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Eligibility Rubrics

Agreements for Good Application

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About The Rubrics

This document contains two rubrics for two Agreements for Good applications:

- Application A: New collaborations
- Application B: Established collaborations

The rubrics were created to support both applicants and reviewers in understanding what makes collaborations strong, equitable, and ready for agreement-focused funding. Each criterion is grounded in well-established best practices from the fields of collaboration science, collective impact, and network governance; including clarity of purpose, shared decision-making, community leadership, trust-building, and learning orientation.

The purposes of the rubrics

For applicants to offer transparent guidance about what strong collaborations often have in place, and what supports durable agreements.

For reviewers to provide a consistent, fair framework for assessing alignment with Agreements for Good.

For the field to reinforce that collaboration is an intentional practice, not just a structure.

These tools are not judgments of worthiness or organizational quality. Many collaborations are doing vital work that is simply different from what the Agreements for Good program funds. If your collaboration would score “low” on several criteria, it may signal that this particular funding opportunity is not the right fit right now, or that your collaboration is pursuing a different set of goals than Agreements for Good.

Our hope is that these rubrics help you reflect on your collaboration’s strengths and whether Agreements for Good aligns with your current stage and needs. We honor the many forms of collaboration across communities and fields, including those that may not be a match for this program.

Application A: New Collaborations

Rubric Criterion	Weight	Grant Alignment (What We're Looking For)	Grant Application Response Guidance 3 - Strong Alignment	2 - Medium Alignment	1 - Low Alignment
Question 1. Shared Issue or Opportunity	3	A meaningful, external-facing issue (a community, sector, or systems challenge that multiple organizations care about); aligned with one or more Docusign priority areas	Issue clearly articulated; strong relevance to a Docusign priority area; appropriate for agreement-building.	Issue generally described but broad or internal to the lead organization; Docusign priority alignment requires inference.	Issue unclear or unrelated to Docusign priority areas; focused on internal needs of the lead organization.
Question 2. Who's at the Table (or Will Be)	1	Evidence of multiple organizations involved or soon engaged; early relationship-building.	At least one identifiable partner; rationale for involvement; early conversations already underway.	Partners not yet confirmed but outreach underway; some relationship-building described.	No partners identified; appears to be a solo effort; convening is networking-only.
Question 3. Community Voice & Leadership	1	Meaningful involvement of people most affected by the issue, now or through a concrete plan.	Clear role for community-led or grassroots partners; shares power in design/decisions.	Intent to engage community but plan is vague or informal.	Community voices absent or peripheral; institutional-only collaboration.
Question 4. Agreements At the Center of the Collaboration	3	A new or strengthened cross-organizational agreement that partners will co-design. The agreement helps the group collaborate more effectively and supports one of the three Docusign priority areas. It is feasible for early-stage work and creates a foundation for continued collaboration beyond the grant.	The application clearly describes the type of agreement the group wants to build (e.g., shared purpose, governance norms, joint plan, shared standards). It explains why it is needed, how multiple organizations will shape it, and how it will support long-term collaboration and one of the priority areas.	The agreement concept is present but general (e.g., "We want to align" or "We will explore ways of working together"). Rationale or impact is not yet clear.	No specific agreement described; work is primarily service delivery, outreach, or networking. The proposal does not articulate what partners will co-create.
Question 5. Trust-Building & Common Ground	1	Thoughtful structures and processes that help participants build relationships, establish shared understanding, and begin working toward alignment. We are looking for evidence that the applicant is intentionally designing how people will collaborate, not simply bringing them together.	Specific trust-building practices (facilitated dialogue, inclusive design, shared norms).	General statements about convening/discussion without detail.	No mention of trust-building; one organization driving decisions; informational-only convening.
Question 6. Learning Approach	1	A clear sense of what the collaboration hopes to learn through this early work, perhaps around how to partner well, understand the issue more deeply, or explore what an eventual agreement could look like. We're looking for a test-and-learn posture: openness to uncertainty, curiosity about what might emerge, and a willingness to adapt based on what the group discovers.	Specific learning questions or hypotheses are shared; applicants describe what they are hoping to understand about the issue, partners, or collaboration dynamics; they show openness to uncertainty and a plan for how learning will shape next steps.	Interest in learning is stated but learning questions are broad or vague; applicants show willingness to adapt but do not clearly describe what they hope to learn or how it might influence the collaboration.	No learning goals described; applicants present a fixed plan with little room for adaptation; unclear what insights they hope to gain or how learning will inform future work.
Question 7. Use of Funds	1	Funding supports collaboration infrastructure; not service delivery, re-granting, or pooled funds.	Clear, realistic plan for convening, facilitation, backbone coordination, design work; 1-year vision for success is clear.	Funding uses are plausible but the connection to advancing the creation of a shared agreement is unclear. Plan may mix collaboration infrastructure with early programmatic work, needing more clarity.	Funding primarily for service delivery, re-granting/pooled funds, organizational operations, or unrelated work.

Application B: Established Collaborations

Rubric Criterion	Weight	Grant Alignment (What We're Looking For)	Grant Application Response Guidance: 3 - Strong Alignment	2 - Medium Alignment	1 - Low Alignment
Question 1. Shared Issue or Opportunity	3	A meaningful, external-facing issue (a community, sector, or systems challenge that multiple organizations care about); aligned with one or more Docusign priority areas, and appropriate for collaborative action.	Issue clearly articulated; strong relevance to a Docusign priority area; appropriate for agreement-building.	Issue generally described but broad or internal to the lead organization; Docusign priority alignment requires inference.	Issue unclear or unrelated to Docusign priority areas; focused on internal needs of the lead organization.
Question 2. Collaboration Members & Roles	1	Evidence of a committed, established collaboration with defined partners, regular engagement, and shared practices or accomplishments.	Clear list of partners; defined commitments; regular meetings; strong examples of past joint work.	Partners named but roles or commitments unclear; inconsistent engagement; limited evidence of coordinated achievements.	Collaboration appears loose or nominal; little evidence of shared work or commitment; focus on knowledge-sharing, professional development, networking-only, or a contractor/sub-contractor relationship.
Question 3. Community Voice & Leadership	1	Meaningful involvement of people most affected by the issue, with evidence of evolving or strengthened power-sharing over time.	Clear leadership roles for community-led/grassroots/Indigenous partners; evidence of improved power-sharing; past accomplishments reflect community influence.	Some involvement of community partners and stated intent to strengthen their role, but practices remain informal or early-stage.	Community voice peripheral or absent; no meaningful decision-making role for proximate partners.
Question 4. Governance & Decision-Making	1	Clear governance structures supporting collaboration: such as roles, responsibilities, decision-making processes, accountability mechanisms, and conflict resolution.	Governance structure documented and used; has shared decision-making; clear roles; credible accountability and conflict processes.	Governance exists but informal, inconsistently applied, or partially defined; shared decision-making aspirational.	Governance missing or nominal; one organization drives decisions; no shared accountability.
Question 5. Agreements At the Center of the Collaboration	3	A meaningful cross-organizational agreement that partners will co-design is at the center of the proposal and tied to impact in one of Docusign's priority areas. The agreement may involve strengthening or scaling an existing agreement or creating a new agreement that builds on the collaboration's established trust, shared history, and governance. This criterion evaluates the clarity, importance, and potential of the agreement itself, and how advancing it will support progress on the shared issue area.	The agreement work is clearly defined, meaningful, and consequential. Applicants explain what the agreement is (or will be) and why it matters for the collaboration's future success. They show how advancing this agreement will improve alignment, coordination, or shared action on the issue area.	The agreement work is identified but partially described; applicants provide some clarity but the importance or connection to the issue is underdeveloped. Reviewers can see potential but lack a full understanding of why this agreement is the right next step.	Agreement work is vague, unclear, or not meaningfully connected to the collaboration's purpose or the shared issue area. Proposal focuses on general collaboration or service-delivery activities rather than agreement-building.
Question 6. Why Agreement Has Been Challenging	1	A clear explanation of the conditions or dynamics that have made alignment challenging in the past — such as misaligned priorities, fragmented decision-making, gaps in information or trust, or structural barriers. This helps reviewers understand why agreement work is timely and necessary, without requiring a technical diagnosis.	Applicants clearly describe specific past challenges that made agreement difficult. The explanation helps reviewers understand what has prevented alignment and why this agreement work is an important next step now. Description is concrete but not overly technical.	Applicants reference challenges, but explanations are general or incomplete. Reviewers can infer why agreement work is needed, but the root dynamics are not clearly articulated.	Applicants do not explain prior challenges or give a cursory statement ("it's hard to collaborate") without detail. Reviewers cannot understand why agreement work is necessary at this point.
Question 7. Intended Outcomes or Changes	2	Clear, meaningful process outcomes that describe what partners hope will shift as a result of strengthening or advancing the agreement. Outcomes should reflect how the agreement process will move the shared issue forward, as opposed to programmatic outputs or service-delivery metrics.	Outcomes are specific, realistic, and clearly connected to the process of building or strengthening the agreement. They describe meaningful shifts in how partners will work together, such as shared understanding of the issue, aligned priorities, improved accountability, or readiness for joint action; and show how these shifts will advance the shared issue area.	Outcomes are identified but somewhat general or mixed; some describe collaboration shifts, while others drift toward service-delivery metrics. The connection between the agreement process and movement on the shared issue is present but underdeveloped.	Outcomes are vague, solely programmatic, or unrelated to the agreement process; unclear how strengthening the agreement will influence collaboration or advance the shared issue.


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