



**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: SKATING PANDA 2024**

# **Collaboration Barometer**

Navigating competition to unlock collaboration  
and simplify sustainability challenges

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**“Collaborations  
move the needle...  
that’s how **progress**  
happens”**

– Sustainability lead, Finance



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# Why do competition and collaboration matter in sustainability?

Avoiding the worst effects of climate change and biodiversity loss, while tackling social inequality, requires enormous efforts across governments, businesses and NGOs. Put simply, it is impossible without collaboration.

To better understand these challenges, Skating Panda has spoken to 18 sustainability practitioners and leaders in construction, fashion, retail, banking, mining, social enterprise and NGOs. As well as in-house sustainability experts, our panel includes CEOs, legal, marketing and communications leads. Some are in global roles, while others work in the UK, France, Colombia, Mexico, New Zealand and Kenya.

## Conclusions:



**Collaboration is good for business and sustainability.** Sharing resources makes organisations more efficient and knowledgeable, saving time and money [see p.9].



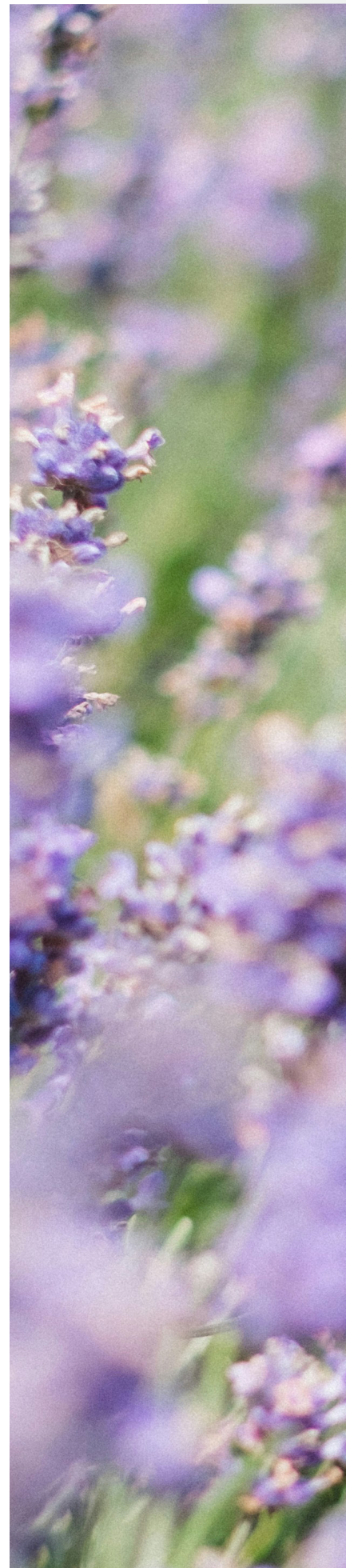
**Competitive mindsets are hindering collaboration.** Competition gets in the way because of the age-old 'will to win', a fear of scrutiny or even the promotion of sustainability as a competitive advantage [p.10].



**Sustainability professionals are over-convened.** Instead, they are seeking fewer, better collaborations that are meaningful and impactful.




**Collaboration is essential to progress on the most complex, systemic issues.** Improving supply chains, regulation and innovation will all be key to achieving a just transition to a low-carbon economy. Joining forces with others is vital to instigate these changes.



**Skating Panda has collated the findings into a Colloboration Barometer toolkit to make partnering easier and more impactful.**

Aimed at sustainability practitioners, CEOs, CFOs, or any role with oversight on sustainability, the toolkit allows organisations to overcome the barriers to collaboration, speed up progress on sustainability and tackle systemic change.



A close-up photograph of the backs of several zebras, showing their characteristic black and white stripes. The stripes are curved and create a strong sense of rhythm and movement. The lighting is dramatic, with deep shadows and bright highlights.

**“Through  
collaboration  
you’re **creating**  
**more** than any of  
you could alone”**

– CEO



## Why would I take on a collaboration? **What's in it for me?**

Almost all sustainability leaders feel they lack the resources required to tackle the challenges facing their organisation or sector. Collaboration is rarely top of mind to solve this resource gap. But our participants tell us that well-structured, meaningful collaborations provide multiple resource and efficiency benefits across four categories. This makes it easier to progress on sustainability agendas and tackle complex, systemic problems: improving supply chains, innovating or influencing policy. Collaboration, done well, isn't just good for sustainability – it's good for business.



### SAVE TIME AND MONEY

*"If the basics could be shared... it should free up opportunities to do the really interesting stuff that's actually going to make big [sustainability] changes"*



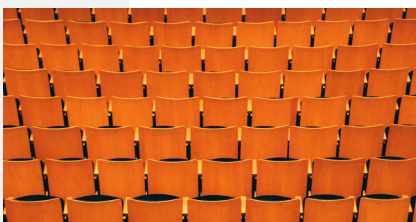
### GENERATE SCALE AND SPEED

*"You have to [have] power in numbers, 100%... and that is when you see great changes happening"*



### SHARE STRENGTHS

*"Sustainability has got lots of different bits and you're not going to find anyone that's expert on everything... [so] we combine"*



### STANDARDISE APPROACHES

*"Everyone should speak the same language so that you can [be] focusing on implementation instead of debating methodology"*


These are laid out in more detail in **the full Skating Panda 2024 Collaboration Barometer**.

# What is stopping people from joining forces?

Our interviewees identify two types of barriers to collaboration: a competitive mindset, which is ingrained in the profit-making model and is what many professionals 'have grown up with'; and (paradoxically, given the potential benefits above) resource concerns, which become particularly acute during periods of cost pressure. Many of these concerns are borne from experiences of poorly managed collaborations.



Diagram A: two types of barriers to collaboration

An aerial photograph of a desert landscape. The foreground shows a vast expanse of sand dunes with a distinct, repeating pattern of small, rounded mounds. In the lower right, a dark shadow of a person is cast onto the sand, suggesting the presence of a person standing nearby. The background shows more dunes under a clear sky.

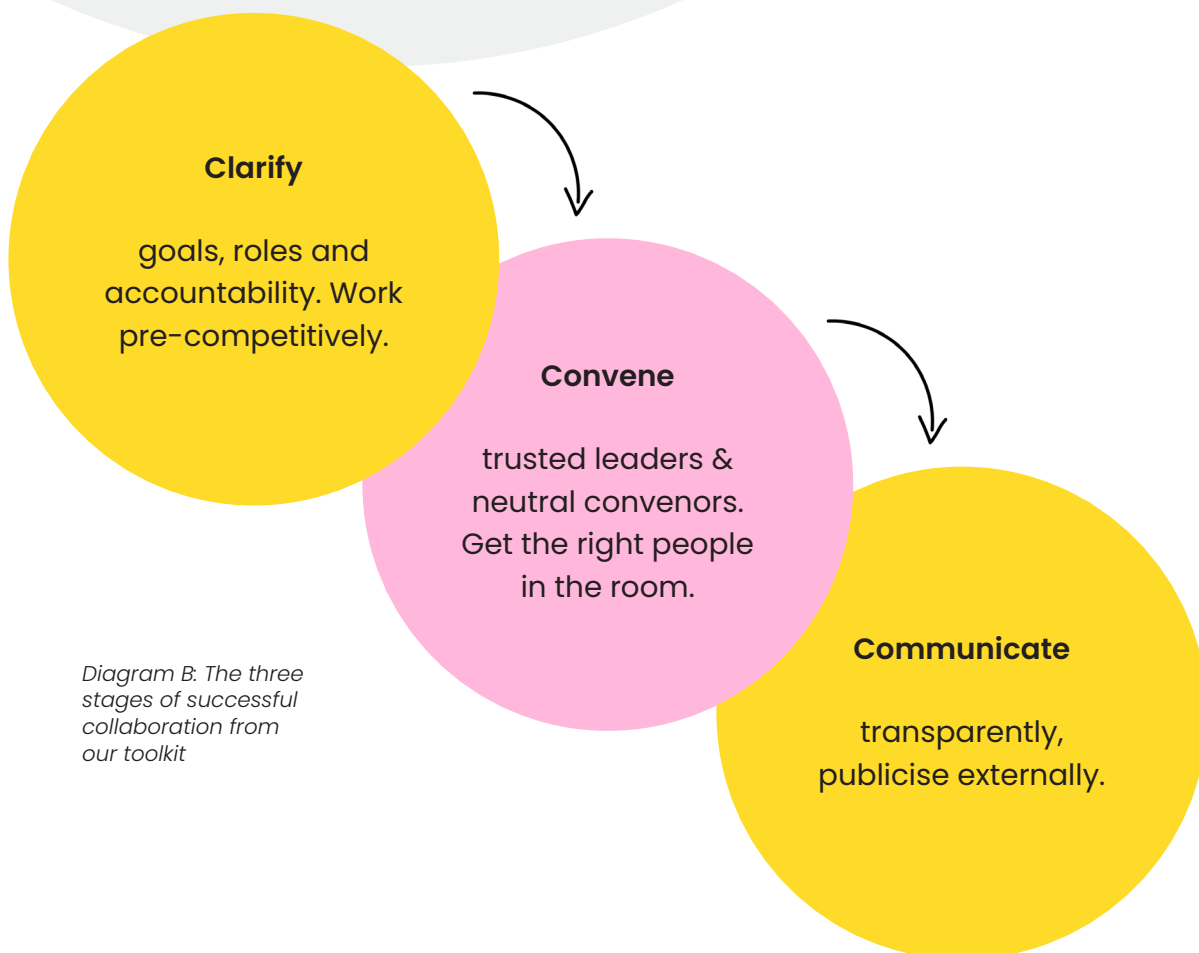
**“When you start introducing goals which are not necessarily purely commercial, you need different tools, and **collaboration is one of those tools** which typically is not used in regular commercial endeavours”**

– Sustainability lead, Financial Services

## How can I make sure my collaboration is **meaningful**?

From Skating Panda's Collaboration Barometer research, we have distilled a set of tools to help organisations ensure that the collaborations they initiate and participate in are meaningful and productive.

Below (in Diagram B) is a preview of the three key stages in the process. The full Skating Panda 2024 Collaboration Barometer breaks these down into a comprehensive guide of top tips. To find out more, access the full report and/or book a meeting with us; get in touch through [info@skatingpanda.com](mailto:info@skatingpanda.com).





## What's next?

A just transition to a low-carbon economy and healthier society is required for businesses today to survive, since the current modus operandi is destroying the very value we rely on for economic growth. This transition requires organisations to shift systems of economics, marketing, production, agriculture, consumption, media and health. Joining forces with others is vital to navigate this change.

Collaborating can feel hard, out of our comfort zone or off-putting. But done the right way it can build fruitful and productive relationships, eliminate waste, streamline resources, and move mountains. Skating Panda is well-positioned to help you do that. Please get in touch to find out more.

## The authors

**Skating Panda** is a creative social impact consultancy, working across systemic problems in health, gender and climate to address the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

**Jules Moscovici** works for Skating Panda as a researcher. He has an avid interest in copyright and patent systems, racism in financial markets and global health.

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