

Structure for Success: Designing Sustainable Ecosystem Building Initiatives

Many ecosystem building organizations (EBOs) and initiatives are newly launched or informal efforts lacking sufficient funding. To empower long-term ecosystem building efforts in communities of all sizes, geographies, and demographics, there is a significant need to develop and share proven models for structuring EBOs and funding ecosystem building activities.

Your mission, should you choose to accept it...

Develop a resource guide for ecosystem builders to identify organizational models and funding streams that work with their community's unique circumstances and fuel their ecosystem building efforts long-term.

Example Solutions

Starting from a blank page can be difficult—the following sample ideas are here to markup, change, and riff on as you determine the deliverable you will start building today.

- Create a sample budget for to 1) demonstrate how much funding is commonly needed for the various ecosystem building activities and 2) identify promising revenue streams to cover each of the expense categories.
- Design a set of blueprints to show how ecosystem building organizations have been successfully structured to date in a variety of communities.
- Draft a how-to manual for sustainably crowdsourcing grassroots ecosystem building efforts when there is no financial or organizational infrastructure to support the work.
- Develop a table of contents for a future book of case studies on structuring EBOs. Give 5-10 examples of EBO's who have successfully established a sustainable model.

Conversation Starters

Common questions asked by ecosystem builders, that could be explored...

- Which ecosystem building activities should be paid for with public funds? Private donations? Earned revenue?
- How is the structure and funding of an EBO different when it is housed inside or outside of an established economic development institution? What are successful models of institutional and grassroots collaboration?
- How will various factors in a community (size, demographics, location, etc) affect the types of models and funding realistically accessible to an ecosystem builder?