TOOL 8

Give-Get exercise
This is a very simple tool where each organisation is asked to draw up a list in two columns:

- What does it have (or what is it expected) to GIVE to the partnership (time, skills, financial resources, premises for meeting in etc)?
- What does it hope to GET (see also Clarifying aims/ mission on page 17)?

This is best done face-to-face with all partners present. Organisations are encouraged to be SMART in their aspirations:

- Be specific – if they want a greater voice, what does this mean in practice? What will it look like in the future and how is that different from now?
- Are the benefits measurable? It should be possible to do this even if they seem fairly intangible – for example an informal network should be able to assess whether participants are benefiting from meeting even if it’s simply to give each other mutual support
- Is it achievable and realistic? It’s easy to get carried away with dreams of what might be achieved and your role as facilitator of collaboration may be to keep asking for reality checks – after all it’s more encouraging to be successful in making small steps and then go on to make bigger ones, rather than fall at the first hurdle
- Be specific about resources needed (in the GIVE column) and don’t forget staff time, but acknowledge that there may be some investment needed up front which may not be returned in the long run (particularly in the case of bidding for funding if the bid is unsuccessful)
- And finally ask partners to place what they want to get from the partnership within a reasonable time frame.

As a useful follow-on to this, bring this information together and share it with the whole partnership, showing the relative positions of each partner. This can help in addressing conflict issues.

You may also wish to encourage partners to identify what others have to contribute and stand to gain, and most importantly risk losing.

Source: Getting started on collaboration – a toolkit, JH Consulting (2007)