# Partnership tailored to society

## Guide to managing cross-sector partnerships

This project is funded by the European Union

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# Preface

*If we see ourselves as initiators of change and bearers of social development, then it is not only desirable but also necessary to perceive how successful we are in facing the challenges of the modern age. Of equal importance is finding out how prepared we are to take risks and accept new possibilities that lie ahead of us. In today's globalized world, where the traditional roles of the public, business and civil sectors are no longer applicable and all of us begin to share responsibility for common interests, partnership is the only way towards sustainability. More than ever we need innovative and alternative approaches to solving social and economic issues.*

*The guide to managing cross-sector partnerships is a unique assessment tool, a means of re-examining our own motivation and capacities, as well as our readiness to make progress, develop and not overlook any opportunities. In this publication you will find all the relevant information about the creation and development of cross-sector partnerships, their significance and effective realisation. However, our primary goal is to provide direction and suggest that coming together around a single idea can overcome seemingly insurmountable differences between sectors – especially the business and civil sectors. We also seek to show that a lot can be done for our communities through synergic action.*

*The path to successful partnership, of course, isn't simple; there is more and more talk of partnerships, but still there are not many real, strategic partnerships that yield long-term results. In this Guide we offer an overview of the most important elements that make partnerships successful, in the hope that it will give light to any uncertainty and provide the confidence needed to step freely into partnership, sincerely believing in its strength.*

*Authors*

# Content

# Partnership for sustainability

The Guide to managing cross-sector partnership is among the results of the project "Partnership for sustainability", conducted by the Centre for the Development of Non Governmental Organizations (CRNVO) from Podgorica and Smart Kolektiv from Belgrade. The project is funded by the European Union, under the Cross Border Cooperation Programme Serbia-Montenegro.

The aim of the Partnership for Sustainability project is to encourage cooperation and the establishment of sustainable partnership relations between the business sector and civil society organizations (CSOs) in the cross-border area of Serbia and Montenegro, through education and the exchange of experiences and ideas. Participants in this project include civil society organizations from Bijelo Polje, Rožaje, Nikšić, Pljevlja, Užice, Prijepolje and Novi Pazar, all of which are interested in collaboration with the business sector, finding new ways to support their activities and establishing quality relations that are important for their organizations' sustainability.

Project activities were designed to help organizations acquire new skills and master practical instruments needed to establish cooperation with the business sector. These activities include: a Capacity building programme in key areas: Public relations, Strategic planning, Corporate philanthropy, Business – CSO partnerships; Study visits to organizations, associations and companies which set an example for cooperation between the civil and business sectors; Four-month mentoring support in developing projects that include cooperation with the business sector; Participation in the "Partnership Ideas Fair", where organizations' representatives will have an opportunity to directly present their project ideas to companies; Participation in the Forum on cross-sector partnerships and corporate social responsibility, where all three sectors will have a chance to share experiences; Presenting proposals for partnerships on the website www.partnerstva.me.

The following organizations are participating in the programme: Alfa Centar (Nikšić), Argument (Prijepolje), Bios (Prijepolje), Bjelopoljski demokratski centar, Bonum (Pljevlja), Da zaživi selo (Pljevlja), Društvo mladih ekologa (Nikšić), Ekološki pokret Ozon (Nikšić), Ekološki pokret Prijepolje, Forum žena Prijepolja, Humanitarac (Nikšić), Ikre (Rožaje), Jednakost (Prijepolje), Kulturni centar DamaD (Prijepolje), Media team (Nikšić), Morakovo (Nikšić), NVU roditelja djece s teškoćama u razvoju "Zračak nade" (Pljevlja), Sandžački odbor za zaštitu ljudskih prava i sloboda (Novi Pazar), Prijatelji Brodareva (Prijepolje), Pljevaljski ženski prostor, Snažna mama (Bijelo Polje), SOS telefon za djecu i žene žrtve nasilja (Bijelo Polje), Udruženje mladih sa hendikepom (Nikšić), Udruženje paraplegičara Bijelo Polje i Mojkovac, Udruženje za pomoć licima ometenim u psihofizičkom razvoju (Nikšić), Udruženja žena sela Potpeća, Užičko bilje i Viva Vita (Pljevlja).

Centre for the Development of Non-Governmental Organizations (CRNVO) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization established in Podgorica in 1999., with the aim to improve the position of non-governmental organizations in Montenegro and to open the path towards more democratized society. Through different activities, CRNVO continuously works on enhancing non-governmental organizations' capacities, encouraging cross sector cooperation, increasing the understanding of the role and importance of NGOs for the society, and empowering citizens to actively participate in the development of democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Smart Kolektiv is an independent, non-profit organization, established in Belgrade, with the mission to find innovative perspectives for sustainable development of the civil society, and society as a whole, through synergic linking of various social agents. As a pioneer in promoting corporate social responsibility concept, and guided by the idea of connecting business and society, Smart Kolektiv seeks ways to apply business logic and experience to the solution on social problems, helps companies to cooperate articulately and strategically with the community, while helping various social groups to get the business sector's attention to their needs and initiatives. The organization devises and puts into effect campaigns that initiate positive changes in society, operating through four key programmes: corporate social responsibility, social innovation, youth entrepreneurship and social marketing.

*The Guide to managing cross-sector partnerships addresses representatives of all sectors who intend to act together to change their communities. Even though the guide focuses on partnerships between the business and civil sectors, the majority of information and advice provided can also be used to connect other sectors – public and business, civil and public.*

*Examples which illustrate the necessary steps in building up and realising partnerships are cases from the practise of the organizations participating in the project "Partnership for Sustainability", which this guide forms part of. This is why some segments of this text are written from the perspective of civil society organizations, but nevertheless they are equally applicable to the representatives of other sectors as well.*

# I Cross-sector partnerships

*Coming together is the beginning.
Keeping together is progress.
Working together is success.*

*Henry Ford*

# Challenges of the modern age

The achievements of the modern age - globalization, technological progress, demographic changes and economic transition - have a huge impact on all members of society. The unstoppable development of society provides numerous possibilities for progress and success. We witness, however, that development does not reach all segments of society, resulting in a deeper gap in social differences and creating new disparities. Unemployment, poverty, a low level of education, the marginalizing of minority groups and environmental pollution are just some of the critical issues – problems that cast a shadow over the business, scientific and technological successes of today. The deepening of socio-economic differences and carelessness towards the environment endanger society's sustainable development.

We are witnessing radical changes and various social transformations, not only in our region, but throughout the world in general. Traditional structures of society have changed vastly over past decades. Hierarchy in society is different and relations between sectors are becoming more intertwined and mutually dependable. In the past decades changes to the business sector have been of particular importance to the entire society. New business ethics mean that a company's responsibility must be more than producing goods or services and making profit. It must be measured in terms of taking responsibility for the total impact of its business. In other words, companies have started contributing to solving social and environmental issues. Citizens, civil society organizations and the public sector also recognise the need for more active participation in shaping social and economic reality. The predominant opinion throughout the region that the public sector has the sole task of solving citizens' social issues has changed. Obligations and responsibilities towards community are distributed to all its members, in order to ensure the sustainable development of society.

Companies seek a balance between their economic goals and the deeper impact they want and need to have on society. Civil sector is seeking new ways of being sustainable which would allow a greater number of initiatives for the benefit of society and more tangible results. The public sector has to find effective solutions in order to be able to deal with complex social issues and open the door for all members of society in the process of policy formulation and determining the course of development. Mutual rapprochement of sectors and establishing cross-sector cooperation is one of the more effective mechanisms available to all sectors. Joint action could be the right solution for many societal issues.

In 1992 at The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development cross sector partnership was recognised as a mechanism which can help change society for the better. Since then, progress has been made on promoting partnership, as well as in development of the concept itself. This was followed by confirmation of the importance of partnerships at United Nations Summit in Johannesburg in 2002 and also at the Rio + 20 Summit of 2012. The European Union in its strategic documents has also recognised the importance of collaboration between sectors, which has become a relevant mechanism for solving problems in different areas: from healthcare to environmental protection. The European Union's "Europe 2020" strategy recognises the importance of this concept for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The Council of Europe has set partnership as a precondition for using pre-accession and structural EU funds.

# From single sector approach to cross-sector partnership

The problems and challenges that society faces today have become too complex and mutually linked and a single sector's available resources are often not enough for an adequate response. Single sector approach has proved itself to be inefficient many times. A sector's isolated activities often failed to give the desired results. This is the reason why cross-sector partnership is a mechanism which recognises the capacities and competencies of every sector and uses them to achieve common goals.

*Definitions of cross-sector partnership:*

*Cross-sector partnership presents a "cross-sector alliance where all the individuals, groups, or organizations agreed that they will: (1) work together on implementation of responsibility or a certain task (2) share risk, as well as benefits; (3) always review their relations; and (4) revise their agreement if necessary."*

*International Business Leaders Forum*

*"Partnerships are voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both public and non-public, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and share risks, responsibilities, resources and benefits."*

*UN report "Towards Global Partnerships"*

The meaning of a partnership is obvious: through partnership, the quality, competence and resources of all sectors can be used in an optimal way to resolve the problems of society.

Society is traditionally divided into three sectors:
▸ public ( known as the "first" sector), which is in charge of public good and public interest

▸ business ( known as the "private" or "real" sector), guided by making profit
▸ civil sector (the "third" or "non-governmental" sector), dedicated to specific issues or parts of society that are in need of special attention.

Although formally separated, sectors are continually versed on each other because their fields of action and needs are partially interlinked.

Divided the functioning of sectors, lack of knowledge and lack of understanding of values and principles of work has resulted in many stereotypes.

| Public sector | Business sector | Civil sector |
|---|---|---|
| bureaucratic | orientated towards profits | non-transparent |
| inflexible | disinterested in common good | unsustainable |
| orientated towards political as opposed to common interests | calculative and falsely responsible | inefficient |

The chart: sector stereotypes

Every sector has its priorities, values and characteristics which can be important and useful for establishing and realising partnership. Some of the sectors' characteristics presented in the chart might significantly help successful partnerships:

| Public sector | Business sector | Civil sector |
|---|---|---|
| legitimacy | inventiveness | inclusiveness |
| stability | productivity | creativity |
| authority | readiness for action | dedication |

The chart: Sector characteristics important for partnerships, adapted from "The Partnering Tool book", author Ross Tennyson.

Cross-sector partnership implies establishing cooperation between at least two sectors. Partnerships that include all three sectors are rare in practise because of the complexity of managing such partnerships.

In Serbia and Montenegro partnerships between the public and business sectors is somewhat more frequent than partnerships between the civil and business sectors. It is clear today that the public sector cannot, and should not attempt to resolve important social issues on its own. Engagement of the civil and business sectors, for providing consulting services in the areas of their competency, is one of the aspects of interaction among sectors which has multiple benefits for the whole of society. The position of the public sector enables easy access to useful information and based on this information frameworks for economic and social policies are created. Enabling the participation of organizations and business sector representatives in this process arises as one of the public sector's obligations. The authority and legitimacy of the public sector can be used to create an enabling environment that will support and stimulate cross-sector partnerships. The availability of material and immaterial resources, which the public sector possesses through state authorities, local government bodies and public enterprises, may be important to the realisation of partnerships initiated by the civil or business sectors.

## Partnership between the civil and business sectors

When endeavouring to overcome mutual differences and setting compatible goals, the interaction of organizations and companies contributes significantly to promoting and expanding the practise of establishing partnerships between the civil and business sectors. Classic sponsorship and donations are the usual form of cooperation between organizations and companies, but companies with evolved strategies of corporate social responsibility recognise civil society organizations as partners with whom they can share a common vision of a better society.
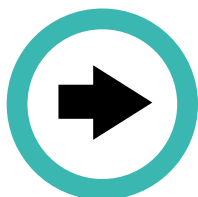
According to the research project "Attitudes on Socially Responsible Management in Montenegro", conducted for the TACSO project, only half of the companies included in the research are open to cooperation with the civil sector. Willingness for cooperation is considerably higher within organizations (92%). When cooperation occurs, it consists mainly of sponsorship and donations (in 58% of cases). Companies willing to cooperate with organizations would do so through sponsorship (24%), by participating in joint projects (24%), providing donation in-kind (20%) and financial donations (20%).

According to research conducted by BCIF (now Trag fondacija) regarding philanthropy in Serbia, 78% of the companies that participated in the research cooperate with organizations in some form. In most cases cooperation relates to implementing activities for the public good in partnership, 35% of companies financially support projects of civil society organizations, while 17% engage organizations as service providers. As many as 94% of companies included in this research consider that the two sectors could cooperate more closely on joint projects.
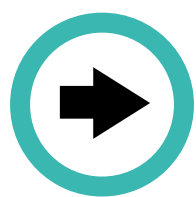
Relations between organizations and companies are evolving from the classic philanthropic model of cooperation towards systematic and structured collaborative action. Although the most common form of cooperation is still the one in which a company is seen as a donor to an organization for projects it creates and implements and which are not necessarily related to the company's business, both sides are becoming aware that partnership has great potential. By combining different competences and resources and sharing mutual vision, partnerships between companies and organizations may bring the needed positive change to the community.

**Giving:** *financial and in-kind contributions*  →  **Investing into community:** *time and skills*  →  **Collaborative action:** *for better results*

*Graphics: Evolution from philanthropic to partnership model*

A civil sector organization's experience, trust within the community, insight and knowledge about the problems in society are valuable resources which it can bring to the partnership. On the other hand, specific knowledge and skills that companies have, material resources and the public visibility of business sector representatives may greatly contribute to the realisation of a joint partnership plan.

Most importantly, organizations and companies manage to achieve a satisfactory degree of understanding for the logic and values of every single sector and also set goals that concern solving community problems compatibly and mutually.

Partnership initiatives may also bring some significant benefits to both sides. For civil society organizations, partnerships with the business sector may bring better sustainability and more efficient realisation of their goals. The civil sector helps companies fulfil their objectives and enhance their reputation – the reputation of a company dedicated to the society in which it operates and the achieving sustainable development goals (more about the advantages, risks and benefits of partnerships between companies and organizations can be found in the chapter "Why partnership?").

## *Corporate social responsibility as an opportunity*

Although the term *Corporate Social Responsibility* (hereinafter CSR) is widely known to the public, this concept deserves special attention, particularly in the context of cooperation and partnerships among companies and organizations. CSR activities are based on companies and small and medium-sized enterprises recognising that their engagement in the community is necessary. Mechanisms for cooperation between businesses and the civil sector developed on CSR's postulates give the companies' engagement in the community greater impact and effectiveness.

The social responsibility of a company implies responsible relations towards the community in which it operates. Through CSR, the goal of economic progress, i.e. generating profits, becomes compatible with a company's environmental and social goals. As a part of society which achieves significant progress in an economic and technological sense, through CSR activities companies can and must use that very progress to solve numerous social, environmental and other issues.

According to the definition published in the European Commission's White Book, CSR is "a concept by which companies integrate social and environmental issues in their business operations and in their relations with stakeholders, on a voluntary basis". *(European Commission, White paper on CSR)*

The European Commission's document "*A renewed EU strategy 2011-2014 for Corporate Social Responsibility*" provides a new definition of CSR, explaining it as the "responsibility of companies for their impact on the society".

The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) defines CSR as "permanent dedication of the business sector to ethical conduct and contributing to economic growth, simultaneously improving the lives of employees and their families, as well as community and society as a whole".(www.wbcsd.org)

Although there is no universally accepted definition of CSR, almost all of them include several crucial points:

▸ CSR means thinking long-term
▸ CSR integrates economic, social and environmental aspects of business
▸ CSR implies relations with all stakeholders

▸ CSR benefits both the company and society as a whole.

In another words, CSR means that a company is accountable for all the impacts it has on all its stakeholders, from its employees to the community.

Stakeholders are all the individuals, groups and organizations that affect or can be affected by a company/organization/situation and its action. From the point of view of the company/organization, relations with stakeholders must be high-quality, constant and reciprocal, in order to understand their needs and ensure their involvement in decision-making processes. Relations with stakeholders can be much more than communication and good informing. It should include the active participation of stakeholders in decision-making processes and the conducting of activities when circumstances allow.

Responsible businesses include transparency in decision-making and conducting activities which have a social, economic or environmental impact on the community. This also includes ethical business conduct and healthy governance mechanisms. A company is duty bound to respect all the legislation and is expected to undertake responsible activities that exceed legislative obligations. A socially responsible company usually focuses on four fields, the so-called four pillars of CSR: workplace (activities concerning employees, safety at work, employee development etc.), market (relations towards suppliers, consumers, responsible marketing etc.), environment (environmental protection, prevention of negative impacts and support to environmental initiatives), local community (initiatives that help community development, inclusion of vulnerable groups etc.).
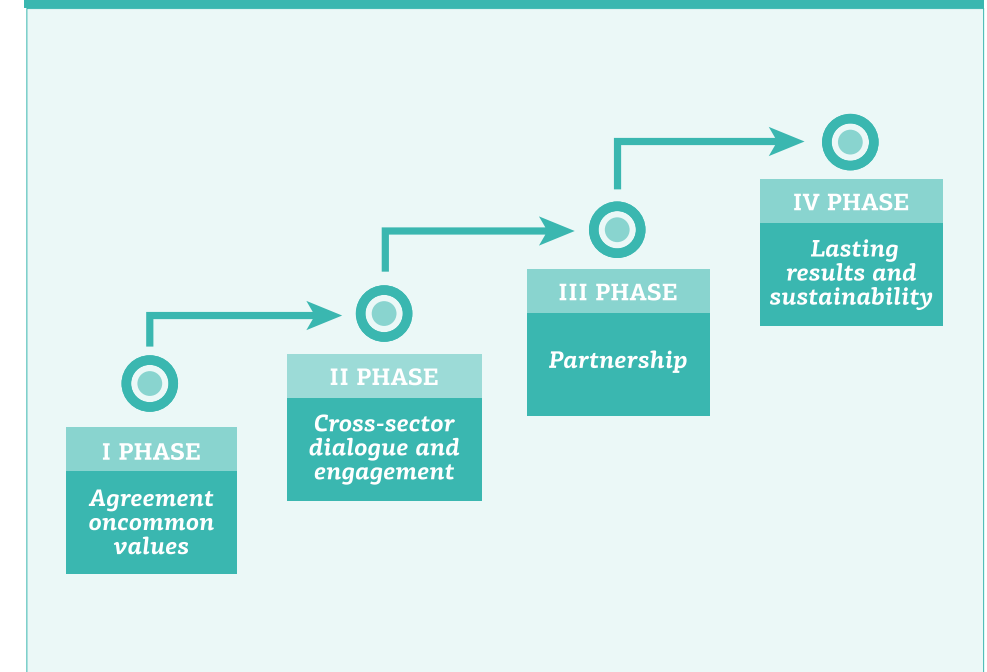
In most cases, activities in the field of CSR are related to the fourth pillar – local community. This field provides numerous possibilities for collaboration between companies and civil sector organizations, relying on various mechanisms of cooperation, from sponsorship and donation, to making partnerships for systematic and planned implementation of common initiatives. Although the concept of CSR is directed towards benefiting the community, a company itself benefits from implementation of responsible business practices. The most obvious of these are creating a good public image and the positive effects that CSR has on reputation, but primarily it is the long-term sustainability of a company brought about by ethical, transparent and responsible management. CSR has a rising influence on the competitiveness of companies, considering trends that show consumers take companies' dedication to the community into account when making purchase decisions and tend to choose the products and services of companies which operate ethically and responsibly.

Postulates of CSR are among the significant elements for stimulating partnership between businesses and the civil sector. With it, the concept of CSR provides an opportunity for the company to be more responsible, for the organization to be more active and for the community to be improved.

One of the latest trends is to replace the term *Corporate Social Responsibility* with a new term *Integral Social Responsibility* (ISR). The new term draws attention to the fact that it is necessary for each sector to be responsible, introducing another often used term – *shared responsibility*. Author Louis Guay describes 4 phases in the implementation of ISR:



**I PHASE**
*Agreement on common values*

**II PHASE**
*Cross-sector dialogue and engagement*

**III PHASE**
*Partnership*

**IV PHASE**
*Lasting results and sustainability*

Graphic: ISR phases

## Mechanism of cooperation between the business and civil sectors

### Sponsorship

Sponsorship is a business relationship whereby a sponsor and a recipient of sponsorship define cooperation which is mutually beneficial. It consists of financial or non-financial donations for a given activity, which includes specified counter-favours for the sponsor, most often commercial or public visibility. Most commonly the sponsorship rights holders are persons and/or organizations from the areas of sport, culture, science, environmental protection and social care. Unlike a donation, sponsorship includes commercial relations, because it is based on mutual benefit and is undertaken with the purpose of fulfilling certain promotional aims.

Beside their business interests, many companies, focus on the criteria of general social benefit in the context of ethical business conduct, in accordance with their mission, values and goals, when stipulating the terms of sponsorship.

### In-kind donations

The support a company can offer a community is not limited merely to financial donations. Instead of financial aid, or in conjunction with it, many companies offer their products, other goods or services (*in-kind donations*), usually equipment, working material, space etc. There are numerous ways for a company to offer support in resolving problems, depending on the openness of both sides to innovative and mutually beneficial solutions.

### Grant schemes

Companies donate a part of their profits or resources to not-for-profit organizations as a non-commercial financial grant. Traditionally, the most common practice is the spontaneous (ad hoc) response of a company to donation requests, where it is difficult to determine priorities in responding to requests, since responding to all of them is not possible. This is why corporate donation programmes are being managed strategically more and more – with distinct goals, metrics and reporting, similar to other business disciplines.

The strategic approach means that companies decide on priorities and criteria according to which the funds will be distributed and announce an open call on the basis of that. The open call guarantees higher transparency in grant making, although expenses of this form of corporate giving include not only the funds that a company plans to distribute, but also operational expenses of the whole process (collecting applications, assessment, selection, contract signing and monitoring the results of granted projects).

### Employee engagement (volunteering)

Employee engagement or employee volunteering is a coordinated programme in which a company donates the time, competencies and energy of its employees to a cause benefiting the local or wider community. In the context of employee engagement, volunteers are supported by their employer, whether they volunteer during business hours or in their own time.

Employee volunteering as good business practice that can work well if implemented as an initiative of an individual or a department, but it is only the strategic, programmatic approach that ensures the efficiency and success of the programme - by building constructive partnerships with organizations and institutions in the community, while simultaneously developing employees' skills. The most common form of volunteering activities which companies organize or participate in are action days in the area of the environment or refurbishing schools, kindergartens or social care institutions. Volunteering based on the professional skills of employees (*skills-based volunteering*) is becoming more widespread, providing valuable competencies (financial planning, legal advisory, marketing consultancy) to projects benefiting local communities.

### Management of grant funds

Besides direct financial donations to project and programmes, granted ad hoc or through open calls, companies often form funds or foundations as a special legal entity and finance their work. This form of cooperation means that companies provide financial assets, while foundations, as independent entities, manage these assets. Due to time shortages, human recourses and experience, foundations are not managed by the founding company, but rather by experts from the civil sector or another foundation, since they have better insight into acute social needs and efficient ways of resolving them.

### Social marketing

Social marketing is an instrument by which companies support the development and/or implementation of campaigns which aim to change behaviours regarding public health, security and the environment, or to bring other benefits to the community. It is a concept in which commercial marketing tools are utilised for non-commercial purposes in order to influence the opinions and behaviour of a certain group, driving positive social change.

Besides reaching consumers in a way that exceeds traditional purchase patterns and creates long-term and emotional connections with consumers, the main purpose of this form of marketing is to contribute to the promotion of a social cause. One of the most frequent forms today is so-called *cause related marketing*, where a company's product is connected to a certain social cause, positively impacting on the company's reputation, customer loyalty and sales, whilst on the other hand ensuring a significant media presence for a non-profit partner organization in order to broadly promote the causes it represents.

### Social enterprises

The concept of social entrepreneurship is one of the widest trends implying that social problems can be solved by using entrepreneurial principles. Social enterprise is an enterprise that links its business operations to a social mission. Like any other company, a social enterprise focuses on generating income, but its uniqueness comes from the way it uses the profit gained – with a clear goal of ensuring the wider community benefits from its activities.

The main characteristic of this alternative form of entrepreneurship is that the profit is reinvested into expanding or advancing the activities, maximising the benefits to the community instead of maximizing profits. Profit is used to support social causes that may or may not be directly

connected with the enterprise's business operations; or the enterprise itself contributes to such a cause by, for example, employing persons from vulnerable groups. Partnerships with the business sector are usually established through the support of companies in founding social enterprises, or including such enterprises in their supply chains, thereby contributing directly to their sustainability.

# Recommendations for the development of partnerships between the business and civil sectors

1. Promotion of the partnership concept. In order to increase the number of partnerships and thereby bring prosperity to the community, it is necessary to work on raising awareness of the importance of partnerships and the benefits each sector can derive from them.

   The promotion of civil sector initiatives and its work in general, as well as promoting the activities of companies dedicated to the community, would contribute to bringing sectors closer together and creating new partnerships.

   Examples of successfully realised initiatives are among the best motivational and promotional tools for expanding partnership practices. Organizations, as a "voice of the community", can contribute greatly to promoting this concept in their own sector. Companies have significant resources and the required communication skills, which can bring the concept of partnership closer to all sectors and the public in general.

2. Education. It is necessary to improve the knowledge of each sector regarding "the other" – for companies to get to know the way civil society organizations work and their values and for organizations to be familiarised with the principles of CSR.

   Partnership requires constant learning. Educational activities aimed at creating and implementing partnerships contribute to building capacities for partnership and cooperation among all sectors, as well as increasing the readiness of organizations and companies to engage in partnering initiatives.

   Following international trends and analysing successful partnership initiatives in our region are just some of the ways of contributing to greater quantity and quality of partnerships.

3. Enabling environment. Managing a partnership in unfavourable economic, social and political circumstances can include significant risks. Companies and organizations must advocate for the improvement of the legal framework for both the civil sector and cross-sector relations. Advocating for tax and other incentives for cross-sector partnership initiatives is also necessary. With its authority and legitimacy, the public sector can enhance the importance of the partnership concept and support concrete cases of partnerships between companies and organizations.

4. Corporate social responsibility. Promotion and strengthening of the CSR concept can contribute to the development of partnerships between businesses and the civil sector, bearing in mind that the mechanism of cooperation in companies and organizations is developed on the basis of this very concept. .

5. Media. The role of media in promoting partnerships needs to be more active. Media, as an integral part of society, can show responsibility for a community by reporting on the activities of civil society organizations, the socially responsible initiatives of companies and cross-sector partnerships.

6. Brokers. Establishing and promoting the broker "profession" as a mediator in partnership realisation would facilitate the process and encourage organizations and companies to change the community together.

### Broker - mediator

The creation and realisation of partnership is a process that demands special skills and knowledge, as well as the art of negotiation and mediation. The English term *broker* is used for persons that mediate between parties interested in creating partnerships. A broker must know the operational methods and logic of all sectors and must be a good communicator and facilitator, in order to lead the partners through the process of partnership realisation and implementation. Dedicated to connecting ideas and people, brokers can help greatly in identifying partnership goals and finding optimal ways for its realisation. Potential partners often have a staff member inside the organization or company who acts as a broker, or they engage a third party for this task. In Serbia and Montenegro the concept of brokerage still isn't fully developed. The role of the broker as a qualified mediator can greatly facilitate the process of creating and implementing a partnership.

# II *Partnership – in practise*

*"It is easy to talk about partnerships, but it is usually much harder to realise them. They demand continuous bravery, patience and decisiveness. They are rarely an "easy" solution to some problem and sometimes they may be a frustrating and disappointing experience which doesn't fulfil initial hopes and expectations. But it doesn't always have to be like that."*

**Ros Tennyson,**
**author of "The Partnering Tool book"**

# Why partnership?

Partnership is a process through which partners from the business and civil sectors overcome mutual differences and create room for innovations and creativity, for developing partnership initiatives with a common vision. Practice has shown that the single sector approach often isn't an adequate solution for some of the complex challenges faced by modern society.

*Following the principles of CSR, a company makes efforts to resolve the poverty issue of vulnerable groups in the community in which it operates. In attempting to resolve this complex issue, it requires adequate information about real needs and to establish contact with the target group. A company doesn't naturally possess this because its activities and expertise are focused towards generating profit. Those essential resources are in the possession of civil society organizations dedicated to improving the position of the members of vulnerable groups. In this way the goals of the organization become compatible with the goals of the company and form the basis for a common vision of partnership. Through the partnership building process, a company and an organization will use their available resources in an optimal manner and contribute to the community, setting an example for everyone regarding the necessity for cross-sector engagement and responsible behaviour of the company, organizations and the community as a whole.*

Successful partnerships have multiple benefits, bringing innovative solutions for sustainability issues and providing the possibility for the sectors to efficiently and effectively share their competence and resources for the sake of achieving important goals. Successfully realised partnerships are yet another argument for the promotion of this concept and will be used to encourage other companies and organizations to resolve issues that require the partnership approach. Above all, integrating sectors and their synergic functioning contribute to a community's stability and sustainability.

## Obstacles

Making partners' values and goals compatible is a demanding process that includes the confronting of particular challenges, such as: perceiving the sectors' differences as insurmountable, a lack of understanding and negative attitudes towards "the other" sector.

| The most common obstacles to establishing a partnership between companies and organizations are: | |
| --- | --- |
| **Obstacles from the civil sector's point of view** | **Obstacles from the business sector's point of view** |
| lack of motivation from the business sector | failure to recognise the need for initiatives "for the greater good" |
| lack of interest for the activities of other sectors | lack of understanding for the missions and operational methods of civil society organizations |
| discouraging legal framework | financial issues |
| unfavourable social and economic circumstances | bad image of the civil sector |
| lack of trust in companies' motives | poorly designed projects of organizations |

*Chart. Obstacles to establishing partnership; Source: Research "Attitudes about Corporate Social Responsibility" conducted in Montenegro in 2012 for the need of the TACSO project; Research "Individual and Corporate Philanthropy in Serbia" conducted in 2012 by BCIF (now Trag fondacija)*

It is a fact that there is still no strong social awareness of the importance of partnership initiatives. The experience of Smart Kolektiv and CRNVO, through years of working with numerous organizations and primarily through the project "Partnership for Sustainability", shows that the civil and business sectors lack initiative and an essential understanding of the partnership concept. The increasing interest of all relevant stakeholders for different aspects of cross-sector cooperation is encouraging and successfully realised partnerships are a testament that this mechanism of cooperation is among the more efficient ways of demonstrating the social responsibility of companies, organizations and citizens. Civil society organizations recognise that cooperation with the business sector is one of the important factors of their sustainability, while companies in the civil sector recognise a partner with whom they can conduct socially responsible initiatives.

## Values and principles of partnership

Every partnership is based on sharing a common vision. In addition, in order for a partnership to be successful the partners need to adopt and share the same values:

▸ respect – from organizations for the activities of companies which make profit; and from companies for the activities of organizations which are focused on community development
▸ engagement of all stakeholder groups
▸ social and environmental sustainability
▸ acquiring and sharing knowledge
▸ prevention of disagreements and conflict

Every partnership will have its particularities, but some principles are applicable in most situations:

▸ dedication to reaching a common goal
▸ transparency in all segments of a partnership's formation and realisation, in order to build mutual trust and respect
▸ fair treatment and mutual benefit as the legitimate partners' right to tangible

individual benefits of partnership, which will also serve as additional motivation for partners to get engaged in the implementation of the partnership idea.

In the process of building a partnership, depending on the nature of the initiative being implemented, partners can determine new principles for the basis of their cooperation. Dedication to the agreed principles is one of the guarantees of a successful partnership initiative.

## Partnership benefits and risks for partners

Certain benefits and risks presented by a partnership are important as an evaluation mechanism which partners have at their disposal, both when deciding on the forming of a partnership and in the domain of motivation and the engagement level in the implementation process. Transparency and informing partners about the benefits expected from the partnership influence its course. Fulfilling these expectations is an important part of the project evaluation.

Besides the partnership benefits that are common to both sectors - professional development of involved parties, access to a greater number of resources, use of partner's expertise and experience - particularly important advantages are:

| For civil sector organizations | For business sector representatives |
| --- | --- |
| increased visibility through association with a "branded" company | better corporate image through associating with an organization known for its contribution to society |
| better chances for influencing public policies | comparative advantage over competitors |
| possibility to generate income and contribute to the organization's sustainability | access to new markets, consumers and networks |

| access to a wide range of creative, technical and human resources | satisfied employees |
| --- | --- |
| increased credibility | increased brand value and reputation |

*Chart: Benefits of partnership for the civil and business sectors*

Partnership is a complex process that can have a significant impact, but also carry certain risks that need to be addressed. Besides specific risks which will depend on the partnership initiative itself, partners from both sectors face the following dangers:

▸ Negative influence on reputation through inadequate choice of partner or poor realisation of the partnership initiative
▸ Loss of autonomy which, to some extent, is inevitable when working in partnership

▸ Conflicts of interest which may compromise the planned realisation and relationship between partners;
▸ Exhaustion of resources, due to partnerships demanding exceptional dedication of the staff and the deploying of the most diverse resources
▸ Implementation challenges of the partnership itself.

Of course, the decision to establish a partnership will mean that the benefits outweigh the potential risks. The ability to recognise risks and the readiness to face them will contribute to the easier implementation of partnership.

# From idea to realisation

Every partnership is an exciting and special journey. However, there are certain mandatory stops on this path. The following section offers a short review of the steps towards the establishment and implementation of a partnership. Questions within each section represent guidelines that should lead the parties to consider different aspects of partnership. The road from initial idea to realisation shows activities that concern partnership preparation (Are you ready? Partnership idea; Mapping and choosing the partner; Resources mapping; Planning), negotiations about the partnership and basic guidelines for successfully managing the partnership. The authors' previous experience has indicated how necessary it is to dedicate special attention to

the part tackling partnership preparation, so the main focus is on this topic. Partnership formation and realisation includes steps typical to project management that are known to both the civil and business sectors. This is why they aren't particularly elaborated, except for the particular elements characteristic to partnership initiatives. Illustrations of the steps on the path from initial idea to realisation represent concrete examples from the practices of organizations participating in the project "Partnership for Sustainability". These organizations expressed a desire, motivation and courage to enter the partnership with the business sector, thus contributing to their own sustainability and the sustainability of their communities.

## Are you ready?

When the business sector and representatives of civil society organizations collaborate and form partnerships that strive to solve a problem or bring improvement to the community, partnership becomes a complex process which requires certain skills and knowledge in order to be successful. However, most importantly the partnership relations of the two parties need to be built on the assumption that they are ready to collaborate with "the other one" and "the different one". Differences between the two sectors and potential meeting points and overlaps were already discussed in the previous chapters. However, the beginning of planning the partnership is the perfect time to re-examine a decision to engage in a partnership in the first place. This is why it is important to start "from within" and come to a clear answer to the question of whether or not there is willingness for cooperation with the other sector in your organization or company.

*Do you respect the differences between sectors?*

*Does your organization/company have a clear*

*and recognisable attitude regarding collaboration with other sectors?*

*Do you advocate the partner approach?*

*Are you willing to reconsider your opinions and attitudes?*

*Are you ready to relinquish part of your autonomy for the sake of partnership?*

*What are the risks that partnership carries? Do you fear that the partnership will compromise your reputation among colleagues from the other sectors and/or in your surroundings?*

*Do you have an adequate response to the challenges posed by the partnership?*

*Are you sufficiently committed, brave and creative to engage in a partnership?*

*What motivates you?*

*What do you expect the partnership will bring you?*

Misperceptions among sectors and a lack of faith in the effectiveness of partnership is often the first obstacle within an organization itself. This kind of situation should be perceived as a challenge and not as a problem, because these situations can be overcome by constructive discussions.

*A member of an organization which advocates equality and improving the status of members of vulnerable groups came upon the idea of engaging in a collaborative project with an enterprise, which would enable employment and a certain source of income for some members of the target group. The main obstacle for the implementation was disagreement and the absence of support among the rest of the team. The rest of the team concluded that the initiative for cooperation with the enterprise was too risky to the organization's reputation in the local community, which was sufficient reason to give up the project. Depending on the size and internal organization of the company/ civil society organization, it is important for the implementing of cross-sector initiatives to ensure the necessary support from within – from close colleagues to top management, i.e. the structures which manage the organization.*

The readiness of an organization/company to form partnerships is initially reflected in the analysing of its own resources, goals, values and plans. Analysis should result in choosing partnership as desired and suitable form of cooperation. Therefore, make sure you have a consensus among your team members when deciding to opt for partnership as a method of implementing a certain project.

## Partnership idea

Every partnership implies that partners have their own goals and expectations, but the core of the partnership is formed by the partnership idea – a vision that partners share and a common goal towards they strive. Partners come together around a shared vision – which is the reference point of every partnership.

The partnership initiator is usually the one to offer a shared vision of the partnership through the suggestion of partnership realisation, leaving of course, in the spirit of good cooperation, room for its joint completion, adjustment and improvement. That will provide an added value, characteristic for a partnership idea – the synergic power of different sectors.

When the enabling environment is not sufficiently developed and neither are the policies of fostering partnerships that deal with solving different social issues, it is crucial to build a partnership on firm common values, goals and a vision, as this will represent the source of motivation, strength, optimism and faith in success.

Zato preispitajte svoju ideju kroz prizmu partnerstva:

*What makes your idea a partnership idea?*

*Why is partnership necessary for the realization of the idea?*

*What are the advantages of realising this idea through partnership, compared to its realisation by a single sector alone?*

*What is the common goal of the partnership?*

*What makes that goal simultaneously the goal of the organization and the business sector representative?*

*Evaluate the relevance of the partnership's goal, both for you and your partner.*

*What will you consider a success and what will your partners consider a success?*

The flow of partnership building can also be different: a company and an organization share a field of action when social questions are concerned, and the partnership project creation process and defining a common vision through consultations and meetings represent an integral part of the partnership's realisation.

An organization wishes to contribute to improving the status of women in the community by providing them employment. Through development of the idea and project design, the necessity to involve the business sector has been recognised in order to ensure better results. However, developing the idea in the direction of partnership relations was a demanding process – from the starting point, when the business sector was just an observer, to the active participation of companies in designing and realising the whole project.

Flow of the idea's elaboration:

**Initial phase:** *we are going to organize a series of seminars for companies in order to develop sensibility in the business sector for the need of employing women over 40 years old.*

*On the path towards partnership:* considering that tangible success depends on companies themselves, it is necessary to additionally motivate and include them in the realisation of activities. As such, we will use the roundtable format in order, together with companies, to be able to glean specific information and the right reasons explaining why the employment of these groups is an issue. Through the active participation of company representatives in discussions, we will contribute to raising the awareness of this problem among companies, as well as in the wider public.

*Partnership idea:* we will organize roundtables with all stakeholders and the information gleaned and conclusions drawn will be used in order to identify the reasons where, in partnership with companies, we can have an influence together (for example, lack of certain skills, such as computer skills, English language skills etc.). We will design training programmes depending on the needs of the company. Trainings will be delivered by representatives of companies that possess appropriate expert knowledge. For those women that express the desire and have an idea of starting their own business we will provide mentors from partner companies who will help realise their ideas.

Women participants will benefit from the partnership project the most, as will the organization itself, by more effectively achieving the goals they advocate and gaining access to numerous company resources. The partner company will enable its employees to contribute to the community volunteering, gaining that way new knowledge and skills, as trainers and mentors. This action will have an impact on the reputation that each of the participants has in the community.

No matter which path to conceptualising the partnership idea we take, theory and practises are in accordance that success of the partnership vastly depends on a balance between the common partnership goal and the individual goals of each partner.

*What can a partner expect from the project? What tangible benefits?*

*What benefit do you expect from the realisation of this partnership?*

*Think about the motives of your partner.*

Think about the achievements and possible benefits from your point of view, as well as from your partner's, in order to be more objective and rational. Additional strength to the partnership will be provided by the fact that realisation of the idea will benefit not only the community, but partners as well.

Every initiative, action and partnership has a wide sphere of influence. That is why it is important to reflect on all potential effects of the partnership in the widest possible spectrum. Consider:

*Who are the stakeholders in your partnership project?*

*How could the partnership influence them and how could they influence the partnership?*

*In which way are they involved in the project?*

*How do they perceive the project, i.e., how do you expect them to perceive?*

*What could they expect from the partnership?*

*Do you think your idea and goal are close and clear enough to the stakeholders?*

*Do you expect a positive reaction from the community where the partnership will be implemented?*

## Mapping and choosing the partner

*"The strongest partnerships are those that drew together the best group of partnership organizations." Ross Tennyson*

Mapping potential partners represents a unique research undertaking: it is necessary to gather as much information as possible about partners, systematise them according to adequate criteria and then make a choice. Internet presentations, news articles, annual reports and direct communication with potential partners are valuable sources of information which can help in the selection of partners compatible with the goals and values of your partnership initiative.

Depending on the nature of the partnership idea, there will be cases when you will be able to choose from the wide selection of partners: in others your choice will be narrowed. Regardless of the situation, the choice of partner will, to a great extent, determine the success of your partnership idea.

Try to objectively perceive the positive aspects of cooperation with a given partner and all potential aggravating circumstances and characteristics of said partner that could negatively influence cooperation. Therefore, analyse:

*Does the potential partner have experience in realising partnerships?*

*What kind of reputation does the partner have inside its own sector and the community?*

*Does the partner understand your work, ideas, values and mutual differences?*

*Is the envisaged partnership idea close to the activities that the organization/company has conducted in the community so far?*

*What resources could you count on during realisation of the partnership?*

*How do you plan to motivate your partner for cooperation?*

*Do you believe that the given partner is the one with whom you could share a vision of partnership?*

*What risks for the realisation of the idea cooperation with the given partner brings for your organization/company?*

These questions will serve as a guideline when considering potential relations and will lead you to a decision in choosing a partner.

The question of ethics, of both companies and organizations, especially in the context of consequences of the transition our society has traversed, is one of the most important questions imposing itself during the process of choosing a partner. Partnership is an opportunity to profit from the positive public reputation of a partner, but there is also a risk that negative connotations will be partially transferred to your organization.

## Resources mapping

Mapping resources is no more than compiling a list of all partners' contributions to a partnership. A multitude of resources and their diversity, brought by the partners from the business and civil sectors are important factors of success in partnership projects. The competencies of sectors are different and mutually compatible, and with adequate partnership managing skills can ensure great results.

Try to be precise when responding to the following questions:

*What resources do you make available to others?*

*What resources of the partner are necessary for realisation of the idea?*

*Professional knowledge? Information? Contacts? Finance? Space?*

*Although finances represent the most important resource for realisation of the partnership initiative, the quality of nonmaterial resources will very often play an important role when it comes to the quality of a partnership. An organization advancing the position of women in the community intends, in partnership with a local food production company, to realise a project that could lead to the founding of a catering service that could provide employment for women without a stable income. This kind of initiative demands substantial means (space, equipment), but also certain skills known to the business sector that the organization's members and beneficiaries lack. Moreover, skills for managing finances and knowledge of marketing and sales are necessary for the realisation of this project, in order to place the product in an adequate and successful way. Knowledge and expertise in managing and monitoring finances and creating a marketing strategy for catering services will be a resource that the company will contribute to the partnership through its employees' skills.*

## Activities

Planning the activities necessary to realise the partnership idea prior to reaching an agreement on the partnership's realisation may seem odd. However, experience from practise shows that the most successful partnerships are those where realisation went according to a plan, even if it was just a sketch of planned activities.

For the initiator of a partnership, drafting the activities serves as another feasibility test for the partnership idea and also as a reflection of the determination, readiness and dedication to the realisation of the project.

In the preparation stage it is sufficient to draft a short answer to the question:

*What activities do we need to realise the partnership?*

Instruments for planning activities and the importance of developing action plans are well known to professionals from all sectors. Specific planning when it comes to idea realisation through partnership lies in the potential diversity of ideas, different approaches and a multitude of available resources. This will come to the fore when the detailed action plan is being devised, which is one of the necessary steps in the realisation of the idea.

*The activity plan is one of the main elements of a partnership proposition for an organization which fights poverty in the local community. The organization, as initiator of the partnership, has elaborated an action plan whereby key activities for realisation of the partnership were predicted. In a team, by elaborating step by step, a picture of the partnership process has become clearer. Activity planning has represented a useful way of checking up different aspects of the partnership – the lists of necessary resources and stakeholders have emerged in the process. New possibilities and directions of partnership development have appeared, as has additional space for strengthening future cooperation with the partner through their involvement in more activities than initially expected. The plan has remained flexible enough and open to changes that can be initiated by the potential partner. Most importantly, planning of the activity has served as additional motivation and stimulus to go forward in concrete realisation.*

## Partnership negotiations

Partnership negotiation is a step which implies launching or intensifying negotiations with identified potential partners. However, these are not classic business negotiations, which are often characterised by a negotiators' firm adherence to their own interest only. As early as in this stage, the characteristic of the partnership concept will emerge, going above the conflict between values and goals of different sectors and including openness of partners towards creative and innovative solutions. Partnership negotiations are accessed with a firm belief and faith that the pursuit for a partner with whom you can share a common vision will be successful.

One of the methods of commencing the partnership negotiation is preparing and sending a document – a proposition for partnership realisation, which concisely explains the intentions and goal of the partnership initiative and motivates partners to participate in its realisation. This document is the result of preparation period during which a partnership idea has taken shape on the basis of gathered information, feasibility has been confirmed, common goals of the partnership have been identified, as well as the way to achieve them. In another words, the document should contain the information relevant for a potential partner, such as:

▸ What is the partnership idea? What change you aim to make and how is it achievable?

▸ What are the stakes and roles of the partners?
▸ Why is a partnership the best solution?
▸ Which benefits it brings to the community and which to the partners?

Be clear and decisive, but don't forget that it is a partnership, so make sure potential partners know that you are open to the joint planning of future activities, advancement of the idea and new, inspiring possibilities. The goal of this document is to motivate potential partners to build a partnership and share a vision.

Partnership negotiations take time, dedication and the readiness to perceive obstacles as a possible chance to advance the partnership. Show initiative. Show readiness to entirely respect the principles of partnership. Be open to conversation and imaginative, constructive solutions. Build a partnership vision together. Be transparent about your interests in realising the partnership and demand the same from your partner. Base the partnership on healthy foundations as early as in the negotiations phase.

The outcome of negotiations will not always be successful, but even in those situations you will have the impression that it was at least worth a try. Finally, your effort to achieve an agreement and realise a partnership will be one more step towards the sensitisation of all sectors and changing ingrained opinions regarding the difficulty of overcoming differences between the sectors.

## Model of partnership proposal

### 1. Summary

*What is the subject of the proposition for establishing a partnership?*
*How and who can realise the partnership idea?*
*What are the expected results of the joint project?*

### 2. Premise or "Bearing in mind…"

*How did we define the idea? Why is this idea important?*
*What is the issue in question? What is the context?*
*What do you want to change?*

### 3. Partnership idea

*Explain the idea. What do you propose?*
*What makes the idea relevant and feasible?*
*What will you gain with its realisation?*
*What makes your idea a partnership idea?*
*What is the common goal?*
*Why is a partnership the best form for the idea's realisation?*
*What are the advantages of implementing this idea through partnership, compared to its realisation by a single party acting alone?*

### 4. How?

*What activities are foreseen? What will they achieve?*
*If you haven't already planned actual activities, explain the necessary phases of realisation and expected results.*
*What is the time frame for realisation?*
*Ensure a potential partner knows that you are open to new ideas and constructive suggestions.*

### 5. Roles?

*What are the principles you would like to base the partnership cooperation on?*
*What is your role and what is your partner's role?*
*Why is that kind of division the best solution?*
*What qualities and competences that you possess are necessary for the partnership's success?*
*What qualities and competences of your partner are necessary for the partnership's success?*
*What recourses do you need for the idea's realisation?*
*How does each partner contribute to the partnership?*

### 6. Why partnership?

*Make a list of benefits for the community/beneficiaries
of your partnership initiative.
What are the particular benefits of partnership for the partner?
What do you expect from the partnership?*

### 7. Why choose a particular partner?

*Why do you believe that a particular company/organization
is the ideal partner?
Why do you believe that you can share a common vision?
What makes you sure the partnership initiative will succeed?*

### 8. What next?

*Further steps? Contact person?
Meeting proposal in order to present additional information?*

### + About us

*Who are we? What are your most significant results in the context of the proposed project? Which values we believe in? What do we strive to achieve?
Link/contact for more information*

## Institutionalisation

An agreed partnership can be made official in different ways: from utterly informal, such as shaking hands, to exceptionally formal, like signing a contract and other documents that define the partnership process in detail. It is up to the partners to choose a form of partnership institutionalisation. Bear in mind that partnership is a complex process which means sharing a vision, but also the duties and responsibilities for its realisation. Good practise in managing projects of any kind includes a clear concept of division of responsibility and achieving consensus regarding desired goals. Institutionalisation is advised due to all the specific features that a cross-sector partnership brings with it. An official written document can be the foundation for healthy management of a partnership and prevent potential misunderstandings and problems during the implementation.

The most common choice of document that organizations use when entering into a partnership is the form of partnership agreement or memorandum of understanding. Unlike a contract, an agreement is not legally binding, the engagement is set up on a voluntary basis and is a result of the joint preparation of partners.

Key elements of the partnership agreement are:

- ▸ a vision of the partnership
- ▸ principles on which the partnership is based
- ▸ common goals of the partnership, as well as individual goals of the partners
- ▸ ways in which each partner is contributing to the partnership and resources that will be made available
- ▸ basic procedures and areas of responsibility that will be assumed by partners individually.

Depending on the type and complexity of activity, some partnerships will include signing a contract on realisation or additional agreements. Although not legally binding, a memorandum or an agreement proves the partners' determination to implement a partnership, and as such gives additional credibility to partners and projects, probably drawing more attention of the stakeholders too.

### Example of partnership agreement

### 1. Partner organizations

*1.1. Partner A
    Contact information
    Contact person
1.2. Partner B
    Contact information
    Contact person*

### 2. Statement of intent

*2.1. We, the undersigned, confirm joint commitment to/in relation to...
2.2. Cooperating as partners, we are aware of the value that each of us can contribute to this undertaking/solution to this issue...
2.3. In particular, we expect from our partner to contribute to the project in the following ways:
    Partner A...
    Partner B...*

### 3. Structures and procedures

*3.1. Roles and responsibilities of each partner...
3.2. Coordination and administration...
3.3. Decision making processes...
3.4. Reporting and monitoring*

### 4. Resources?

*4.1. We are providing the following resources*
- *To the partnership...*
- *To the project...*

### 5. Revision?

*5.1. We agree to provide the partner with all the information relevant for this partnership, in an agreed manner*
*5.2. We agree to perform an assessment of the partnership*
*5.3. We agree to adjust and revise the partnership if it is necessary for the success of this partnership*

### 6. Closing Provisions?

*6.1. Although this partnership agreement is not legally binding for the partners, it presents their clear intention and dedication to achieving a common vision...*
*6.2. This partnership agreement will represent the foundation for future joint activities of partners and for possible legally binding contracts, which will regulate special areas of the partnership.*


*Signatories:*

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*Adjusted material from the publication "The Partnering Toolbook" by Ross Tennyson*

## Partnership in action

The time has come to begin the realisation of the partnership!

It is a moment when all necessary resources are being put to use and when joint efforts are invested in achieving the targeted goals. It is a moment when it is necessary to carry out everything that has been agreed upon, and in which the story about every partnership becomes unique.

In realising the partnership you will use the knowledge and skills you acquired in your previous work. Partnership management is not very different from management of any sort of project:

▸ Create a specific plan of activities and partnership structure in which you will define the time frame of activities and who is in charge for their realisation. Do not forget that this is a partnership, so responsibilities shall be adequately distributed among partners. This is of special importance for building and strengthening mutual trust.

▸ Mobilise all necessary resources. Engage yourself. Make a stakeholder map and consider how and to which extent they should be involved in the realisation of the partnership.

▸ Design a mechanism for monitoring the project. You can rely on standard instruments which you already use in project management.

▸ Communicate openly and in a timely manner. Conduct constructive discussions with your partners. Document the meetings and organize notes about partnership progression.

▸ Test the partnership. Determine the dynamics of reporting, which will point out the necessity of revising plans, thereby ensuring its successful realisation.

▸ Foster your partnership. Celebrate successes together.

▸ Spread the idea about the importance of partnership and, at the same time develop the capacities of your own organization/company to establish and successfully implement future partnership initiatives.

► Analyse the results, consequences and effects of the partnership. Has your goal been accomplished? Did you realise your own expectations and those of your partner? Compare tangible benefits and resources invested in realisation. What are the effects of your partnership on society?

► Share your story. Be an inspiration for future partnerships.

Successful realisation of a partnership requires managerial skills, which, with a lot of devotion and effort, can bring success to the partnership. Partnerships operate well when there is mutual trust between partners, focus on targeted results and a common vision. They demand an appropriate attitude and dedication. The "mutual" element is the most important one. It is the essence of every partnership idea and the source of motivation, strength, optimism and belief in success.

One of the most influential and most recognized publications on the subject of managing cross-sector partnerships is "The Partnering Toolbook" by Ross Tennyson. This toolbook represents a useful source of information about the creation and managing cross-sector partnerships and is one of the first toolbooks for this topic translated into Serbian. "The Partnering Toolbook" was published through cooperation between Smart Kolektiv and the International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF) and is available via www.smartkolektiv.org. Certain parts of this Guide are based on that very publication.

The information on most successful examples of partnership initiatives between companies, civil society organizations and the public sector in Europe can be found in the publication "Celebrating CSR Partnerships". This publication celebrates the winners of national competitions from 28 European countries, where the European CSR Partnership Award has been presented, with the support of the European Commission. This publication is available via www.smartkolektiv.org.

*A successful partnership is built on common values.*

*A successful partnership is based on mutual trust between carefully chosen, capable and responsible partners that accept mutual differences.*

*A successful partnership implies fair relations between partners regarding the stakes, risks and benefits of the partnership.*

*A successful partnership takes care to engage all stakeholders in the realisation of the partnership initiative.*

*A successful partnership demands skilful project management.*

*A successful partnership is based on transparency, open communication about all relevant issues, partners' flexibility and readiness to address challenges.*

*A successful partnership requires dedication, innovativeness and courage.*