

TalX Workshop 5: The role of partnership in developing Place-Based Adaptation

Date: October 12th, 2021



Introduction

A changing climate poses a wide range of impacts and risks for society in Britain and Ireland. To prepare for the impacts of climate change, effective and sustainable adaptation action is needed on a cross-sectoral and multi-level basis. This needs to be underpinned by an increase in the capacity of organisations and communities to deliver adaptation actions in different places across Britain and Ireland.

As part of the EPA-funded Transboundary Adaptation Learning Exchange (TaIX) project, an adaptation Capability and Maturity Model (CMM) is being created for the five jurisdictions of Britain and Ireland (Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England). This model will provide a mechanism to enable place-based adaptation through the provision of a structured change process, illustrating the development of adaptation capabilities for all stakeholders acting in a place.

To develop the CMM a series of co-creation workshops are being held online that invite experienced adaptation practitioners and policymakers from across the Britain and Ireland to provide their insights and experiences of 'on the ground' adaptation and the capabilities required to deliver it effectively. The first of these workshops (practitioner perspectives on well-adapting places) was held on March 29th and 30th and invited practitioners from across the jurisdictions to identify priority capability themes for inclusion in the CMM. The priority capability themes identified included:

- Leadership and Ownership (**Leadership**)
- Research, Knowledge and Expertise (**Evidence**)
- Community Education, Engagement, Involvement and Empowerment (**Community**)
- Collaboration, Cross-Sectoral Networks and Partnerships (**Partnership**)
- Sustained and Secure Funding and Resource (**Resource**)

For each priority theme, a dedicated workshop was held to explore that theme in detail.



Figure 1: Themes in the Workshop Series with the theme of this workshop (Partnership) report outlined in red

Workshop 5 – Partnership

The fifth TalX workshop was held on October 12th, 2021 and examined the priority theme ‘Partnership’. To develop effective approaches to adapting to climate change, new forms of collaboration are needed to increase the transformative potential of individuals, the economy, and society as a whole. **Within this project, partnerships are understood as collaborations between actors representing diverse roles and interests.** TalX is focusing on place-based adaptation partnerships, whilst acknowledging the learning and insight from broader (non-climate adaptation focused) partnerships.

Workshop Findings

To support workshop activities and prior to the workshop, a [pre-recorded video](#) was circulated to all participants which provides an overview of the TalX project. The workshop was delivered online over one morning. The workshop commenced with presentations of two case studies from practice, including:

- Lesley Hinshelwood and Catherine Pearce discussing the evolution of [Climate Ready Clyde](#), and the importance of maintaining a dynamic and flexible partnership with strong leadership and a shared vision in order to develop a portfolio of adaptation actions and enable systems change
- Martha Farrell providing insight into the growth of the community led [Maharees Conservation Association](#) and how good governance is essential in forming trusted partnerships with local government and academic institutions to progress adaptation action

Slides from the presentations were circulated to participants. Following this, three interactive sessions were held using [Miro](#). The results are presented in this report. To note, the content within this document summarises the raw input received at the workshop. Additional analysis and refinement of this content is currently being undertaken to develop the CMM.

Work Sessions 1 and 2

During the first session, participants responded (in plenary) to the question, “What are the success factors and conditions for effective adaptation partnerships?”. Following this, break out discussions were held during work session 2 to explore these topics in greater detail.

The main feedback from the discussion on **Governance and Structures** included the need for a bridge between policy and operations. To help bridge this gap and ensure that decisions and actions don't remain siloed and co-benefits are realised, a dedicated coordination role can be pivotal. From a political standpoint, cross-party initiatives that involve a diverse range of stakeholders are more likely to be sustained through changes in political cycles.

Feedback from **Coordination and Coproduction** discussion suggested that the explorations of values and interpretations of ‘place’ amongst actors was an important early activity. It was also indicated that the role of partnerships may evolve from more passive coordination to active coproduction. Effective coordination needs to be in place before moving to coproduction, as successful partnerships that are delivering adaptation are much more resource intensive.

The discussion on **Skills and Culture** highlighted the need for a number of skills including the ability to communicate well, to be resilient in the face of challenges and facilitation skills to allow for a variety of voices to be heard equally. Partnerships also need tempered radicals, those who can be patient and wait for opportunities to arise to advance their goals, as well as a dynamic culture of energy and enthusiasm from the whole organisation, but particularly the senior level and decision-makers, that is maintained over time. The space within partnerships to have difficult discussions about loss and uncertainty and integrate this into robust decision-making and adaptive pathways was also a key point raised.

The discussion on **Actors** emphasized the need for representation from all groups, but particularly vulnerable groups who may be more impacted by climate change. This included the benefits of sociocracy and in particular the value of shared power. Relevant communication and time are key to reach a wider range of stakeholders and build up partnerships and for these partnerships to thrive, there needs to be a clear aim and an understanding of what each partner brings to the table.

Feedback received from both sessions is collated in Table 1 and presented under the specific headings mentioned above.

Table 1 Results from work session 1 and 2

Categories	<u>Findings Work Session 1: What are the success factors and conditions for effective adaptation partnerships?</u>	<u>Work Session 2: Delving deeper into success factors and conditions for effective adaptation partnerships</u>
<p>Governance and structure: <i>The decision-making processes and hierarchy</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential to have a clear structure, with specified roles and responsibilities at an early stage • Transparency of guiding rules and principles • Signed agreement with clear targets and milestones • Identify risks at the start of the partnership and revisit regularly • Clear lines of accountability, communication and support • Open and transparent decision making, clear governance strategy • Light touch governance • Mix of operational and leadership roles • Support and buy-in, trust, confidence • Democratic process of decision-making with some level of scrutiny 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistence and getting to the right people can help to break down silos • Our community group has had to take risks and take action without explicit approval because we couldn't get responses from the silos! • Lack of resources can result in neglect of issues that need to be addressed • Need both senior management and operational perspectives as part of governance • Need to value strategic, coordinating function that is required for effective partnership - helps to identify how to breakdown silos - how to bring people together - no one wants to fund this role - good to see this with Climate Ready Clyde and partnerships in other places. • Timing is crucial - windows of opportunities • Success and a good relationship/trust gives you more credence with state agencies • Need to understand the scale that you are working at and engage with people who can influence at that scale • Example case study Birmingham - urban forest master plan - cross party group established to develop recommendations / Co-produce process funded by city
<p>Coordination or coproduction <i>If the partnership is a space for</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-learning and joint training sessions with others who have gone before • Frameworks to lead groups through the complexity so people don't feel out of there depth when looking at things outside of their specialism • Create a neutral space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptation as a catalyst for climate action through partnership • Resource - need to have a process Trust - everyone is in the same situation Forum - to share ideas/knowledge Staging - Lots of people work together at the same time. • Upkeep of partnerships is difficult as needs shift - sustaining co-production

<p><i>sharing information, planning and coordinating activities or as a platform for sharing resources, budgets and decision-making</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating mechanisms - things that bring people together e.g., a task, an event, planning something • Learning from arts-based practices - staying longer in 'not knowing' and not leaping to action • People, tasks, organisations, spaces that span boundaries and help make connections across silos • Working with communities which are already engaged and want to do something • Resources/skills for participatory mapping of local risks and opportunities. • Visualization of proposals as a way of testing out ideas and options while in development • Being able, feeling confident, safe space etc to challenge one another 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to have a focus - shared ideas and values - a crisis can get us to that point • Wider engagement is required (e.g. younger people) • Coordination is passive, co-production is active. • Co-ordination needs to be effective to allow co-production • Rather than receiving information, you are able to play an active role in the initiative (Trust, understanding, common vision) - Willingness to invest (Commitment)
<p>Skills and Culture <i>The culture of the partnership (e.g. trust, authenticity, reciprocity), relationships, and skills (e.g. creativity, innovation, learning)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong, meaningful relationships are imperative • Clear identity and or boundary - e.g. geographic • Brave leadership and imagination • Ability to listen respectfully and work with difference • Willingness to experiment, and fail, and learn • Trust, joint interest • Online collaborative platforms (like Miro) can be very helpful in consolidating ideas, clarifying the trajectory • Relating ideas to specific places or nodes on maps • Be flexible, avoid becoming 'locked in' to solutions that will cause future issues • Agile/adaptive management - not rigid - learning focussed • Clarity about what you expect and what you're offering - don't waste people's time! • Culture of openness and being able to talk about issues even though they are really quite difficult e.g. coastal retreat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building that skills and knowledge base across the people you pull together • Fine line - climate anxiety and overwhelming • Bringing in all voices - ability to design workshops that give everyone a chance to participate - ability to convene • Tempered radical - those people who can exist in an organisation when they care about something but have to bide their time until there is opportunity to take advantage of - maybe they get support externally that reminds them that it's worth sticking it out • You'd say culture for an organisation - in a partnership you are bringing together lots of orgs each with their own culture - need to be built around principles or ways of working, useful when you are setting something up to have discussion on principles and remind people of these • Senior level downwards not bottom up only • People willing and embraced and coming forward of their own free will • Enthusiasm maintained over the long term

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open to listening - everyone's updates and inputs are valued no matter what stage they are at • Flexible to grow, change and adjust • Valuing facilitation and convening skills • Honesty and Trust • Right skills at the right time in the process • Willing to take a risk to improve the situation - e.g. state agencies allowing us to try things they might otherwise not have done but for our relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible, dynamic, adaptively managed - enough fixedness to do stuff and ability to flex - can only start with best guesses and then revisit - fixed and agile • Robust decision making - adaptive pathways • Opportunities for peer learning from those just slightly ahead • Uncertainty - often people want simple answer -difficult thing when you're setting up partnership people want to rush to action - need to slow down and sit with vision and consider how this may be achieved - experts may only have partial answer as they need to listen to people - need HUMBLENESS - to appreciate only part of the answer • Find a story that people want to collaborate on • That understanding of what adaptation is - is still challenging - really hard to get people to confront uncertainty and unknowns - it's really negative - it's hard to get people to see that there's an overlap between mitigation and adaptation and the relationship between the two - and sell that • Be clear on co-benefits and interdependencies and being able to communicate this • Break challenges down into short narratives - make it easier for people who are new to adaptation to understand • Case study: Yorkshire and Humber Regional Partnership - at early stage - discussing ways of working • Case study: Dublin (Eat and street)
<p>Actors <i>Those involved – both as formal members and those who participate in activities- ensuring a diversity of</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity about expectations. High-level people will have different perspectives and roles from officers. • Really strong need to mix expert knowledge with the ability to tell a story in an accessible way • Actors will not take part if they feel they are not really taken seriously/ involved in decisions • Diversity • Important to understand the personalities of the partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaps/stakeholder analysis - identify who is missing then work on developing rapports with different/missing groups/sectors. Building relationships is key • Takes time to build partnerships - taking time to understand what people can bring to table and their boundaries and understanding aim • Don't always seen as community as consumers

<p><i>interests, perspectives and experience represented</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve additional actors who can support the core work, and also who may be important to educate • The right balance of personalities, and the ability to be flexible and open to new ideas • Include business, communities, individuals who have lived experience of climate impacts • People who can imagine • Really important to have actors that are responsible for the adaptation e.g. the service providers themselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to be very clear about what we can provide and what requires input from other experts or bodies - setting clear boundaries about the role each actor will play • Representation from all sectors, noting where are gaps • When dealing with large organisations as partners, then making sure that the whole organisation is aware of work i.e. right hand knows what the left hand is doing • Sociocracy principles shared power - based on values and shared power - other have to give up power to share power. • Lived in experience vital as connects with people and often the leaders have not experienced it in the same way as those on the ground, so it inspires the action • Wellbeing & Future Gen act and Public Service Boards brings together
<p>Function <i>The aims, vision, purpose and work plans of a partnership</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An agreed vision between all partners which is broad • Flexibility and ability to respond to changing priorities and opportunities • Start with a clear point of interest, which in time catalyses more complex work • Aligning common goals and collaborating to achieve them • What can the network offer in the first instance? e.g. learning platform, training, forum for peer learning • Clear identification of what the group is trying to change and how it knows when it is successful, e.g. what does good mean? what does it look like? how will we know when we have progressed what are the measures? 	

Work Session 3

During this session, participants mapped out the evolution of place-based adaptation partnerships from those just starting out (less developed or mature) through to well-established and effective partnerships (more developed and mature).

A summary of the discussions indicated that at the **beginning stage of adaptation**, partnerships had fewer motivated key stakeholders and a lot of individual visions with different purposes. To ensure everyone understands the aims of the partnership there needs to be excellent communication between all partners and a safe space to reflect on what the values and working principles of the partnership will be. By pausing and reflecting before jumping into activities, successful long-term partnership are more likely. As partnerships move towards a more **mature stage of adaptation** the discussions highlighted that there should be a high level of trust between partners and a shared vision. Partnerships at this stage should have a dedicated role for coordination, fulfilled by an individual with a specific skillset to help facilitate hearing the voices of all partners involved. Partners should be engaging in governance structures and processes, and adaptation should be embedded in all activities within the partnership. To accommodate this, organisations within the partnerships need to be pooling resources in a more sophisticated way and moving towards funding larger and more long-term shared projects with multiple benefits to all partners.

More detailed findings from the breakout room discussions are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Feedback from workshop participants in how resourcing partnerships develop and mature over time. Content collected on characteristics and specific activities related to partnership development.

	Stage One	Stage Two	Stage Three
Description (Characteristics)	Individual members/partners may be focused on singular issue or problems. Activities may be reactive in response to climate impacts. There remains lack of ownership of problem with view that “someone should do something”. There may be low or no trust amongst partners. At this stage there may also be only a few motivated partners or key stakeholders involved. At this stage it may be a group of individual organisations and members, all who	The partnership is becoming more established. The legitimacy of the partnership brings in other partners or experts. There is a greater understanding and appreciation of partner’s motivations and expertise. Learning (and social learning mindset) forming. Coordination is strong and resourced. Partners beginning to build trust amongst each other. Hierarchies of power are challenged, creating a safe space for all organisations and members, regardless of background or seniority.	The partnership is well resourced and sustainable for the future. Initial goals have been achieved. Partnership has moved from reactive to preventative approaches. There is full permission from partners to test and apply different models. Collaboration becomes the norm on adaptation –liaising with academics and NGO’s prior to undertaking action to get a wide range of input Making mistakes is accepted as long as learning utilised. The partnership is seen as a trusted voice that informs other work in area. Time is taken to

	come with their own vision, aim and purpose. As such, siloed ways of working may be occurring.	There is space for open dialogue and deliberation. Facilitation, convening and boundary spanning roles recognised and valued.	recognise and share success. Monitoring, evaluation and learning is ongoing and embedded. The evaluation of any adaptation partnership requires a firm understanding of its context, the goal of its strategies and tactics, as well as possible limitations to its implementation.
Tasks (Activities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set boundaries and define scope of partnership • Begin to develop shared vision • Map existing priorities and where overlaps exist between stakeholders • Understand actors who want to be (or could/should) be involved and what expertise they bring • Recruitment of skills and representation to partnership • Relationship – building – getting to know members and the ways they work • Communications and governance – setting up processes and structure for communication, engaging and decision making - use appropriate language (no acronyms) • Establish partnership agreements – such as MOUs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Theory of Change model is developed amongst partners • Coordination – There is a resourced coordinator role that is organising members and synthesising information that is being received • Working groups and task and finish groups established to work on specific outputs • Role descriptions of the entity’s structure and aims established • Members collaborating on joint funding bids • Actively seeking out organisations and individuals who can contribute to / help partnership further • Finding and implementing solutions to issues as a partnership • Engaged in learning from projects done elsewhere – knowledge exchange activities • Outreach and engagement activities such as public talks to engage more stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate success • Sustainable resourcing model in place • Monitor changes within place as well as within organisations • Create collaborative shared budget which resources partnership not just individual pieces of work • Scale up as an exemplar • Integrate partnership with multiple levels of governance including national • Common evidence base shared and used by others • Effective and sustained co-creation activities in place (and documented) • Streamlined decision making processes in place – holistic approach • Plan succession – how partnership sustains and grows over time • Narratives, stories and case studies distributed • Knowledge transfer not just knowledge exchange activities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify deliverables and requirements needed from each organisation • Surveying – reviewing evidence and need before rushing to actions. Historical review of activities which have already occurred and are underway. • Using a little bit of everyone’s time rather than a dedicated person for co-ordinating work • Implementation of iterative and flexible approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation for adaptation professionals • Governance structure developed which establishes roles but allows flexibility – recognise that priorities and availability of partners will ebb and flow during different times • Contingency measures put in place in case lead organisation or role changes • Data sharing agreements are put in place – collation of existing evidence • Windows of opportunity are identified and acted upon • Mechanisms for dialogue – revisit aspirations and needs of partners regularly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-benefits of adaptation evidenced and demonstrated • All partners involved / undertaken climate literacy courses •
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Conclusions

The workshop helped draw out insights and information on partnerships for place-based adaptation. It highlighted the experiences of the adaptation practitioners, researchers and community members across Britain and Ireland. In doing so the workshop highlighted that partnerships are essential for larger and longer-term adaptation initiatives that move beyond siloed working. The need for clear communication and power sharing between partners was also emphasized, as was the need for coordination within the partnership to ensure this. The input received at the workshop is now being reviewed and combined with findings from the academic and grey literature to inform the development of the Capability-Maturity Model.

The TalX team would like to thank all the attendees for their active participation and willingness to share their insights and experience in order to promote and enable climate adaptation actions in Britain and Ireland. We would also like to thank our speakers Catherine Pearce, Lesley Hinshelwood and Martha Farrell for making the time to present detailed and inspiring case studies.

Appendix 1: Participant list for the Partnership workshop

Name	Country
Martha Farrell	Ireland
Pauline Power	Ireland
Sabrina Dekker	Ireland
Lesley Hinshelwood	Scotland
Catherine Pearce	Scotland
Emma Whitham	Scotland
Alison Leslie	Scotland
Stephen Jones	Northern Ireland
Sean Maxwell	Northern Ireland
Nuala Flood	Northern Ireland
Kristen Guida	England
Simon Needle	England
Kate Lonsdale	England
Tyrone Dunbar	England
Andrew Thomas	Wales
Fen Turner	Wales
Yvette Eley	Wales

Appendix 2: Workshop Agenda



Agenda for the TalX Partnership Workshop 09:30-12:00 12th October 2021

Background

As part of the Irish EPA funded [Transboundary Adaptation Learning Exchange](#) (TalX) project, a Capability Maturity Model (CMM) to help progress climate adaptation across the UK and Ireland is being developed. The CMM aims to support adaptation practitioners across the UK and Ireland in advancing planning for, and implementation of, effective place-based adaptation.

Following on from an initial workshop exploring practitioner perspectives on well-adapting places, 5 capabilities were identified as a priority for advancing effective place-based adaptation. A series of workshops are being held exploring these capabilities in detail. Select practitioners from across the UK and Ireland are invited to contribute to the development of the resource and learn from each other's experiences.

The workshop taking place on October 12th 09:30-12:00 will focus on the development of partnerships for place-based climate adaptation.

Useful Information:

- In advance of the workshop, participants are asked to view a video presentation providing an overview of the TalX project [here](#).
- To support workshop activities, the MIRO platform will be used. You can find a short introductory video on how to use Miro [here](#).
- The meeting will take place via MS Teams (the meeting link can be found in the meeting invitation)

Agenda:

Time	Title	Topic
09:30	Welcome	Overview of the aims and agenda of the workshop
09:40	Learning from Practice	Case study presentations from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Ready Clyde by Catherine Pearce and Lesley Hinshelwood • Maharees Conservation Association by Martha Farrell
10:10	Work session # 1 – Characteristics of effective partnerships	Identification of the success factors and conditions for effective adaptation partnerships
10:25		Break
10:35	Work session #2: Deep dives	Exercise to unpack the characteristics and activities required for effective partnerships.
11:05	Work session #3: Mapping the evolution of partnership development	Group discussion on the development of partnerships over time.
11:50	Wrap Up and Close	Summary of the workshop outputs and next steps