Formation stage. In this stage of collaboration success hinges on the level of shared clarity around purpose, structures, strategies, leadership, and key tasks. Suggested formative evaluation interview questions:

1. How is/was the leader identified?
2. How are/were members recruited and was enough time spent in the recruitment process?
3. How representative is our partnership membership with regard to its purpose?
4. Do leaders and members share a common understanding of the alliances' purpose?
5. Do we have the right people and organizations at the table?
6. Are leaders' and members' roles and responsibilities transparent and understood by all?
7. Do each of us understand why we are here and what we are hoping to accomplish?
8. Are anticipated linkages between the members' parent organizations and the alliance clearly delineated?

  Ordering stage. Once the alliance has been assembled a critical developmental time period ensues. The conversation about the shared purpose of the alliance or community of practice tends to evoke feelings related to urgency, resources, turf, expertise, and each person's willingness to take on tasks and responsibilities. Suggested formative evaluation interview questions:

1. What is the purpose of this alliance, community of practice?
2. What outcomes do we expect to reach?
3. What are our primary activities?
4. What will indicate to us that we are reaching our goals and outcomes?
5. Have we established systems and norms for managing consensus and conflict?
6. Are policies and guidelines in place to achieve our purpose?
7. Do we have the appropriate bylaws, contract, or other agreements in place to govern our partnerships and activities?
8. How is information disseminated to members?
9. What systems are in place for the budgeting and distribution of other resources?
10. What processes exist to address the issues of membership turnover?
11. How will new members be incorporated into the alliance?
12. Have informal leaders begun to emerge?
13. How are these leaders incorporated into the leadership group (i.e., the formal and informal leaders?
14. What benefits and costs does each of us expect to accrue as a result from our participation in the alliance, this project, this community of practice?
15. To what extent do the benefits of participation outweigh the costs of membership?

  Performing stage. In transitioning from ordering to performing, the alliance focuses on safeguarding its resources and activities from external interference and strengthening (or rediscovering) its internal validity and creative energy in pursuit of the accomplishment of its purpose. In the performing phase, the stakeholders are actively operationalizing the various systems that have been established (e.g, communication, financial, personnel, and evaluation) and are executing the specific tasks necessary to accomplish the alliance's goals. Suggested formative evaluation interview questions:

Woodland, R. (accepted for publication). Strengthening organizational collaboration through evaluation: What evaluators need to know and can do. Forthcoming special issue of *Evaluation and Program Planning*

1. Do members understand their individual roles in the context of the alliance?
2. How have roles and responsibilities shifted over time?
3. How successful have members been in putting the goals of the alliance before their own or their organizations' needs?
4. How effectively and/or efficiently are the alliance systems (e.g., information dissemination, resource allocation) working?
5. Do leaders and members acknowledge and address progress and setbacks?
6. How are requirements for additional or different resources identified?
7. How is data being used to inform decision-making and to make mid-course corrections?
8. Are lessons learned used to amend the alliance structures, leadership, and/or process?

   Transforming stage. Over time alliances and teams will likely reach critical milestones and face planned and unforeseen events (such as the addition of a new member or leader). In the transformation stage, the organization and its members use data related to goals and outcomes to determine whether and how to refine, re-configure, or dissolve their collaboration. As a result of this process three possibilities will emerge: the group will choose to formally end; it will continue unchanged; or it will change any or all of its components. Suggested formative evaluation interview questions:

1. What goals have been accomplished, and how satisfied is the group with its performance?
2. What activities have been carried out, and how satisfied is the group with these accomplishments?
3. What events (both foreseen and unplanned) have an impact on our performance?
4. What evidence do we have about our accomplishments?
5. How committed are each of the partners to the purpose of the alliance?
6. Should membership change? If so how?
7. How is the alliance transforming? What factors are precipitating the transformation?
8. To what extent do the leaders, members, and external linkages agree with the decision to transform the alliance?
9. To what extent do we believe the purpose of the alliance has been fulfilled?
10. Should the alliance be adjourned? If so, when? If not, why not?