

Case study: Including community leaders on the team

To be effective, collaborative project teams must include the right skill sets, but it's also important to include team members who have established relationships with or access to your project's intended users.

COLLABORATIVE PLANNING FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

The *Collaborative Planning for Climate Change Adaptation* project team worked closely with municipal leaders in Exeter, New Hampshire, to develop an integrated climate change adaptation plan. The Exeter town planner was an integral part of the team and she greatly increased the team's understanding of the capacity of the community to collaborate on climate adaptation. Her expertise and boundless energy and enthusiasm helped the team anticipate and overcome many challenges in implementing the project.

Project team's strategy

The planner provided insight and guidance to make sure project efforts were compatible with the town's internal workings, including how people receive information, and what they needed to know to make decisions. Having someone on the team who was deeply connected to the community increased the effectiveness of collaboration and built trust between the project team and community members. It also ensured that a project champion was embedded in many of the town's decision-making processes related to climate change adaptation.

Key advice

Team members who have strong connections throughout a community can provide valuable insights and access to local knowledge, resources, and stakeholders. To bring a municipal leader into a project team, first confirm that there's sufficient overlap between their professional responsibilities and the project goals, and that expectations for their engagement with the project are clearly defined and reasonable to all parties.

To learn more about this project that was initiated in 2012, visit their [Project Page](#).

To access other case studies and resources for conducting collaborative science projects, visit: [A Guide to Collaborative Science](#)

This case study was developed in 2015 by the NERRS Science Collaborative team when the program was hosted by the University of New Hampshire. This case study was originally featured as part of the Collaborative Project Toolkit.

