROJECT?

WHY?

The project team needs to understand the client's underlying ideas and motivation for carrying out the project. This will provide an insight into why the client acts as he does, and the client's motivation may influence the project team and create a sense of ownership.

WHO?

Everyone should have an understanding of the client's success criteria, which should be introduced right after the project presentation. Even the construction workers who will be the last to work on the site need to understand the client's success criteria. This means that these should be presented several times in the course of the process.

The clients will often present their success criteria themselves, but this may also be done by selected user representatives, the client adviser or a third party. This person should be committed and able to pass on a level of knowledge that goes deeper than what can be read from drawings and specifications.

Case-study: The Disabled People's Building

AN 'EYE-OPENER' COURSE KICK-STARTED THE COLLABORATION

To kick off the project, the whole project team was sent on an accessibility course to see for themselves how people with various disabilities access a building.

"If you want the parties to act differently from the way they usually do, you need a different setup from the usual," says the client advisor.

An eye-opener, said all those who attended the course, which also served to kick-start the collaboration.

"The course did a lot to give us this shared mindset, which we expressed in an 'accessibility manifesto': a set of active ground rules for how we proposed to design this building," explains the architect.

HOW?

To begin with, the client, perhaps assisted by the client adviser and/or the process manager, should be clear about his success criteria for the project.

Examples of the client's success criteria:

- Accessibility for all users
- A defect-free building at handover time
- Zero-energy solutions
- Innovation and sustainability
- 100% satisfied end-users
- Delivery on time
- A good working environment

The client may consider a strategic choice of success criteria. If the success criteria relate to an area with a certain novelty value for all concerned, which does not only concern the special skills of particular parties, then no single party within the team can take a lead in the discussion. Rather, all of them become part of an open dialogue and shared development of ideas, which can enhance team spirit and commitment within the project.

Apart from a presentation of the thinking behind the client's success criteria, the project team can be further involved through various seminars, meetings with users etc. This will give the team a greater understanding of the success criteria and enable an identification process.

4 RULES FOR COLLABORATION
HOW SHOULD WE COLLABORATE?

WHY?
For a newly-formed project team, it is important to agree early on in the process on a set of common ground rules for the collaboration. What must everyone in the project team do for the client's success criteria to be met?

WHO?
All key people from the different specialised groups playing a major role in the collaboration should take part.

HOW?
We recommend that the project team draw up a joint statement of intent explaining how the collaboration should proceed; see examples in Appendix 4. A good statement of intent will cover both what people are to collaborate on (the client's success criteria) and the ground rules laid down for the collaboration.

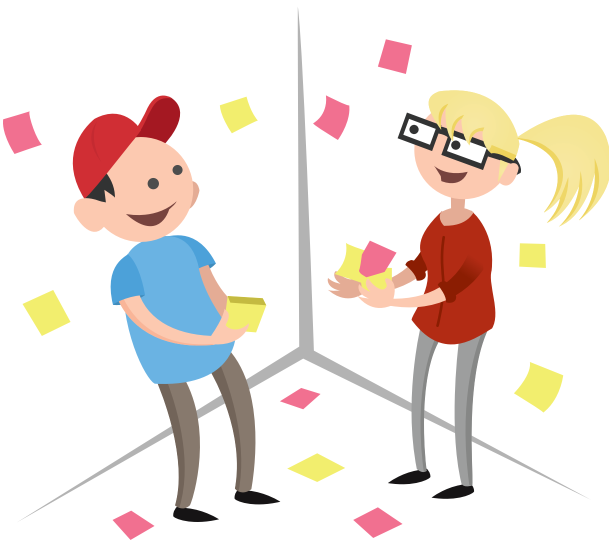
The project team could do a small exercise to identify the ground rules for the collaboration. Each of them should note down what they feel is particularly important for effective collaboration and present the 2-3 most important points to each other. The outcome of the exercise will be that the team agrees on 5-7 statements that best describe the collaboration.

Case-study: The Disabled People's Building

CONSTRUCTIVE BASIS FOR COLLABORATION

At the introductory collaboration workshop, the team drew up a joint statement of intent: see Appendix 4.

"The fact that we established a good basis for continued collaboration was definitely one reason why it went so well. The rules we agreed on are not really that different from those we normally work to. They are simple principles, but they work. They promote constructive collaboration," says the turnkey contractor.



Examples of collaboration statements might be:

- Tell it like it is
- Respect each other's skills
- We need to help each other
- It is OK to comment on other people's professional skills
- Agreed deadlines should be adhered to
- Concerns should be expressed
- The progress of the project is everybody's responsibility
- It is OK to point out errors and omissions

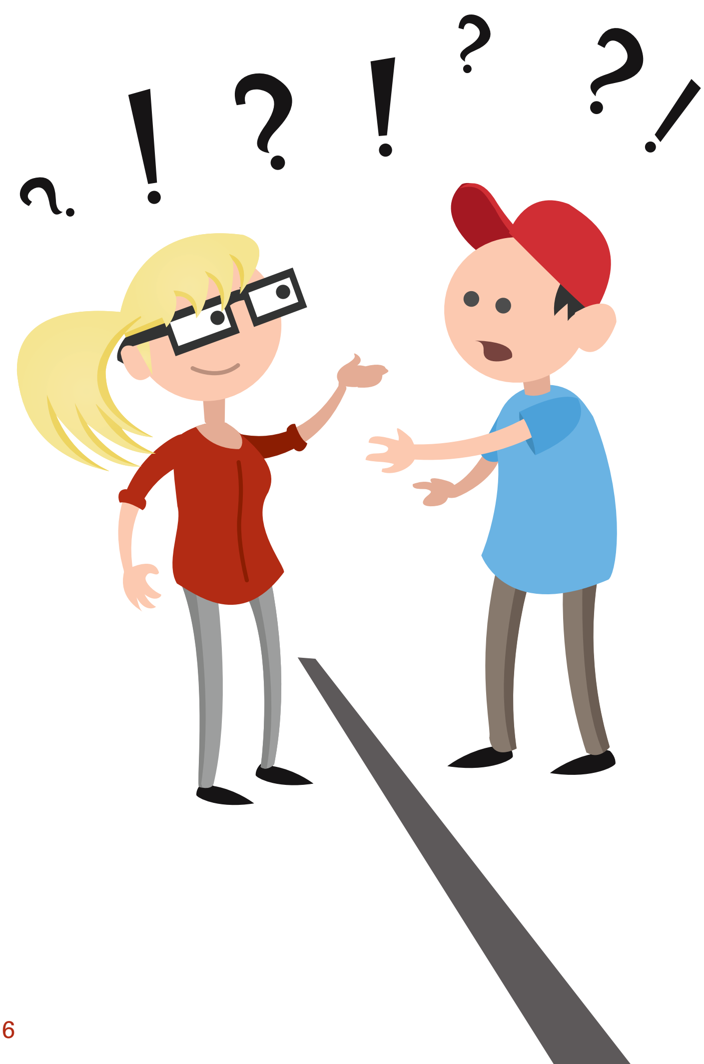
These statements should be collected in a document – possibly as post-its on a poster – signed by everyone in the project team. The process manager will then send a copy to everyone and hang the statement of intent in places where everyone will see it regularly.

The statement of intent may be updated on an ongoing basis, when the collaboration is to be evaluated, and the ground rules may be refreshed.

5 DECISION-MAKING AND RESPONSIBILITIES
WHERE ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND AUTHORITY?

WHY?
It is important to ensure a clear understanding of who is responsible for which areas within the project and who has the right to take which decisions. The aim is to identify and confirm the interfaces within the project team.

WHO?
Those responsible for the various technical areas and the process manager should work together to define and agree on the division of authority and responsibility.



HOW?
The breakdown of responsibility and decision-making authority in the contract documents should be reviewed, and there must be contact details for all relevant people. It should be clear to all who is responsible and/or empowered to make decisions in any given situation. The focus should be on clarifying areas with unclear interfaces between roles. Appendix 5 contains an extract from an interface checklist which may be a helpful tool in identifying interfaces.

It could also be a good idea to define a clear procedure for changing agreements.

At the kick-off workshop, the confirmed division of responsibilities and authority should be formalised and made available to all parties.

In summary, a meeting to clarify responsibilities and decision-making powers should include:

- A review of the division of responsibilities and authority
- A clarification of interfaces – are there situations where the roles have not been defined?
- Changes to agreements - what is the procedure?
- Formalisation of the division of responsibilities and authority and the interface clarification

6 CONFLICT HANDLING
HOW DO WE RESOLVE CONFLICTS?

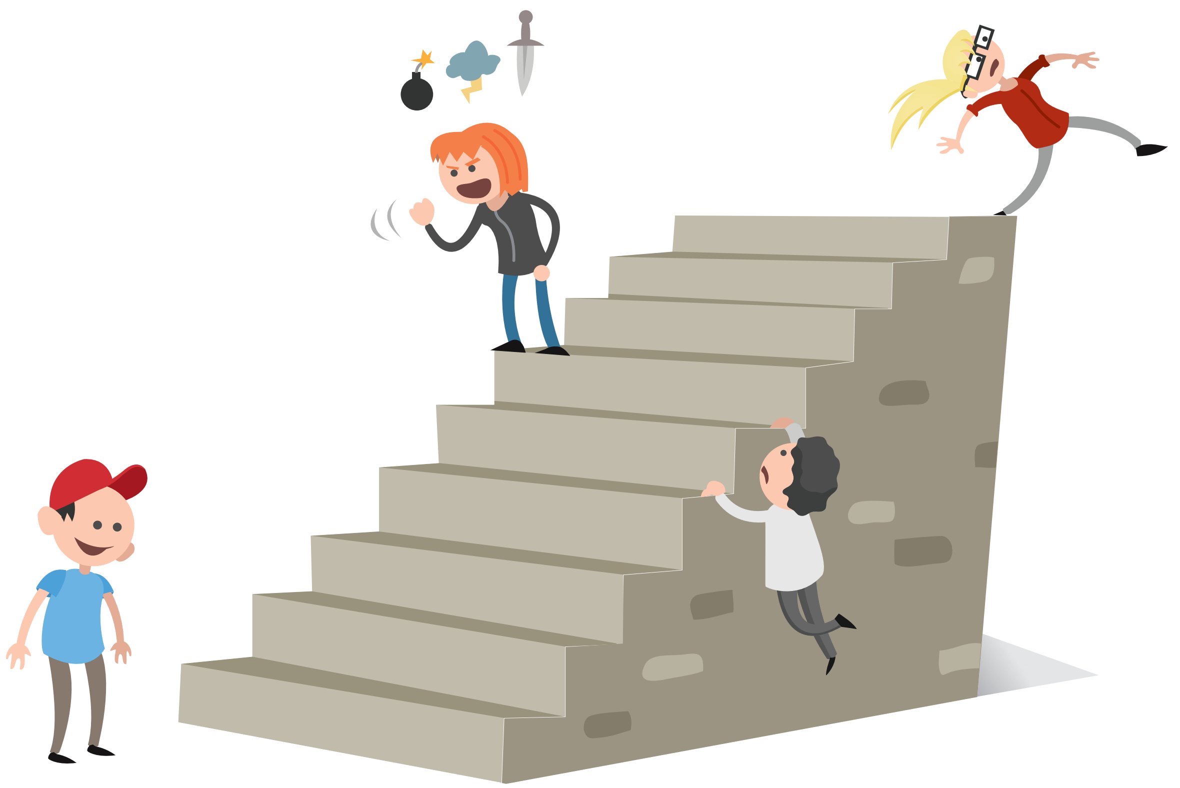
WHY?
Conflicts will inevitably arise in a project team where many different people with many different backgrounds and interests are working together. It is crucial to the collaboration, and to the project, that any conflicts should be handled in a constructive way the moment they arise. When conflicts are resolved constructively, it can help to generate energy and drive within the team. The team should agree on a method of conflict management at the kick-off workshop.

WHO?
Conflicts may arise between anyone in the team, so everyone should help to decide how conflicts should be handled. It may be advisable to set up a steering group to deal with the conflicts that the project group itself cannot resolve.

HOW?
The aim is to focus on conflict management and to clarify what should be done in purely practical terms, when these problems arise. Many methods exist[3], and a vast number of courses focusing in conflict management in the construction industry are available. We do not propose to highlight one method above another, but we do recommend focusing on conflict management early on in the process.

Examples of topics that might be covered by conflict management are:

- Mediation
- The conflict ladder
- Steering group
- Deadlines for solutions
- Focus on needs and interests



3) E.g. Hauen, Denager & Krenk: Konstruktiv Konfliktkultur [A constructive conflict culture], 2009

7 RULES FOR COMMUNICATION
HOW DO WE TALK TO AND WITH EACH OTHER?

WHY?
There are two sides to communication in a project team. There is the technical side, which is concerned with things like ICT agreements, project web pages and decisions taken in relation to e-mails, telephone conversations, meetings etc. Then there is the more informal side, which is about communication at the personal level, i.e. guidelines on the right tone in both written and oral communication, social conventions etc.

It is crucial to the collaboration to agree on a number of ground rules for communication within the project team.

3 GOOD RULES OF COMMUNICATION

- Call before you write
- Don't say "we must" but "I or you must"
- Confirm that the message has been understood

WHO?
The client, consultants and contractor can all contribute their input to the dialogue.

HOW?
The parties involved should jointly discuss what constitutes 'good communication'. The participants may draw on earlier experience and perhaps share stories of what one should not do. The dialogue should result in a note to supplement the statement of intent (see tool 4), setting out the project team's ground rules for communication.

Ground rules for communication should cover the following topics:

- Face-to-face conversations
- Telephone calls
- Written and oral agreements
- Invitations to meetings etc.
- Gossip/bullying
- Letters and e-mails (including cc: rules)