

Strategic Issue Identification & Decision Framework

Process & Tools

Collaborative Decision Making

A precondition to high-quality collaborative outcomes is a high-quality collaborative process. Identifying and moving forward on opportunities for alignment, collective action and mutually reinforcing activities is critical to achieve collective impacts and collaborative advantage.

This document outlines the collaborative process to support decision making around opportunities to address strategic issues as the Alberta Non Profit Network (ABNN).

Principles

Inclusive engagement:

Active engagement of individuals and organizations to support their capacity to contribute to and benefit from ABNN. These individuals and organizations are intentionally engaged to represent diverse perspectives, experiences, and voices within the nonprofit/voluntary sector.

Continuous communication:

Commit to building and maintaining open, honest lines of communication within the Network Stewards and across ABNN.

Transparency:

Engage in frank, open conversation with my Network Steward colleagues, across ABNN, and with external stakeholders.

Integrity:

Think and act in a way that honestly reflects a full understanding of what needs to be done to move ABNN's purpose forward.

Relevancy and authenticity:

Seek to respond to issues which are relevant to the sector through authentic engagement and open communication.

Encouraging reciprocity, solidarity and shared interests:

When opportunities for collective action have been identified and agreed on by the Network Stewards through the Strategic Issue Identification Process (see [Decision Tree and Strategic Issue Action Form](#)), I privilege and advance ABNN's purpose over my individual interests. I work to advance ABNN's work in my own context, when purposes align. I demonstrate mutual respect for everyone's time and contributions, and I follow through with commitments.

Adaptive learning:

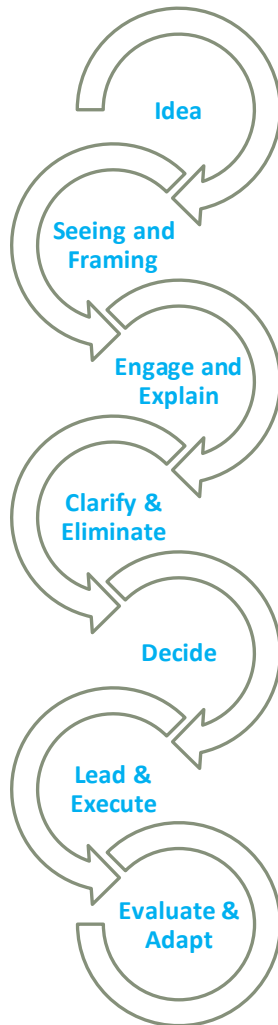
Support ABNN's capacity to understand and respond to the most significant changes in ABNN's context.

When the Network Stewards and/or ABNN experiences instances where these Guiding Principles are not being upheld, the Network Stewards/ABNN are committed to using these same principles to guide inter-personal and inter-organizational interactions to find constructive paths forward which honor the spirit of ABNN's vision and purpose.

Process

The overarching process which leads to the use of the *Strategic Issue Identification & Decision Proces*¹ is below:

¹ Adapted from Fair Process Leadership, INSEAD, and ONN's Vetting Process. Inspired by research of Dr. Darrin Hicks.



1. Idea

A member of the ABNN Network Stewards, a member of a Steering Committee or a member of the ABNN community brings an idea forward that might be appropriate for collaboration/collective action under the ABNN identity.

2. Seeing and Framing

A member of the ABNN Network Stewards leads or supports the completion of the *Strategic Issue Identification & Decision Process* *Decision Tree & Scoping Form*

3. Engage and Explain

A member of the ABNN Network Stewards engages others to help define the opportunity and uses a group meeting/conversation to explain the contents of the *Decision Tree & Scoping Form* to the rest of the ABNN Network Stewards.

4. Clarify & Eliminate

Through the group conversation, options for pursuing the opportunity are clarified and eliminated, if needed.

5. Decide

The Network Stewards are given an opportunity to review the opportunity and submit their decision to support or oppose the opportunity. Each members' decision is recorded in the **Decision Record**.

6. Lead and Execute

A member of the Network Stewards volunteers to take the lead, and a small project team is struck to guide the execution of the opportunity.

7. Evaluate & Adapt

The team uses group meetings and conversations to continuously assess progress and make adaptations as required. A “post-mortem”/lessons learned conversation is conducted to record learnings to inform future action.

Decision Tree - Overview

The ABNN Decision Tree is the first step to scoping an opportunity for collaboration or collective action.

See the Decision Tree process outlined on the next page.

An issue emerges or is put forward by ABNN participants. ABNN determines whether the issue meets its criteria:

Purpose: Does this issue contribute to the purpose of ABNN?

Does addressing this issue advance the cohesive, pro-active and responsive nonprofit sector in Alberta?

Scope: Does it meet the broad definition of a sector-level strategic issue, listed above?

Is it beyond the scope or mandate of a single nonprofit organization and/or sub-sector focus?

Does it matter to the sector, on a provincial scale?

Does it present an opportunity for collective action?

Does it align with the ethos "we can address this issue better together than we can alone."

Urgency: Does this issue require a timely response?

Do we need to act on it now? Why?

If no, ABNN does not invest in this strategic area.

If yes, ABNN conducts a situational analysis scope the existing and required capacity, resources, expertise etc.

Deliverable: Scoping Form outlining

Why, What, How, What, Who. 80% EC agreement to move ahead.

There is an organization or group that has existing experience, capacity, expertise on this issue

There is no organization or group that has experience, capacity, expertise on this issue.

ABNN has existing capacity to address this issue

ABNN does not have existing capacity to address this issue:
ENGAGE AND BUILD APPROACH

BUILD and LEVERAGE APPROACH

ABNN leverages existing capacity through broad communication, sharing, engagement, convening or celebrating the existing capacity.

Capacity is mobilized

ABNN does not have any background in this issue

ABNN has sufficient understanding of existing capacity within the network

ABNN is not aware of existing capacity within network

Baseline research or sensemaking activity

ABNN convenes group to scope response and workplan (may include Steering Committee)

ABNN convenes a broad call-out and one-on-one engagement for others to provide feedback and assist in scoping out the opportunity

ABNN Scoping Form:

Purpose: This form is to frame potential activities to be undertaken by ABNN to assist with decision making on what activities to proceed with, through discussion/vetting with the Network Stewards. This is to increase clarity and scope of potential activities undertaken by ABNN.

Process: 1) Review ABNN Strategic Issue Decision Tree ([See above](#)) 2) Fill out the form below. 3) Save a copy to the ABNN [Dropbox](#). 4) Share it with the NS for discussion on a bi-weekly call or in-person meeting.

NOTE: No potential action will be discussed without this form being filled out prior and 80% of the NS agreeing to proceed. If an NS member does not respond to a request for approval within the allotted time frame given for responses, the ABNN 'consent' approach will be enacted - meaning that NS member will be on record as 'in agreement'. Decisions are recorded on the "Record of Decisions" sheet in Dropbox.

Question	Response/Detail
What Describe the opportunity.	
Purpose Does this issue contribute to the purpose of ABNN? Does addressing this issue advance the cohesive, pro-active and responsive nonprofit sector in Alberta? Why is this a suitable action to be taken under ABNN? How does it link with other strategic actions?	
Assumptions: What are some key assumptions underlying this work or the ultimate success of this activity?	
Scope Does it meet the broad definition of a sector-level strategic issue, listed above? Is it beyond the scope or mandate of a single nonprofit organization and/or sub-sector focus? Does it matter to the sector, on a provincial scale?	

<p>Does it present an opportunity for collective action?</p> <p>Does it align with the ethos “we can address this issue better together than we can alone.”</p>	
<p>Urgency Does this issue require a timely response?</p> <p>Do we need to act on it now? Why?</p>	
<p>Strategic Links Describe how this activity links to ABNN’s core strategies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Funding 2. Engagement & communications 3. Rural, and 4. Learning & evaluation 	
<p>How How will this activity need to be accomplished? What are the steps? Provide as much detail as possible.</p>	
<p>Who Who is leading this activity? Who else needs to be engaged? What kind of skills are needed? Who has those skills?</p>	
<p>When When does this need to be done? What is the timing of the steps?</p>	
<p>Budget What is the anticipated budget/shared/in-kind contributions for this activity?</p>	
<p>Time Requirements What are the anticipated time requirements associated with this activity?</p>	

Other details

Provide more detail that would help ABNN make the decision if and how to proceed.

Decision Record

Once the form is filled out, explored by the team, and circulated for input a deadline for decision is determined for each member to approve or disapprove of moving forward. Final decisions are recorded on the Decision Record.

Sample Decision Record below:

ABNN Decision Record								
Based on: ABNN Exploration Committee Strategic Issue Identification and Decision Framework								
Name of Project	Scoping Doc Completed?	Circulated for Feedback?	Discussed on a call?	Yes	Consent	Objections?	Reason for Objection and Other Notes	80% Threshold Achieved?
Election Preparedness	Yes	Yes	14-Dec-18		All	None		Yes
Pension Plan Response	Yes	Yes	11-Jan-18		All	None		Yes