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During these past years, we have seen at first hand that our environment is characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity, what we call in business terms VUCA environments. Breakneck speed and risk (high uncertainty only allows short-term corrections) condition our road map in organizations. We live in a changing society and face a paradigm shift, which may be synonymous with competitive advantage for companies and an opportunity to innovate.

At SERES we would like to speed up that progress. Socially robust firms also have solid economic foundations. Harvard Business Review has changed their methodology for the Best-Performing CEOs in the World ranking. Since 2015, they no longer merely assess economic performance, but also include other criteria related to environmental, social or corporate governance aspects. This reveals their concern and demand for companies to act responsibly, and guarantee their sustainability as requirements for business success.

Companies’ value proposition has also changed, as their commitment to society and focus on people have gained weight. With the aim of facing large-scale challenges, it is increasingly common that organizations adopt a global perspective and form strategic partnerships. Firms look for long-lasting and efficient social initiatives that multiply impact, and align social commitment with business strategy. Let’s not forget that collaboration is one of the keys to competitiveness in today’s organizations.

SERES was founded to smooth the path for companies in a changing context and a world connected in real time. We are 140 companies that meet the challenge of transforming organizations in their approach to social problems. Society and companies are seated at the same table to generate and share value.

We involve top management to embed Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) into their strategy. We work together with a vocation for transformation, acting as a catalyst for change. We design tools aimed at measuring intangible aspects, and we innovate in order to venture into unchartered territory. We push companies out of their comfort zone, establishing the mentality that the more impactful initiatives, the higher the benefit for the company. We tackle a collective challenge that requires the sustained and constant effort of institutions, individuals and governments.

Organizations are a critical lever to responding to the current lack of equality, population increase, aging, deprivation or geopolitical tensions. There is a connection between social and economic progress: shared value, understood as the addition of social and business value. Solving a social problem should in turn imply a positive impact on a corporation's profit and loss account. Without a doubt, social collaboration offers a great opportunity to innovate, adapt to new circumstances, and create competitive advantage, while contributing to social development through each company’s strengths.
Today more than ever, companies are aware of the impact their activities have on society. That is why they have gradually increased their degree of commitment to and involvement in the social problems we face. There are many ways of going about this. Until very recently, organizations used to carry out initiatives and provide services and resources to disadvantaged groups in an isolated way. Although every initiative is valuable, nowadays there is one way to contribute to society much more effectively. A modus operandi capable of dramatically changing the way we understand Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): collaboration projects.

Fundación SERES has been a pioneer in committing to these projects, supporting them and making them become a reality. With its vision, effort, professionalism and good work, it has already managed to connect a large number of companies with the aim of collaborating in the interest of a shared objective: maximizing their impact in order to build a better society.

At Boston Consulting Group we are convinced that the path chosen by Fundación SERES is the right one and that the key to the future of CSR lies in developing collaboration projects. SERES exponentially increases the value of the contribution of companies. By combining their knowledge and capabilities, organizations not only manage to substantially multiply their impact on the groups at which projects are aimed, but also obtain huge benefits, since these projects are more likely to guarantee economic impact, reduce the risks of embarking on a new venture, and maintain the impetus of collaboration, thus making it sustainable.

For us, it is a great pleasure to support Fundación SERES in drawing up this report, which reflects the win-win effect of collaboration projects, both on target groups as well as participating companies. This report summarizes the main lessons learned from the exhaustive study conducted by SERES and BCG, and identifies the different types of collaboration project, as well as their advantages and requirements. Likewise, we provide companies with a clear methodology and guidelines to lay the initial foundations of collaboration, so that projects are developed successfully.

Without a doubt, collaboration projects do not add; they multiply.
SERES aims to promote the strategic business initiatives that contribute to improving social reality in a comprehensive manner. As part of these initiatives, SERES encourages companies to involve and participate in collaboration projects.

These projects emerge as a new action model to respond to an increasingly complex society whose requirements can only be met through innovative solutions, in line with the constant changes and progress in society.

SERES is committed to collaboration projects as part of business strategy by turning them into a competitive advantage for organizations. These projects imply forming partnerships between different stakeholders that share skills and competences to solve a given social problem with initiatives linked to business strategy that aim at financial sustainability. Fundación SERES encourages firms to improve society by means of responsible initiatives aligned with their corporate strategy and that create value for all. Its main objective is to inspire strategic social management.

There are several ways of collaborating when it comes to facing a social challenge. Efforts should be made to foster all types of collaboration: public-private, between companies and the third sector, or with social entrepreneurs. However, this report focuses mainly on collaboration between at least two companies.

Unlike other associations, collaboration projects are based on an action plan, designed and agreed on by all the stakeholders to attain previously defined shared objectives. Each member is responsible for its own work, but also shares collective responsibility with the rest of the team. This is the main characteristic that distinguishes these projects from those carried out by traditional associations, in which companies provide funding but do not collaborate in the design and development of other aspects of the project.

### Five key premises that make collaboration and projects feasible:

1. **Generation of social impact**
   They should provide a significant benefit to society, transform social contexts, and be scalable.

2. **Economic impact**
   They should ensure a financial return for participating entities.

3. **Colaboración entre empresas**
   They should all participate in the project on an equal footing and adjust the collaboration model to their interaction.

4. **Strategic approach**
   They should maximize their social potential through a strategic alignment with company operations.

5. **Incentive for all collaborating organizations**
   They should offer an incentive that keeps organizations within the project.
During a collaboration project, information is shared between companies and the rest of stakeholders, such as NGOs or bodies in the public administration, and efforts are made to enhance the project continuously by analyzing its implications and the lessons learned.

Collaboration projects may arise from different situations: an observed social problem, previous identification of willingness to collaborate among several entities and companies, a social project that turns into a sustainable business, an already existing collaborative business that is adapted to cater to a disadvantaged group, or a partnership between companies to achieve economies of scale.

Regardless of their origin, all collaboration projects should go through a series of phases in order to be successful: definition of objectives and guidelines; detailed design; execution of pilot tests; and implementation of the full project in the target market.

The initiatives carried out by those companies that decide to develop a collaboration project have a multiplier effect and achieve a higher impact than they would have had if resources and efforts had been employed individually.

Moreover, collaboration projects help achieve higher efficiency levels due to the increase in scale. These projects create opportunities that can only be seized through collaboration since they remove entry barriers at different points of the value chain and provide a larger contact network to access important figures and bodies. When organizations participate in a collaboration project, they gain significant experience as they share knowledge and best practices, expand their areas of influence, and reduce individual risk.

**Four key factors increasing the chances of success:**

1. **Clear benefit for the collaborating entities (win-win).**
2. **Appointment of a person responsible for project coordination.**
3. **Engagement of decision makers from collaborating entities.**
4. **Regular project monitoring.**
What are collaboration projects?
n the last few years, we have witnessed a society in constant evolution, with increasingly complex environments where there is only place for innovative solutions in line with new developments.

To battle with this new scenario, organizations should create new models, not only in business terms but also their way of dealing with the social challenges they encounter. SERES is committed to collaboration projects as part of business strategy by turning them into a competitive advantage for companies.

Michael E. Porter, a Professor at Harvard Business School, and Mark R. Kramer, co-founder of the firm FSG, defined the term “shared value” as a new concept that refers to the role played by companies in society going beyond social responsibility. Accordingly, organizations should devote themselves not only to mitigating damage, but also creating new models and innovative solutions that promote social progress.

A firm that evolves towards a shared value model will be aware of the social needs existing in its environment and of the real benefits it can provide. With this in mind, it can design new services capable of satisfying social needs, find solutions that limit the development of the supply chain, or make joint efforts with other organizations in order to strengthen operations in a given geographic area. All these solutions increase value chain efficiency and provide better access to specialized information. At his presentation to the Technology Panel of the World Economic Forum in Davos in 2018, Dan Schulman, Chairman and CEO of Paypal, stated the need to rethink business models and the importance of collaboration across companies in order to successfully meet consumer requirements and needs.

Wendy Woods, global leader of the Social Impact practice area at BCG, highlights the relevance of the role organizations play as drivers of social change. She underlines the need to go one step further in order to achieve a long-lasting impact, outlining as key factor the introduction of social impact as part of the company’s business.

Collaboration is essential and this is reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which establish a global action framework crucial for transforming economic, social and environmental realities. Adopted in 2015 by world leaders and the UN, and heirs to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), they define the required strategic lines of action on which governments, society and, for the first time, the private sector are called on to work jointly with the aim of ensuring prosperity for all: collaboration is essential to enabling solutions that make it possible to attain these objectives.

The concept of ally, which is explained later, describes the working methodology developed by SERES with the support of BCG in order to boost collaboration across companies for the purpose of creating social action projects linked to business strategy. This evolution towards new action models represents a great step forward in overcoming the social challenges that beset us.

The term “shared value” is defined as a new concept that refers to the role played by companies in society going beyond social responsibility.

This report analyzes how collaboration across different stakeholders can foster high-level initiatives with social impact. There are several collaboration options. In particular, this study focuses on collaboration between two or more companies, referred to from now on as “collaboration projects”. This model combines organizations so that they can solve a certain social problem by sharing resources and skills, depending on their

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3 United Nations Development Program.
4 Eight quantified goals to eradicate poverty in its different dimensions were adopted by 191 heads of state at the Millennium Summit in 2000.
distinct competences. The strategic approach for companies when forming part of a collaboration project, as well as their joint participation in project design and execution, distinguish collaboration projects from other social associations to which companies may provide funding, but there is no effective collaboration across participants.

An interesting example of a successful collaboration project is Together for the Employment of the Most Vulnerable, led by the Accenture Foundation. When the problem of unemployment becomes evident in particularly sensitive social groups, a set of companies, public organizations, NGOs and social entrepreneurs focus on defining a shared objective and joining forces to find a solution to that problem. They then develop this initiative, which looks to increase the opportunities for the group by generating different diagnosis, measurement, training and funding tools. This project has managed to make its way through many other initiatives launched by different organizations. The trigger for success was that a group of business leaders and communities decided to leave their individual agendas behind to embark on a shared project.
Together for the Employment of the Most Vulnerable
Scalable solutions

The initiative aims at developing solutions that favor the employment and self-employment of the most vulnerable groups, made up by people with difficulties finding a job or whose social and labor circumstances (e.g. low educational level, people older than 45, disabled people, etc.) make it hard to leave poverty behind.

To attain its objective, the association tries to join forces with companies, bodies within the public administration and the third sector. This initiative is led by the Accenture Foundation and has been in place since 2012, with more than 1,300 entities involved6.

6More information on the initiative can be found in the project base prepared by SERES in collaboration with BCG.
SERES’ vision: Five fundamental premises for designing a collaboration project
Collaboration across companies is one of SERES’s value levers. This foundation has been working with BCG for several years on different projects to study and implement various cases and ways of working across stakeholders, and see how their impact generates value for society. In this sense, the *Feasibility Study for Launching a Social Collaboration Project* includes more than 70 national and international collaboration projects with transformative power, starting from a previous database of more than 150 projects analyzed.

These projects have been integrated into a public knowledge platform, designed to spread knowledge of collaboration cases and promote this type of work among different stakeholders. The diversity of collaboration projects in terms of the stakeholders that participate or can participate, the relationship models and the topics covered show the potential for this work proposition.

Such projects have been analyzed using a proprietary methodology to understand the degrees of collaboration and their ability to generate impact. This analysis has allowed a series of fundamental premises to be extracted that, to a lesser or greater extent, should be present in every collaboration project: generation of social impact, economic impact, the collaboration itself across companies, their approach as a strategic project (aligned with company operations) and the contribution of benefits to all collaborating entities. We take it for granted that, without these premises, it is extremely difficult for the project to reach the desired impact and be sustainable over time.

### 2.1 GENERAR IMPACTO SOCIAL

We understand as social impact bringing about a significant improvement or benefit for society. As it is complex to quantify this dimension, the following evaluation criteria have been defined:

**a) Transformation of primary or secondary social situations.** The project should include action to transform the social reality of people with a certain need, whether primary (health, food, etc.) or secondary (mobility, technology, etc.), offering permanent solutions where possible. Furthermore, it is necessary to analyze whether the project covers these needs directly or rather opens access to other resources and means of covering them. For instance, an initiative that promotes employability for a vulnerable group satisfies a primary need indirectly, since it provides a job that, in turn, meets other primary needs such as housing or food. On the other hand, a project that offers people with a certain need discounts to buy a car would be meeting a secondary need.

**b) Beneficiaries and scalability.** All social projects should aim at improving the life of the target group. However, the degree of improvement and, therefore, the social impact achieved, will be determined by the number of people who benefit, as well as by project scalability.

We refer to scalability as the ability of each project to improve and grow in a sustainable way without compromising the quality of the service it renders. A social project initially aimed at training disabled people could (if the project is scalable) improve the service by offering the possibility of doing an internship or having an interview with affiliated companies, or might increase the number of beneficiaries by extending the geographic area or including new target groups.

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6Conducted in 2017, this study (in Spanish *Estudio de viabilidad para el lanzamiento de un proyecto social de colaboración*) is the latest version of the joint work carried out by Fundación SERES and BCG in the study of collaboration projects.
2.2 ENSURE ECONOMIC IMPACT

For a collaboration project to be possible, generate the desired impact and be sustainable over time and in financial terms, the participating organizations should achieve a benefit that guarantees the feasibility of their participation and/or these projects should generate economic value by themselves, without involving a deficit for companies.

By setting economic impact indicators, such as the variation in beneficiaries’ purchasing power or the reduction in companies’ operating costs as a result of the project, it will be possible to measure the return required for collaboration projects to be feasible. For example, improving the diagnosis of diseases and developing more efficient and cost-effective therapies for patients could lead different organizations to share their data on treatments and their knowledge to facilitate the diagnosis of diseases.

2.3 COLLABORATION ACROSS COMPANIES

In collaboration projects, the number of companies involved is as important as their relationship model.7

There is not an optimal number of stakeholders, but there should be a real collaboration model for them. In an ideal model, organizations should interact on an equal footing, and take responsibility for the joint success of the project.

Collaboration is the cornerstone for developing projects effectively, but it is not the easiest element to achieve. Some barriers are erected during collaboration, e.g. the impossibility of sharing information or resources, or the potential media impact of the undertaking. According to a recent study8, all this makes cross-company collaboration look like game theory, whereby each participant analyzes the other stakeholders’ decisions before acting, without having an overview of the project.

Thanks to the broad knowledge accumulated by the group, companies optimize the R&D processes applicable to drugs and treatments, thus resulting in the reduction of R&D&i costs and the design of drugs, and therefore, cutting treatment costs to benefit the group to which the collaboration project is addressed.

One possible way of overcoming these barriers is having a gradual relationship model, starting from a simple complementary work on the same target group to gradually migrate to more complex collaboration models.

Companies should interact on an equal footing, and share responsibility and success.

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7 Although the scope of this report is cross-company collaboration, other entities, such as social organizations and bodies within the public administration, can also participate in the initiatives.

8 Jacob Harold. The collaboration game: solving the puzzle of nonprofit partnership, Stanford social innovation review, 2017.
2.4 FIND STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Companies and bodies may collaborate in different ways in projects. Nonetheless, to maximize the social potential of projects the subject should be aligned with a company’s operations or, in the case of social organizations or bodies within the public administration, with their experience and competences.

For instance, where the project aim is to enable access to food and improve agricultural production, the role of an agricultural company might be to train farmers in deprived areas on cultivation techniques; of an infrastructures firm to enhance local connections to enable freight transportation, or piped water supply systems to facilitate irrigation; and of a distribution company to lend its facilities to distribute products through the different channels. All the companies involved in the project contribute their best capabilities to the process within their business framework, fitting in projects with a positive impact into their business strategy. However, if each firm merely provided funds, commitment would easily dilute over time and impact would be far from expected.

In order to strengthen the commitment of participating companies, their strategy and interests should be also aligned with the project. A firm that needs to attract talent for its stores within a certain region and sees the opportunity to train a group to fill the positions will be more likely to remain committed in the long term. Strategic alignment provides the project with sufficient significance and makes it easier to engage key decision makers.

This makes it possible to turn social projects into a competitive advantage that helps identify returns for the company along different dimensions: economic return, better positioning, market opening, risk management, etc.

Fundación SERES believes that for the strategic fit to be effective, it is necessary to use tools that allow measuring and quantifying the impact of corporate social responsibility. That is why tools are provided to translate CSR\(^9\) initiatives into value for the company, calculating their impact on the P&L account. In addition, these tools bring CSR language closer to the rest of company areas, so that initiatives are cross cutting and integrated into the company’s NDA.

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Strategic alignment provides the project with sufficient significance and makes it easier to engage key decision makers.
2.5 ALL ENTITIES WIN

The companies and bodies that participate in the collaboration project are committed to finding some type of benefit that encourages them to stay involved. Ideally, benefits should be linked to the P&L account. This contributes to project growth and sustainability, as it becomes an incentive that encourages firms to keep on participating.

Companies of different weight and size interact in collaboration projects, which may lead to problems when it comes to distributing benefits. In order to guarantee an equal distribution across participants, an external body could coordinate and objectively distribute benefits according to previously established criteria. For example, this is the case with Action Tank, an organization with an efficient social business model to fight poverty and also capable of setting up new businesses.
**Action Tank**

An ecosystem of companies, NGOs, public institutions and researchers

*Action Tank* is a non-profit association founded in 2019 by Martin Hirsch, former French High Commissioner for Active Solidarity against Poverty, Emmanuel Faber, CEO of Danone, and Jacques Berger, HEC Chair of Social Entrepreneurship and Poverty.

The association is made up of multinational companies, NGOs and researchers with the aim of mitigating poverty and social exclusion in France. *Action Tank* helps large companies develop and maintain social impact projects with a feasible business model. It thus responds to the challenge of contributing to a competitive and healthy economic, social and business environment based around social companies.

Its philosophy is based on three key pillars: leveraging on social businesses to fight poverty, creating ecosystems of partners around large companies to develop new business models, and providing empirical evidence through experimentation. The pilot projects carried out by the association allow it to improve its business model hypotheses continuously.

Why start a collaboration project?
The participation of companies in collaboration projects increases the total impact generated by projects, but also represents a competitive advantage for that firm since it means addressing social problems by developing new models that form part of its strategic vision.

Additionally, this way of collaboration offers significant upsides to all the participating entities: they benefit from a multiplier effect, achieve higher efficiency levels, capitalize on new business opportunities, rely on a broad network of contacts and others’ experience, extend their catchment area, and mitigate the risks associated with the projects.

### 3.1 MULTIPLIER EFFECT

If a company decides to use a series of resources to tackle a project, it will achieve quantifiable results that will allow improving the impact on the beneficiary groups and their social reality. For instance, a firm specialized in training could allocate resources to train individuals at risk of social exclusion and equip them to perform a particular job. A maintenance and services company could hire individuals from a given group so that they carry out tasks related to the maintenance of parks and gardens.

In both cases, they are contributing resources and efforts individually. However, the impact would be much higher if both companies aligned their objectives and offered training to maintain parks and gardens, with the possibility of doing an internship at the maintenance firm. The benefits are clear: not only would the training company train the individuals, but it would also offer them the possibility of finding a job; the maintenance firm would increase its impact by receiving more qualified workers to fill the position; and the target group would meet its social need of employability with a long-term vision.

### 3.2 EFICIENCIA

The participation of different entities in a collaboration project enables economies of scale and allows sharing infrastructures to optimize costs.

The participation of different entities in a collaboration project can create economies of scale and higher efficiencies, since the amount of work increases. Moreover, best practices can be shared and implemented at the rest of the entities and infrastructures shared to optimize costs.

When different companies collaborate in the development of a product or service, the number of units to be produced increases and production unit costs decrease as a result of purchasing raw materials on a larger scale and sharing the associated machinery or infrastructure costs among collaborating entities. This allows participants to leverage one another to perform different project activities, achieving economic advantages.

In addition, by sharing best practices, all collaborating entities can adopt them to operate more efficiently and obtain better results.
3.3 NEW POSSIBILITIES

Working together offers new opportunities that would be unattainable if companies participated in projects separately. Cross-company collaboration helps remove entry barriers along the entire value chain or even barriers to enter complementary markets. Collaboration gives rise to projects dealing with complementary products that, in isolation, would not reach a significant market.

Let’s imagine, for instance, a car manufacturer who offers vehicles at a low price to individuals at risk of exclusion. If these individuals do not have the necessary resources to take out an insurance policy or maintain the vehicle, the project is unlikely to be successful. Nevertheless, if the company collaborates with repair garages or insurers that facilitate vehicle maintenance, the project is much more likely to succeed.

Cross-company collaboration helps remove entry barriers along the entire value chain or even barriers to enter complementary markets.
3.4 CONTACT NETWORK

A difficulty many of these projects face is the lack of access to the stakeholders and bodies needed to boost them.

The mere fact of involving different companies, public entities, NGOs and social entrepreneurs in the same project contributes to overcoming this drawback. The lack of access to or the difficulties gaining access to contacts may slow down the momentum of good ideas, which calls for the participation of companies and their respective networks, whose weight is usually linked to company size and social roots.

3.5 EXPERIENCE

Share the knowledge and best practices of all participants benefits the project but also each of its members. An example would be an NGO that understands the social needs of a particular group but lacks the means and experience to satisfy these. Working together with companies that have these resources and experience means that both participants grow and complement one another.

The firms involved in a collaboration project mutually benefit from the knowledge and best practices of the others.
3.6 CATCHMENT AREA

Increasing the catchment area is a clear benefit derived from collaboration projects given that these always offer participants access to sought-after groups which would otherwise be hard to reach. An example of this would be a collaboration project developed in a geographical area where one of the entities does not have any experience while the other has been active there for a number of years. The participant wishing to enter this unknown area would undoubtedly benefit from the market knowledge of other collaborators.

3.7 RISK MINIMIZATION

The presence of diverse stakeholders within the same project helps mitigate the individual risk assumed by each participant upon joining. In the case of companies, for example, this reduction of the risk makes it more attractive to enter markets characterized by great uncertainty, in which a company would not enter on its own, or to experiment with new products or services which they would not be bold enough to offer without backing from others.

Collaboration helps mitigate the individual risk of each participant.
How do collaboration projects arise?
Collaboration projects with social and economic impact may start from five different points of departure and, consequently, follow a series of paths consistent with the diversity of initiatives proposed.

Projects can arise from different starting situations:

- An observed social problem
- Identified collaborating entities
- An existing social project
- An existing collaborative business
- A partnership to achieve economies of scale

### 4.1 AN OBSERVED SOCIAL PROBLEM

An organization (or individual) that is familiar with or identifies a social problem and subsequently looks for a solution and the necessary collaborators.

The *Generation* project is an example. This is an initiative aimed at closing the gap between youth unemployment and the difficulty faced by employers in finding employees with the right skills for specific positions. Once it had identified this problem, McKinsey & Company set out to train young people to enable them to join the job market and fill this gap. This program provides training focused on industries with high growth potential and within these industries the collaborators needed to promote the employment of these young people are identified.

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**Generation**

**Helping young talent get started**

This social initiative led by McKinsey & Company, in which employees, governments and educators collaborate, was set up in 2014 to promote the employability of young people, connecting their skills with the needs of businesses. Participants receive training in professions with a major profile and high demand and are offered the chance to do an internship in the companies that collaborate with the program. They also receive support in their professional career.

At present, Generation is active in five countries (Spain, Kenya, USA, Mexico and India), over 47 cities and 104 areas with a socially deprived environment

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11 You can find more information about the initiative in the project base prepared by SERES in collaboration with BCG.
**4.2 IDENTIFIED COLLABORATING ENTITIES**

Linking of one or more organizations (or individuals) with other voluntary collaborating entities, and then identifying the social problem and propose a solution. This is a less common starting point.

This is the case with some companies that wish to participate in collaboration projects but have not defined the scope and final objective. With this aim in mind, they turn to Action Tank as a collaborator whose experience in developing social projects allows it to support the definition and design of the final collaboration project.

**4.3 AN EXISTING SOCIAL PROJECT**

Transformation of a collaborative social project with no economic impact by investing in a sustainable business.

The Escuela Ana Bella for the empowerment of women is an example of this starting point. It came about as a social project started by Danone to empower women who had survived gender-based violence. Thanks to this empowerment, the School is able to find new collaborator companies to take part in the program and where the women who have received training can find work afterwards. This idea thus contains the element of economic return in the form of providing professionals for business activities.

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**Escuela Ana Bella for the empowerment of women**

*Training and work experience for women who have survived gender-based violence*

Created in 2012 with support from the Danone Social Foundation and *Momentum Task Force*, the school’s mission is to train women who have survived gender-based violence so that they can release their potential, which they focus on their entry into the job market as empowered women.

It offers professional training, individual *coaching* and job opportunities as ambassadors of the brand. It collaborates with various companies where these women can fill staffing requirements, mainly in the direct promotion of the brand with customers and potential customers.
4.4 AN EXISTING COLLABORATIVE BUSINESS

Adaptation of a collaboration project, this time without social impact, which starts to serve a disadvantaged sector as though this were a new market in terms of business development and economic performance.

The partnership between Mercedes and Matternet is a good illustration of this model. This is an initiative with social vocation which develops autonomous drones intended for the transportation of small-sized goods over distances of up to 20 or 30 kilometers. Although this has still to be implemented for disadvantaged communities, Matternet’s co-founder stresses the enormous potential of the use of drones in social projects in view of their ability to transport objects which weigh little (such as medicine or documents) to areas of limited access.

Vision Van
Access to deprived areas without the need of human intervention

This project was conceived by the technology company Matternet, which provides drones to distribute small-sized goods, and the automotive company Mercedes, which has created Vision Van, a van which is ideal for providing the support needed for this kind of drones.

This is a new type of delivery which could change the way of distributing small packages over relatively short distances. The roof of the van functions as a launch and landing pad for Matternet’s zones, which are autonomous devices that can collect and transport a package weighing two kilos over a distance of 20 kilometers12.

Although the project has not yet been launched, this partnership makes it possible to reach locations not accessible to people. This is because the van is able to reach sites inaccessible by road such as rural areas or places destroyed by natural disasters.

12 You can find more information about the initiative in the project base prepared by SERES in collaboration with BCG.
4.5 A PARTNERSHIP TO ACHIEVE ECONOMIES OF SCALE

A number of entities with a known problem or objective in common which can be resolved by means of projects requiring a large investment. These entities join together to create a business with social impact, where the individual contribution of each company is less and therefore the undertaking is more feasible for all of them.

Accelerating Medicines Partnership is an example. This is a public-private partnership aimed at reducing the time and cost of research needed to develop new diagnostic methods and treatment of autoimmune diseases. Normally, a pharmaceutical company invests large amounts on research in the hope of a return given that this is a large market or one with huge potential. In markets with less acquisitive power or when the diseases are less common, investment does not meet the expected return. Thus collaboration between a number of companies reduces the individual investment required while also making it possible to recover that investment and achieve the desired social impact.

**Accelerating Medicines Partnership**
Collaboration between biopharmaceutical companies and various public institutions

This was created with the aim of achieving a better understanding of genetic mutations which cause autoimmune diseases and of developing new forms of diagnosis and more effective treatments for the affected tissue. Although the initial development approach was focused on research into rheumatoid arthritis and systemic lupus erythematosus, Accelerating Medicines Partnership has left open the option of investigation into other autoimmune diseases.

The ultimate aim of this partnership is to increase the number of diagnoses and therapies for patients and reduce the time and the cost needed to develop them. The National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Public Administration of the United States, ten companies from the pharmaceutical industry and a number of NGOs work together in the initiative.
How do we create a system that nurtures the creation of collaboration projects? ally methodology
To nurture the creation of collaboration projects, BCG and SERES have drawn up an action plan structured in eight phases which form part of a methodology called ally. Collaboration between the different participating entities starts to bud when they go through the methodology’s eight progressive phases discussed below.

The methodology’s first phase has been presented to and validated by different participating companies at the annual event on social innovation held by Fundación SERES: Sharing. At this meeting, the collaboration projects between companies in Spain and abroad having been presented during five consecutive years. This first phase (Raising Awareness) together with the second (Preparation), third (Maturation of Ideas) and fourth (Presentation of Proposals) serves SERES as a framework for the creation of an ecosystem which encourages the nurturing of collaboration projects.

The last four phases, which are common to any successful project, will be developed and led by companies that decide to take part in a collaboration project: the fifth phase represents the Definition of Objectives and Guidelines; the sixth, the Detailed Design of the Project. The seventh phase consists in launching and validating the project on a reduced scale through pilot tests while the last phase is full-scale market implementation.

It is important to bear in mind that for any collaboration project a series of economic and human resources will be needed, as well as a project leader and technical manager with previous experience in charge of the action plan and the

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3. Maturation of Ideas
Ideas and potential projects are chosen and work done how to drive development.

4. Presentation of Proposals
Proposals from the previous phase are presented to potential collaborators.

2. Preparation
Participants are identified and invited for the maturation of ideas. These are mostly companies but it is also possible that social entrepreneurs, NGOs and public entities take part.

5. Definition of Objectives and Guidelines

1. Raising Awareness
Information about the collaboration projects is disseminated and benchmark examples shared.
The main goal of SERES will be to stimulate the cyclical process of the first four phases and support the leadership of pioneering companies at each phase.

coordination of the different entities involved.

The support of entrepreneurs and social organizations can be a key aspect throughout the last four phases due to their experience and knowledge with disadvantaged groups and social projects.

In the fifth and sixth phases, Definition of Objectives and Guidelines and Detailed Design of the Project, it is important to maintain regular working sessions to contribute and develop ideas at a high level, share best practices and review the progress of the project design (including the action plan for its implementation). In the seventh phase, Pilot Tests, it will be necessary to launch the pilot within a limited scope. In addition, in this phase the progress of the project implementation has to be reviewed and information shared at regular meetings, incorporating the relevant adjustments. In the last phase, Implementation, the project will be launched in its total scope, and regular meetings held to review its development.

As it progresses, it will be necessary to appoint a person responsible for each collaborating entity so that there is a clear interlocutor at the beginning of each phase. There are also specific milestones at each stage: in the first one it is advisable to present the high-level design to the decision makers at the companies, and in the second and third phases, the responsible individuals from the participating entities have to sign a new agreement, where necessary, to allocate the necessary resources and keep moving forward. In the last phase, the project results and progress will be presented within the companies and in public forums.

You can access the information about the meetings in SERES Sharing
Key success factors
Collaboration projects with social and economic impact have a number of key success factors, similar to those found in any project or business. Their definition should also take into previous knowledge and the conditions of the collective success described by J. Kania and M. Kramer14. In particular, four key factors are considered to make a collaboration project successful:

- Benefit for all participating companies
- Appointment of a project coordinator
- Involvement of decision makers
- Regular monitoring of the project

6.1 BENEFIT FOR ALL PARTICIPATING COMPANIES

All participating companies must be able to obtain a value proportional to their contribution and which they must also be able to perceive (win-win).

This is the case with the M-Pesa initiative. This is a project with a clear social vocation, aimed at people without access to bank accounts in different emerging countries. Currently, it has more than 30,000 distributors in different countries around the world and has been able to offer transfer, savings and credit services to millions of people. At the same time, the collaborating entities obtain a commission for the transfers and operations carried out through the M-Pesa system, providing a clear benefit for each of the participating companies.

M-Pesa
Access to banking services using mobile phone connectivity

Project launched in 2007 by Vodafone for Safaricom and Vodacom, main network operators in Kenya and Tanzania, to offer a branchless banking service and facilitate simple banking operations, such as mobile phone payments, money forwarding or cash withdrawal at ATMs for people without an active bank account.

Today, it serves millions of people, mainly in Kenya and Tanzania, but also in other countries such as Afghanistan, South Africa, or India. This is the most successful mobile financial service in developing economies.

6.2 APPOINTMENT OF A PROJECT COORDINATOR

This is a person, team or organization with which there is no conflict of interest.

*Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance*, is a good example. The project’s aim is to achieve equitable access to vaccines in countries with fewer resources. In Spain, it works with the Alianza Empresarial para la Vacunación Infantil (Business Alliance for Child Vaccination), which is committed to the fight against child mortality.

*Alianza empresarial para la vacunación infantil*

**Contribution to infant healthcare within the framework of a global initiative**

This was created in 2008 by the Fundación Bancaria “La Caixa” (foundation of a Spanish bank) as part of the *Gavi Alliance* international initiative, which belongs to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Another participant is the Institute for Global Health of Barcelona which is a strategic ally due to its knowledge in the healthcare field.

Different Spanish companies have adhered to this alliance to combat child mortality. As part of the program, CaixaBank makes available to the Alliance its network of offices, through which it provides information to all those Spanish companies interested in joining the cause.

In addition to channeling the economic contributions and ensuring that they are destined entirely to the program, La Caixa Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation double the contributions from the private sector, and multiply individual donations by four.
6.3 INVOLVEMENT OF DECISION MAKERS

Decision makers should be involved in the collaborating entities from the outset. These should be people able to validate and approve the human and economic resources required on behalf of their entity.

Danone’s Malin Project, which offers discounts on nutritional food for families with limited resources, has clearly committed responsible individuals at each of the project’s collaborating entities. The pediatric experts who helped to set up the program count on support from Jean-Jacques Elediam (President of the French Red Cross), Christophe Delacourt (President of the French Society of Pediatrics) and all the entire board of the French Association of Ambulatory Pediatrics, who all take part.

Emmanuel Faber (CEO of Danone) and Jacques Berger (Director of Action Tank) are also directly involved. In this way, the subsidiary of Danone, Bledina, finances the discount vouchers while Action Tank contributes its experience in social projects.

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Malin Project
More than 4,000 families registered in the program

Under the Malin Project launched in 2011, Danone sells nutritional food under the Bledina (subsidiary of Danone) and Gallia brands with a discount of between 25% and 40% to families with children from 6 to 24 months old and few resources. The Malin Project is aimed at pregnant women and children from families with economic problems and/or social difficulties. The company also carries out specific educational programs about nutrition.

The program began with four pilots in Grenoble, Villefranche-sur-Saône, Loire-Atlantique and Savoy, and in 2015 it was extended to northeastern Paris. There are plans to launch it throughout the country in the near future.
6.4 REGULAR MONITORING OF THE PROJECT

It is necessary to monitor the project and have total transparency to manage it. It is essential to establish indicators to monitor the progress of the project and to achieve the set objectives and goals.

These must be defined and agreed upon by the participating companies at the beginning of the project or of each project phase. Areas for improvement can be identified based on an exhaustive monitoring of these indicators. This is completed with regular and fluent communication between all the stakeholders involved in the process, regardless of their degree of participation.

The example chosen to illustrate this success factor is Mobiliz-Garage Renault Solidaire.

The project uses a series of measurement parameters to monitor exhaustively the number of vehicles that they repair and sell at lower prices to users with problems in entering the job market. At the same time, they keep track of the return that this represents for the collaborating companies and quantify the social impact achieved.

This monitoring has allowed them to identify the areas for improvement and achieve continuous growth since the creation of the project in 2012.
**Mobiliz-Garage Renault Solidaire**

Network of garages in France with discounts for people in precarious situations

Project created in 2012 by Renault in view of the importance of mobility in their own vehicles for the population with few resources. This is a group that tends to live at a distance from their workplace in areas with a poor public transport infrastructure or who have complicated schedules.

Renault promoted together with entrepreneurs from its network of garages, a series of solidarity establishments for the repair of vehicles at an affordable price, with discounts of between 30% and 60%. The initiative also includes NGOs and public institutions that collaborate in identifying potential beneficiaries.

Since 2013, the initiative also includes the possibility of buying second-hand vehicles. It is already available today in 300 garages.
Next steps
Having defined what is a collaborative social project, how stakeholders benefit and what advantages the companies carrying them out receive, it remains to establish the following steps to put the projects into practice. SERES seeks to make collaboration projects more widely known and help companies on this journey. That is why it works in close collaboration with them, to guide them and facilitate their interaction with other companies, social organizations and entrepreneurs.

A database has been published with examples of collaboration projects in Spain and internationally, which can be accessed. It can be seen from this that this is a growing movement that caters to different social problems depending on the context and the strategic activity of the participants.

In order to involve more companies, the Fundación SERES makes an encounter platform available to them to build a common agenda, with key social issues to address collaboratively. SERES encourages companies that have identified an interesting topic and believe in the potential of collaboration to achieve greater social impact when they embark on the adventure of collaborative projects from a strategic point of view. That’s how the big stories start.

SERES wants to position itself as a benchmark in raising awareness of collaboration projects, so it makes available to companies all the necessary information about this new model of social project. It also provides different work groups to facilitate the search for new collaborators together with those who develop projects to build a better future together.

It’s time to act.

Adding to multiply!

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DO YOU LEAD OR BELONG TO A COLLABORATION PROJECT?

Add it to the movement, make it known.
Get in touch with SERES.

Visit [http://www.fundacionseres.org](http://www.fundacionseres.org) and fill out the form.

Thank you for your interest.
8
Testimonials
We are witnessing a new paradigm of cooperation between different stakeholders who understand that the current challenges cannot be resolved individually.

The collaboration between companies and social organizations has been broached and we are experiencing a gradual evolution in the relationship of companies with society. It is increasingly common for collaboration in industry to address global challenges relating to the development and birth of strategic alliances among businesses or between business and other organizations.

The strategies adopted by a company in its relationship with society are gradually evolving.

Of course, the strategies adopted by a company in its relationship with society are gradually evolving.

In fact, consumers and workers actively seek to be part of responsible projects. Many companies make sense mainly in terms of intangibles, which already represent 80% of their value. At SERES, we identify trends and help companies connect to society so that we all grow together. We are an observatory of international models that provide solutions to social challenges and we aim to find their innovative and practical application.

In this context, responsible leadership is an opportunity and undoubtedly an obligation: leaders have in their hands the chance to transform organizations and establish active listening with their stakeholders. One way is to inspire connecting pathways, because a solid leader must ask the right questions and also have the answers. If leaders do not understand the changes that are taking place, others will not follow, and they are the ones who must inspire us right now. The traditional leader has always wanted to have total control. But now the leaders best able to mobilize and motivate others will be the most successful.

Because we aspire towards this relationship between business and society, we have worked closely with stakeholders such as Action Tank, who involve companies in the development of collaboration projects with social impact. We believe in collaboration to maximize the social value of corporate performance and we work to position it as a strategic line of business within companies. In recent years, the collaboration has highlighted Sharing, our annual social innovation event, and now we seek to go further, mobilizing action. At the 2017 edition, we presented the cases of seven companies that already have collaboration project initiatives in progress or being designed, and through this report we seek to contribute to a knowledge base that encourages others to join this collective challenge.

SERES was created to inspire and face the challenge presented by the transformation of companies to assume their role in dealing with social problems. Today we are 140 companies, around 70% of the IBEX 35 and approximately 30% of GDP. The Foundation’s goal is to guarantee the strategic vision of collaboration projects and to position their social interventions as key initiatives for organizations, capable of offering value for business and society.

Lucila García
Deputy General Manager
Fundación SERES
It has been a huge privilege to work hand-in-hand with SERES on the study of collaboration projects and the preparation of this report.

The analysis of the different initiatives has highlighted the multiple advantages of collaborative social projects compared to more traditional ones: they are more efficient, achieve greater impact over a wider catchment area, benefit from a broader collective experience of best practices, and involve lower risk. The study reveals, among other interesting conclusions, that the most successful collaboration projects have a number of key factors in common, such as the clear definition of the benefit for the participating entities, the appointment of a project coordinator, the regular monitoring of the project results and, above all, the involvement of senior management with decision-making power at each participating company. At BCG, we share the vision of SERES on the role of companies as drivers of the changes needed to improve an ever more complex social reality. Collaboration projects are a unique opportunity for companies to work towards a common goal and generate social change on a large scale.

We strongly believe that more and more companies will be joining this new way of addressing social problems, and that SERES will play a fundamental role as a catalyst in this transformation.

At BCG, we share the vision of SERES on the role of companies as drivers of the changes needed to improve an ever more complex social reality.

Sebastian Bak
Principal
The Boston Consulting Group
Study methodology
In preparing this report, several analyses were carried out to obtain in-depth knowledge of different types of collaboration projects, as well as the benefits that these have for the companies involved in them.

More than 140 projects from different countries have been identified and analyzed, and the particularly outstanding cases in terms of collaboration selected – more than 70 – and divided into five specific axes: industry, action lever, geographic area, type and degree of impact, and degree of collaboration.

9.1 INDUSTRY
The projects have been classified according to the sector to which both the project itself and the collaborating companies belong. These industries might belong to the food, education, finance, mobility, health, or other sectors. It should be noted that the food and education sectors generally show a greater degree of collaboration than others and usually generate a high social impact.

9.2 ACTION LEVER
The main element in this classification is the mechanism used to achieve the project goal. Includes: advice, support in entering the job market, discounts for inclusion, donation of goods or services, financing, investment in R&D&i or infrastructure and others.

9.3 GEOGRAPHIC AREA
Projects have also been classified according to where they were implemented. We distinguish between projects carried out solely in Spain, those implemented in other developed or emerging countries, and those put into practice across several geographic areas. In Spain, most projects take the form of providing support to people entering the job market; in other developed countries, they mainly address discounts for inclusion; those that include emerging countries in their approach tend to involve investment in infrastructure or R&D&i to meet basic primary needs.

More than 140 projects from different countries have been identified and analyzed, and the particularly outstanding cases of collaboration selected – more than 70.
9.4 IMPACT

Another classification of the projects is based on the type of impact (social, economic or both), as well as the degree of intensity of that impact. Both social and economic impact and collaboration are present in many projects, but not always simultaneously.

The degree of social impact has been assessed on the basis of the number of people benefiting and how their life changes (if it satisfies primary or secondary needs). The degree of economic impact is based primarily on the feasibility or potential of the project and on its size.
9.5 DEGREE OF COLLABORATION

The degree of collaboration in projects has been evaluated relative to two main axes. First, the number of collaborating entities participating in each project and, second, the model of collaboration between them (leader and collaborators, coordinator and collaborators, or full collaboration). Thus, the degree of collaboration is considered higher when there are more participating entities who are inclined to form a collaboration between equals and without established hierarchies. In addition to the study and analysis of existing collaboration projects, various relevant experts on the subject were interviewed, including more than twenty social project leaders. All of them have helped to arrive at a clear understanding of how collaboration projects work and how collaborating companies and the groups they help can get the most out of them.
Project classification

By industry (%)

- Education Training: 31%
- Food: 14%
- Finance: 6%
- Mobility: 5%
- Health: 12%
- Services: 13%
- Technology: 6%
- General Others: 13%

By driver (%)

- Corporate activism: 6%
- Support job placement: 35%
- Donation goods/services: 14%
- Inclusion discounts: 12%
- Financing: 13%
- Investment R&D infrastructures: 13%
- Others: 7%

By geographic area

- Spain*: 35%
- Developed countries: 10%
- Global: 15
- Emerging countries:

*The projects in Spain are included in developed countries.
**Degree of collaboration and impact**

- Very high: 43%
- High: 26%
- Medium: 23%
- Low: 8%
- None: 8%

**By social impact**

- 22%: Very high
- 36%: High
- 12%: Medium
- 8%: Low
- 23%: None

**By economic impact**

- 45%: Very high
- 10%: High
- 12%: Medium
- 5%: Low
- 12%: None

**By social and economic impact**

In 64% of cases, the project has a joint social and economic impact.
The preparation of this report was assisted by the invaluable contribution of all the experts in collaborative social projects we interviewed:

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