



WealthWorks Value Chains: Roles of the Coordinator Team

WealthWorks value chains are complex networks of individuals and organizations working together to meet their individual self-interests while at the same time building greater regional wealth. With multiple players and moving parts, it's no surprise that value chains are not self-organizing but, in fact, require thoughtful coordination. A value chain coordinator could be an individual, organization, or team that facilitates communication and collaboration among stakeholders and provides strategic guidance to the value chain.

It takes a certain type of organization(s) to be a value chain coordinator—one that can fill the many, dynamic roles required and who has the skills to navigate the work. This document describes the roles of a coordinating organization(s).

Wealth-Building Advocate

Value chain coordinators are responsible for upholding the value chain's wealth-building goals—increasing the eight capitals, strengthening ownership and influence, and improving low-income livelihoods. Coordinators work with value chain stakeholders to develop shared goals that are specific to the region and help to ensure that stakeholders act in ways that support and advance these goals.

Big-Picture Holder

Coordinators maintain a “big picture” perspective on the value chain, meaning that they see the relationships between the value chain's many players and activities. They wake up thinking about the whole value chain—from the producer to the consumer—not just one part of it. Having this perspective allows them to identify gaps in the value chain, see the self-interest of potential partners, and co-create solutions with a range of value chain stakeholders.

Connector and Convener

Coordinators play multiple convening and connecting roles in the value chain. First, they bring stakeholders together around shared interests, often building new relationships in the process. Second, they build connections among value chain partners by facilitating and maintaining open flows of communication. Third, coordinators help connect the value chain to outside resources, such as technical assistance or investors, as well as policy opportunities.

Innovator

Coordinators look for creative ways to address difficult challenges, often thinking “outside the box” and encouraging risk-taking among stakeholders. Such efforts spur new activities, relationships, and ways of doing things. For this reason, they see themselves as catalysts and innovators in the value chain.

Mediator

Coordinators often play the role of mediator, within and outside the value chain. Within the value chain, they facilitate conversations and help to address conflicts that arise between partners. Outside the value chain, they often negotiate with stakeholders in the broader community to reach new agreements, build consensus, and bring new partners into the value chain.

Data Collector

Coordinators work with partners to develop shared indicators across the value chain and then regularly collect and aggregate data on those indicators. Data collected reflects the value chain context, its processes, its wealth-building impacts, as well as supply and demand for products or services. Coordinators use this data to celebrate successes among value chain partners and to adjust processes to create greater impact. Coordinators also share data with broader audiences in an effort to attract new partners, bring in new resources, or influence policy.

These are some of the key roles coordinators play in a value chain. Of course, coordinators are not the sole actor in all of these roles. In fact, they rely on a range of partners to step in at different times for different purposes—perhaps to advocate for wealth-building, serve as neutral conveners, share innovative ideas, or collect relevant data. The coordinator provides critical leadership in the value chain to ensure these things get done and that progress is made toward wealth-building goals.