

Establishing collaboration



THE VALUE-ADDING COLLABORATION

Effective collaboration is a crucial factor in establishing a construction process that adds value and produces a successful building. This fact can be so obvious that it seems trivial. Nevertheless, clients, consultants and contractors can recall various construction projects where the collaboration did not work well and where people talked at cross-purposes, where opposing interests ended in conflicts, or where the responsibilities, objectives and success criteria were not clear to everybody. Poor collaboration is often cited as a reason why a construction project slips against budgets, schedules and quality criteria.

In this guide, the whole construction industry recommends that all parties in a project team should focus especially on establishing effective collaboration. Good collaboration requires effort from all concerned – an effort that pays off at the end of the day.

This guide provides examples and tools which naturally have to be adapted to the needs of the individual project.

We hope the guide will be a useful inspiration for everyone in the construction industry – including those who already know that the value-adding construction process is based on good collaboration.

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The Value Creating Construction Process is a collaboration between:



ESTABLISHING COLLABORATION

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The authors have been supported by the following expert group:

The Danish Building Trades (BAT): Lars Knudsen (MT Højgaard), Mich Johansen (Chr. Johannsen Entreprenør A/S), Christian Korsgaard Sørensen | **Danish Association of Construction Clients:** Finn Bloch (New Hvidovre Hospital), Randi Muff Christensen (Danish Defence Estates and Infrastructure Organisation), Anniken Kirsebom (Danish Building and Property Agency), Kræsten Bischoff (Danish Building and Property Agency) | **The Danish Construction Association:** Erik Nimb (Botica Entreprise), Malene Raagard Møller (NCC Construction Denmark), Erik Lund (NCC Construction Denmark), Morten Walbeck (Jakon), Christian Witttrup (Hilti), Ulrik Kristensen (Enemærke & Petersen) | **Danish Association of Architectural Firms:** Arne Vejrbæk (Erik Møller Architects), Erik Steen Larsen (C.F. Møller), Sara Asmussen (Tværsnit) | **Building Supply DK:** Sine Trige Pedersen (MT Højgaard) | **The Danish Association of Consulting Engineers:** Lars Bendix Christensen (WiSENBERG), Dag Sander (NIRAS) | **The Danish Mechanical and Technical Constructors Association (TEKNIQ):** Birger Villirs (Christoffersen & Knudsens Eftf.) | **The Value Creating Construction Process:** Rolf Simonsen (Værdibyg), Nina Koch (Værdibyg), Jan Eske Schmidt (TEKNIQ)

Author: Nina Koch (Værdibyg)

Illustrations: **Morten FC** | Layout: **Larsendesign.dk** | Translated in 2017

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ABOUT THE GUIDE

This guide can be read from two sides. On one side, you can read about the initial considerations on collaboration, the kick-off workshop and how the collaboration should be maintained.

On the other side, you will find the Toolbox, to serve as a practical source of inspiration when the process is to be implemented.

In a separate appendix you will find examples of useful documents to support the process in practice.

There is also a case-study describing the process of collaboration in the construction of the new headquarters for Disabled People's Organisations Denmark (DPOD).

FOCUS ON PHASE CHANGES FROM PLANNING TO IMPLEMENTATION

The guide is based on collaboration between designers and contractors, because it is precisely in the transition from design to implementation that practitioners say there is a need to strengthen relationships and collaboration.

It should be stressed, however, that the recommendations and tools in the guide can be used with few changes and adjustments at many other stages in the construction process.

INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS ON COLLABORATION

The client plays a crucial role in establishing this collaboration, as it is up to him to prioritise the importance of good collaboration and to define the terms for the necessary measures to establish this collaboration. But all parties to a construction project benefit from establishing the collaboration. If the client does not take the initiative to focus on collaboration, it is up to the project team itself to push things forward, e.g. by presenting the recommendations and tools in this guide to the client.

FRAMEWORK FOR THE COLLABORATION

Before advertising for consultancy and contracting services, the client should determine:

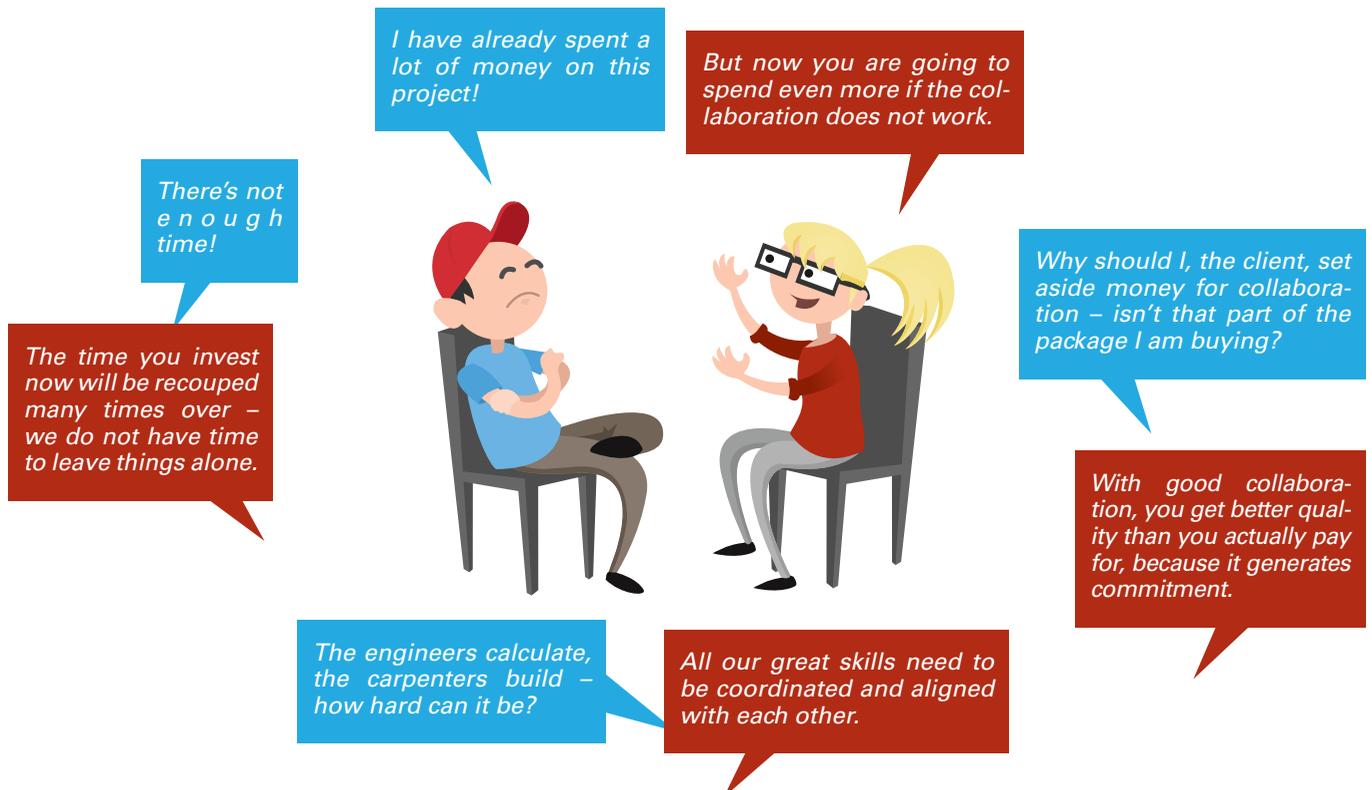
- Success criteria for the project
- Requirements and expectations as to collaboration within the project team
- Budgets, time limits and human resources to establish the necessary collaboration

We recommend that the client include a clause in the contract documents on the extent to which he expects the parties to engage in collaborative activities. This could involve e.g.:

- Participation in collaboration seminars and kick-off workshops
- Production of standard guidelines for the collaboration
- Allocation of tasks and roles
- Making a collaboration statement
- Ongoing monitoring of the collaboration

Appendix 1 contains example wording to serve as inspiration when a collaboration agreement or contract is to be drawn up.

The client should also be aware of the agreements and regulations (such as the 'AB' documentation) that apply to the project.



KICK-OFF WORKSHOP

When the project team is assembled, a common basis on which to collaborate should be established. We recommend having a kick-off workshop for the project team to review the terms of the project and to discuss, work through and agree on the necessary ground rules for the future collaboration.

We recommend that all parties in the project team take part in the kick-off workshop. This includes (representatives of) the client, the consultants, the contractor and any sub-contractors and suppliers in place at the time when the kick-off workshop takes place. User representatives may also attend. It is always a good idea to repeat the workshop on a regular basis as new sub-contractors and suppliers engage in the project.

The kick-off workshop may last for 1-2 days, or it may be completed in an afternoon – this will depend on the type, size and complexity of the project. Appendix 2 contains example agendas for kick-off workshops of varying scope.

DO NOT FORGET PROCESS MANAGEMENT

Regardless of who takes the initiative to organise the kick-off workshop, there should be a designated process manager who can facilitate the workshop and manage the future collaboration process. The client should take a view on process management at an early stage¹ – what tasks and responsibilities should be assumed, and by whom? The process managers role should be clarified before the kick-off workshop, which this person should help to initiate, plan and facilitate.

Process management may be handled by a representative from the designers, the contractors, the client's organisation or from a third party. The main issue is

EXAMPLES AND EXERCISES IN THE TOOLBOX

In the toolbox on the other side of this guide we have gathered a number of practical examples of how these topics can be addressed in practice at a kick-off workshop.

that the person responsible for process management should have a good social understanding and an interest in focusing on collaboration.

KICK-OFF WORKSHOP INCLUDE?

At a kick-off workshop, the project team should reach a shared understanding of what is to be built and why, and who the different parties are. We recommend covering the following topics:

- 1 INTRODUCTION OF THE PROJECT TEAM**
This is to put faces, names and roles to the members of the project team.
– *Who are we?*
- 2 PROJECT PRESENTATION**
The project should be presented so everyone in the team reaches the same understanding.
– *What are we building?*
- 3 THE CLIENT'S SUCCESS CRITERIA**
The project team should know and understand the client's success criteria for the project.
– *What do we aim to achieve with the project?*
- 4 GROUND RULES FOR COLLABORATION**
Team members should agree on the ground rules to provide the framework for collaboration.
– *How shall we collaborate?*
- 5 DECISION-MAKING AND RESPONSIBILITIES**
The project should be thoroughly reviewed to clarify the division of responsibilities and interfaces.
– *Where are the responsibilities and authority?*
- 6 CONFLICT HANDLING**
There will inevitably be conflicts within a project team, which need to be handled constructively.
– *How do we resolve conflicts?*
- 7 GROUND RULES FOR COMMUNICATION**
There should be a consensus on what constitutes good communication within the project team.
– *How do we talk to and with each other?*

1) In this context, the term 'process management' refers only to the collaboration process.

REMEMBER TO MAINTAIN THE COLLABORATION

The foundation for good collaboration is laid in the kick-off workshop. But as the project progresses, new situations will occur to challenge this good collaboration. It is necessary to maintain the collaboration through evaluation, adaptation and conflict handling.

Maintaining the collaboration means that the process manager is always aware of the development of the team and the collaboration, and that any challenges that occur are addressed. This may involve a brief one-to-one chat during the coffee break, or setting aside time at regular intervals to evaluate the collaboration, perhaps at project meetings that are already planned. It is important that the ground rules adopted at the kick-off workshop are observed and that the team consider whether there are areas with room for improvement.

Appendix 3 provides an example of how the collaboration can be evaluated in practice.

The collaboration should be examined at the regular construction project meetings, where e.g. the ground rules could be raised for discussion. Remember that it is important to pass on guidance and information from the meetings to those who did not attend.

CONFRONT AND RESOLVE THE PROBLEMS

It is the process manager's responsibility to ensure that the problem areas identified by the project team are addressed. This may be done by reminding the team of the ground rules for collaboration, or by updating the rules so they meet the practical needs. There may also be conflicts that have to be resolved according to the model adopted at the kick-off workshop.

It may be found that some individuals are doing more than others to impede the process of collaboration. If so, one needs the courage to raise the problem for dis-

ussion in the project team and a willingness amongst all concerned to consider replacing the person – as we know, a chain is only as strong as its weakest link.

OTHER ONGOING ACTIVITIES

Apart from ongoing evaluation, there are many activities that can be initiated to ensure that the good collaboration continues to function. Various events of a technical, project-related or social nature may be held, to ensure that new players joining the project along the way are integrated into the collaboration.

One challenge to this collaboration is that new people will be joining the team as the project progresses, and it may be necessary to run several kick-off workshops. Collaboration in the construction phase is also crucial to the project².

2) See Værdibyg's guide to 'Involving sub-contractors'

APPENDIX 1

WORDING FROM COLLABORATION AGREEMENT

APPENDIX 2

WORKSHOP AGENDAS

APPENDIX 3

EVALUATION OF COLLABORATION

APPENDIX 4

STATEMENT OF INTENT

APPENDIX 5

EXTRACT FROM INTERFACE CHECKLIST

CASE-STUDY

THE DISABLED PEOPLE'S BUILDING