

Defining the Collaborative Governance Model

A new form of governance has emerged in response to more adversarial and managerial modes of policymaking and implementation. The Collaborative Governance, as it has come to be known, was initially intended to bring public and private stakeholders together in collective forums to engage in consensus-oriented decision making. This new style of governance is loosely based on the research done by Stanford University. Their study on *Collective Impact* became the launching pad for this new governance model, found [here](#).

Beyond having the ability to bridge the gap between the public and private sectors, this new governance model can be used for situations where multiple organizations serve the same constituency. By utilizing this model, several related organizations can cooperate in an organized way towards a common goal.

Very little structured literature is available on this form of governance, and because it aims at flexible collaboration, there are several variations in language and approach. However, it is also true that the vast majority of those researching this governance model agree on a few important details. One such important and constant observation is that four variables can serve to enhance or hinder the effectiveness of this model. They are,

- Prior history of conflict or cooperation
- Incentives for stakeholders to participate
- Resources imbalances
- Power, leadership, and institutional design

Another observation is that a series of factors are needed to establish and maintain the health of this model. Factors such as,

- face-to-face dialogue
 - trust-building mechanisms
 - Development of commitment setting documents
 - Shared Understandings

The following quote By Chris Ansell and Alison Gash highlights this new model's origin and untidiness.

“Although collaborative governance may now have a fashionable management cache, the untidy character of the literature on collaboration reflects the way it has bubbled up from many local experiments, often in reaction to previous governance failures. Collaborative governance has emerged as a response to the failures of downstream implementation and to the high cost and politicization of regulation. It has developed as an alternative to the adversarialism of interest group pluralism and to the accountability failures of managerialism (especially as the authority of experts is challenged)”. Collaborative Governance in Theory and Practice by Chris Ansell and Alison Gash -University of California, Berkeley

Several factors precipitated CCMBC's move to a new form of governance and led to developing its form of the Collaborative Model. Some factors were,

- Lack of trust in a centralized decision-making institution
- Uncoordinated mission, vision, and strategy
- Lack of ownership of major decisions and direction
- Disconnect between provincial conferences, the national conference, and national agencies
- Apathy from churches towards denominational programs

As MB national agencies, provincial and national conferences ramped up their ministry, a feeling of disconnect and isolation began to emerge. Additionally, CCMBC was experiencing a distancing from the voice of the local church.

To fully understand the sense of "holy discontent" being voiced by churches, agencies, and provincial conferences, CCMBC began a three-step consultation process.

Step 1: General Leaders Meeting and One Mission Partnership Task Force

A strong call for better coordination of services and collaboration was heard at all conference levels. To reflect on the situation at hand, the Executive Board invited leaders representing all MB ministry areas to a meeting in the spring of 2017.

The purpose of this meeting was to hear from one another, pray together, and discern what the Spirit was saying to us. After much discussion and prayer, interim Executive Director, Steve Berg, called out a group of people to form a task force. Appropriately named, The *One Mission Partnership Task Force* (OMPTF) was tasked with continuing the work that started during the summer meetings. The One Mission Partnership Task Force would undergird their meetings with a pattern of prayer, listening to the Spirit, and discerning the underlying spiritual issues present in our family of churches.

After several meetings, the OMPTF provided practical feedback to the Executive Board for discernment and execution.

The findings from the OMPTF:

[August 3, 2017 Observations](#)

[August 29, 2017 Observations](#)

[October 18, 2017 Observations](#)

[October 18, 2017 Report to the Executive Board](#)

[Why Two Rails?](#)

Step 2: Hiring of an outside Governance Consultant

Alongside the work of the OMPTF, and with a focus primarily on governance issues, CCMBC acquired the services of Les Stahlke. Les had developed the previous governance manual for CCMBC and had been of immense help through the last restructuring of our conference. Les went about his consulting role with diligence and carefulness.

Step 3: Conference Ministers' Meetings

The third piece of the consultation process was regular meetings between CCMBC, represented by the interim Executive Director, and provincial conferences, represented by their conference ministers/executive directors. During these meetings, a feeling of closeness began to develop, and a sense that better coordination of services was necessary. Out of these meetings, the first alliteration of the Collaborative Model emerged. The Collaborative Governance Model structure outlined in this manual presents significant upgrading from the Collaborative Model first envisioned by the conference ministers due to the shaping of the OMPTF, Executive Board, and Board of Faith and Life, staff, and understandings outlined by Les Stahlke.

The first draft of the Collaborative Model was presented to the Executive Board in 2017, found [here](#).

The Collaborative Governance Model represents a moving away from the relational governance model established by Les Stahlke. This manual introduces a new language, relational structures, and reporting systems. Terminologies needed to be crafted to explain this new governance model's functionality fully. As previously indicated, there has been a great effort to secure engagement at all levels. The hope moving forward is that this governance system will allow us to coordinate better the resources existing within our conference.

To address the variables presented in our introduction, CCMBC's Collaborative Governance Model incorporates the following:

- Permission-granting collaborating processes,
- Clear reporting relationships,
- System of internal controls,
- Defined decision-making parameters.

Permission-granting Collaborating Processes

This model is predicated on the participation of various independent and autonomous organizations. Therefore, these organizations must bind themselves to this Collaborative Model by creating a clear Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) between the separate organizations and the collaborative strategy agreed and approved by all.

Clear Reporting Relationships

The partners in the Collaborative Model must agree to a descending reporting system. There must be a clear agreement as to who in the reporting relationship carries stronger implications, and, therefore, the primary reporting relationship must be considered. Secondary reporting relationships also need to be identified and prioritized.

Systems of Internal Controls

The Collaborative Model partners must agree to a common strategic plan and accountability to that plan's performance. Identifying deliverables and key performance indicators will be necessary to develop internal controls that allow for proper management and measuring of outcomes. These controls will analyze performance based on the agreed-upon goals and outcomes.

Defined Decision-Making Parameters

The decisions that are made and by whom they are made will need to be clearly defined and agreed upon by the partners. After the decision-making parameters are established, the decisions made will be binding to the partners.

To fully function as intended, the Collaborative Governance Model requires four underlying components:

1. Common mission and agenda
2. Common measuring systems
3. Clear relational structures
4. Principal organization

Common Mission and Agenda

For multiple organizations to collaborate effectively, an understanding of common direction needs to be present. Therefore, articulating an overall mission that encompasses all the organizations' interests in the Collaborative Model is necessary. Further to articulating a mission, organizations must operate with a clear, common agenda. This agenda will indicate the areas that organizations will collaborate on and what areas fall outside of the collaboration process. This component is of the utmost importance when implementing a collaborative budget. To fulfill this component, the partners will develop a new document to be known as the CUSP – The Collaborative Unified Strategic Plan.

Common Measuring Systems

Since different organizations have different methods of measuring results, it is essential to arrive at a common measuring system when relating to one another. This measuring system needs to be understood clearly by all participants and should incorporate qualitative and quantitative elements. The principal organization needs to be the one to keep records, track progress, and measure results. Adequate information needs to flow to all participating organizations.

Clear Relational Structures

As organizations agree to participate in the Collaborative Model, they agree to a reporting and accountability system. Clear authority and reporting relationships need to be established and agreed upon by all. The reporting system relates only to the items associated with the shared mission and agenda defined under the Collaborative Model.

Principal Organization

The Collaborative Governance Model requires that all participants agree that one principal organization will exercise the coordinator role. This principal organization will be responsible for maintaining information flow, managing resources, and relational upkeep. The principal

organization will be the holder of any significant structural and systemic frameworks related to the Collaborative Model.

The MB Church of Canada Collaborative Governance Model Structure

A new structure is needed to fully operationalize the Collaborative Model to convey an expanded collaboration and inclusion of partners. This new structure is now known as the MB Church of Canada. This structure consists of six provincial conferences (Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia), three national agencies (MB Seminary, Multiply, and Legacy), and CCMBC as the principal organization.

This new model of governance includes the following members:

- MB Canadian churches - represented in the decision-making process by their appointed delegates.
- MB member organizations - represented in the decision-making process by their elected board members.

The Collaborative Model is segmented into the following areas of responsibility:

1. Governance Area of Responsibility:

This area is responsible for the overall health and effectiveness of the MB Church of Canada. Their primary focus is measuring and monitoring the collective impact and maintaining the relationships in the Collaborative Model.

The Groups responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the Governance area are:

- The Executive Board
- The National Council

The following documents support the governance area of responsibility:

- The CCBC Charter
- Bylaws
- SPA's
- Governance Library

2. Theological Area of Responsibility:

This area is responsible for the theological cohesiveness, spiritual well-being, and ministry ethics of the MB Church of Canada. Their primary focus is the clear articulation of the Confession of Faith and the denomination's overall spiritual health.

The groups responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the MB theology and ethics are:

- The National Faith and Life Team (NFLT)
- The Provincial Faith and Life Team (PFLT)
- MB Seminary

The following documents support the theological area of responsibility:

- Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith
- Theological and ethics documents
- National credentialing Process

3. Strategic Area of Responsibility:

This area is responsible for providing the best possible approach to achieving the overall mission of the denomination. The focus is the articulation of a strategic and tactical plan.

The groups responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the strategic plan are:

- The National Ministry Team (NMT)
- The Executive Board

The following documents support the strategic area of responsibility:

- The CUSP
- Tactical documents and policies

4. Decision-Making Area of Responsibility

This area is responsible for the approval and accountability for our family of churches' overall mission, strategy, theology, and relationship. The focus is to guide and approve the denomination's general mission and vision.

The National Assembly is the decision-making body for the MB Churches of Canada and is comprised of:

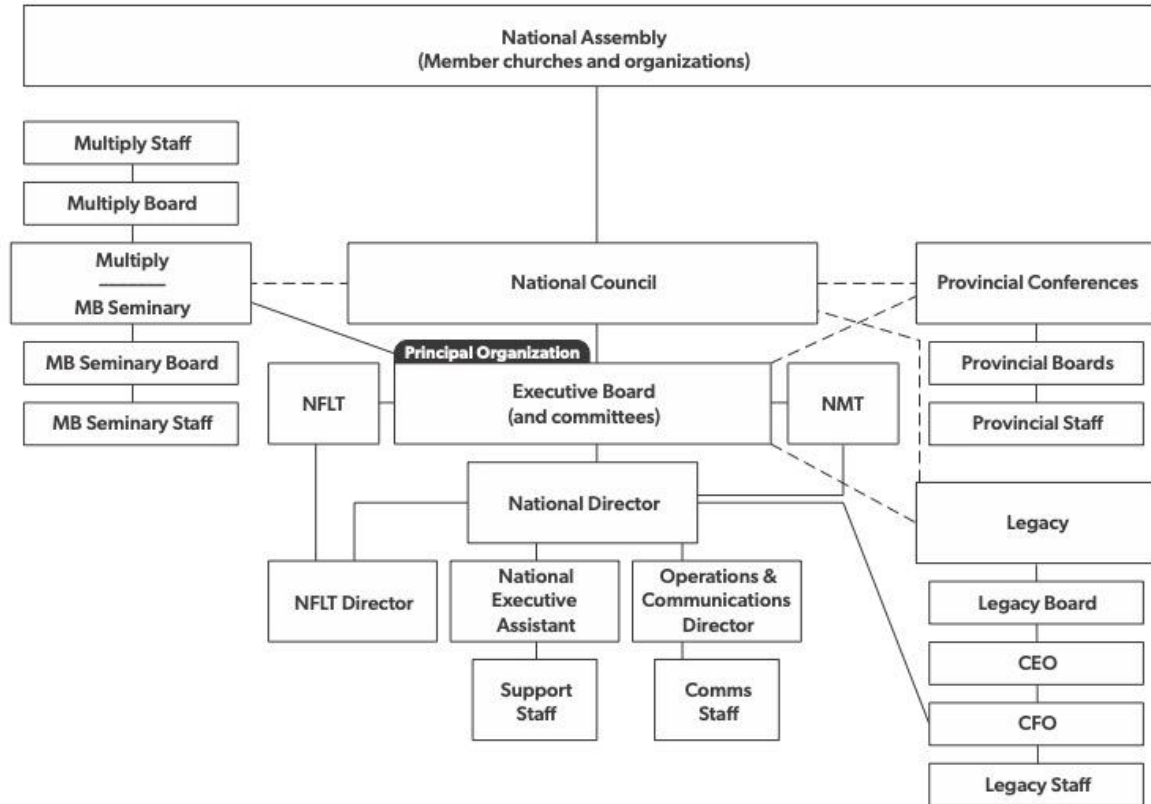
- Church Delegates
- Member Organization Delegate

The following document supports the decision-making area of responsibility:

- The Decision-Making Road Map

This Governance Model is supported by the CCMBC of North America Charter, the General Operating By-Law, the Collaborative Unified Strategic Plan (CUSP), the Confession of Faith of the CCMBC, and the Strategic Partnership Agreements.

The MB Church of Canada Org. Chart



Chapter Four

Partners and Strategic Partnership Agreements

This Collaborative Governance Model will have the following partners: CCMBC as the principal organization, six provincial conferences (Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia), Multiply, Mennonite Brethren Seminary, CCMBC Legacy.