

Effective group dynamics depend on the mindset of the participants as much as on meeting techniques and related instrumental management skills (➔G-series). The success of projects depends on the degree to which each of the participants can effectively collaborate: the extent to which you can motivate yourself and other to move from an 'I can' to a 'we can' attitude (➔B2). According to Gosling and Mintzberg (2003), a collaborative mindset involves an open attitude towards participative action with others – whether persons or organisations. 'Connectedness' is a fundamental human motivation for positive and active interaction and involvement with other people (contributing to identify development and mental health and wellbeing) (Townsend and McWirth, 2005). A collaborative mindset is a precondition for proactive performance and solutions that apply paradoxical (➔A4) and out-of-the-box thinking (➔A4). The collaborative mindset is aimed at the exchange of information, adjustment of activities, sharing means, reinforcing of each other's capacities to deal with problems and creating a common goal (Huxham, 1996). Most sustainability challenges require joint efforts that also require specific types of management and leadership. The leadership literature talks about collaborative, integrative or even servant leadership in the context of the great transformation needed for sustainable change. A collaborative mindset combines two types of motivation: 'pro-social' and 'pro-self' (De Cremer and Van Lange, 2001). Pro-social behaviour is intended to benefit others, it is often referred to as 'altruism', relates to questions of sharing and 'fairness', but can be inspired by guilt, upbringing or other factors that are extrinsic. Pro-social motivations seem to be more aligned with longer-term sustainability issues, than those of people with a pro-self mindset. Luckily, there is growing evidence that most people's brains are more social than competitive, aimed at 'co-operation, living together in mutual dependencies in which love and friendship play an important role' (Mieras, 2008). Collaboration, for instance in the area of technological innovation, complementary to competition, lies at the root of societal progress. The societal challenge then becomes how to organise collaboration within a competitive environment and how to link these processes therefore to more sustainable business models.

A 'collaborative mindset' is aimed at establishing participative relationships with others to enhance better, more creative or more effective results. Your ability to profit from collaboration depends on the exact nature and resilience of this more basic mindset. The checklist in Table B.4 is based on general mindset research. Honest and intuitive answers to the (21) critical questions provide you with a first assessment of the degree to which you have a collaborative mindset.

Table B.4 Checklist critical questions on your mindset

How important do you find it to...	Extremely unimportant ← → Extremely important							Score
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
identify the group as responsible?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
maintain harmony?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
be mutually dependent?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
take care of the group?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
be tolerant of complexity?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
be open to other opinions?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
build-up trust amongst each other?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
share information?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
engage in joint activities?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
share the results of your efforts?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
aim at mutual gains?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
collaborate ahead of competition?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
think 'out-of-the-box'?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
engage others in your thinking?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
manage the relationships among people (rather than managing people)?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
listen than talk?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
learn rather than control?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
help establish structures, conditions and attitudes through which things get done?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
share responsibility?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
acknowledge that you cannot do it alone?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
understand the problem before looking into possible solutions?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Total Score:								

Interpreting the results

First look at the pattern that pops-up: (a) if you are 'all over the place', then you lack consistency in your approach, which might be due to personal characteristics, but also the circumstances under which you have developed this particular mindset; (b) if you are more consistent in your approach, then you either score all

questions to the left of the scale (1-2) or to the right of the scale (6-7); (c) if you score consistently in the middle (or you had difficulty actually answering the questions), then you run the risk of 'being stuck' – in both options you might want to have a closer look at your general attitude. Now try to score your profile.

- A score above 90 in total, implies an undisputed collaborative, pro-social mindset that is more into open learning loops.
- A score below 25 shows a more pro-self, egocentric personality that is more into closed learning loops.

In case of a more detailed analysis, you can give some of these dimensions more weight. For instance, in partnerships it is extremely important to share 'ownership' of the results, more than that you maintain harmony or 'think out-of-the-box' (►A4). With innovative partnerships, however, 'out-of-the-box thinking' should be valued more highly. But it is very likely that many of these categories are related and mutually influence each other.