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Cross Border Studies

The Partnership Principle and Multi-Level Governance in the EU

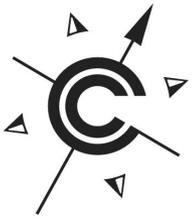
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European Union

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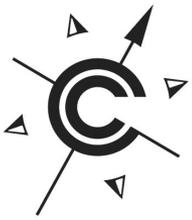


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Implementation of the partnership principle and multi-level governance in 2014-2020 ESI Funds

- Partnership Principle was strengthened for the 2014-2020 ESI Funds:
 - Compulsory for each ESI Fund programme to organise a partnership at **all programming stages** and at **all levels**.
 - A European **Code of Conduct on Partnership (CoC)**
 - all partners are involved at all stages in the implementation of Partnership Agreements and programmes;
 - more importance has been given to stakeholder involvement and influence.
- The aim of this study was **to review the establishment of the partnership principle and the application of the CoC** in the Partnership Agreements and programmes financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF), including European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) programmes and multi-fund programmes co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF).

(DG Regio)

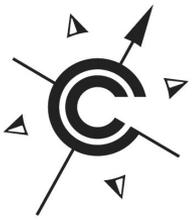


European Code of Conduct on Partnership

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The framework within which the Member States implement partnership:

- the partners selected should be the most *representative of the relevant stakeholders*;
- *selection procedures should be transparent* and take into account the different institutional and legal frameworks of the Member States and their national and regional competences;
- *the partners should include* public authorities, economic and social partners and bodies representing civil society, including environmental partners, community-based and voluntary organisations, which *can significantly influence or be significantly affected by implementation of the Partnership Agreement and programmes*;
- specific attention should be paid to *including groups who may be affected by programmes* but who find it difficult to influence them, *in particular the most vulnerable and marginalised communities*, which are at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion, in particular persons with disabilities, migrants and Roma people;
- for the selection of partners, it is necessary to take into account the differences between Partnership Agreements and programmes;
- *partners should be involved in the preparation and implementation* of the Partnership Agreement and programmes, through timely, meaningful and transparent on the analysis of challenges and needs to be tackled, the selection of objectives and priorities to address them, and the coordination structures and multi-level governance agreements necessary for effective policy delivery;
- *the partners should be represented on the monitoring committees* of programmes. Through their active participation in the monitoring committees, the partners should be involved in assessing performance on the different priorities, the relevant reports on the programmes and, where appropriate, calls for proposals;
- effective partnership should be facilitated by *helping the relevant partners to strengthen their institutional capacity* in view of the preparation and implementation of programmes;
- the *exchange of experience and mutual learning* should be facilitated;
- the role of the partners in implementing the Partnership Agreements and the performance and effectiveness of the partnership in the programming period should be subject to assessment by the Member States.



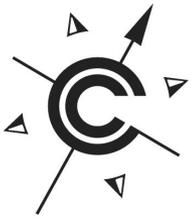
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KEY FINDINGS:

- The partnership principle has been satisfactorily respected in a wide range of countries and programmes.
- Still challenges across a broad range of countries concerning the mobilisation of partners.
- Generally the modified legal framework was perceived as positive as it increased awareness and visibility of the partnership principle.
- The level of stakeholder involvement has improved since the 2007-2013 programming period,
- although there are sometimes differences between the content of the programming documents and the perception of stakeholders.
- Overall, the partnership principle adds value to the implementation of European public policies.

Final Report – July 2016



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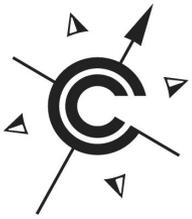
Analysis focused on the three topics:

1. *composition* of the partnership;
2. *involvement in the drafting process* of Partnership Agreements and programmes; and
3. the *involvement of partners in the implementation* of the programmes.

Additionally,

- general benefits and challenges of partnerships;
- comparison with the 2007-2013 programming period; and
- value of informal dialogue between the Member States and the European Commission (EC).

A separate chapter addresses European Territorial Cooperation programmes (ETC).



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- **The perception that respondents have of the processes is not always coherent with the information presented in the programme and Partnership Agreement documents.**
- The partnership principle is implemented very differently across the Member States, with the level and type of partner involvement often depending on national administrative structures and the existence of different cultures and historical legacies.
- The efficient implementation of the partnership principle is also dependent on the technical and financial capacity of the partners.

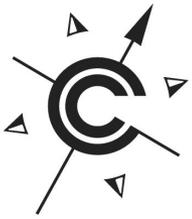


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Added Value of the Partnership Principle:

- experience and technical know-how is considered during decision-making processes, enabling better thematic balance and focus;
- brings commitment and ownership and thus facilitates policy implementation ;
- partnerships have brought about complementarities in respect of other policies, strategies and funding sources

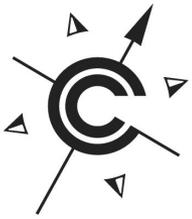


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The main challenges:

1. The main challenge has been ***the mobilisation of partners*** (including Ireland)
2. Difficult to develop balanced strategies when the stakeholders promote vested interests.
3. Opportunities to engage in constructive dialogue seem to have been hampered by time constraints (including in UK)
4. Administrative rules of the consultation process were often perceived as being too standardised, leaving little room for national adjustments.



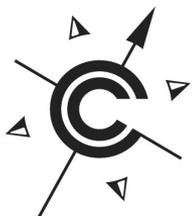
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Composition of the Partnerships

In general,

- the partnerships for both Partnership Agreements and programmes involve all types of partners but variations exist between Member States and between types of programmes.
- Countries that joined the EU in 2004 or later have more often than not established new partnerships, both for programmes and Partnership Agreements
- Countries that joined before 2004 have tended to build on existing partnerships.
- There are discrepancies between what is stated in the documents and *what is perceived by the survey respondents.*

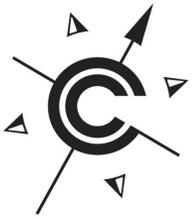


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Representation (%) of total number of partners in the Partnership Agreement EU wide, 28 Member States

Member State	Public Authorities	Percentage of public authorities and education provider				Civil society	Economic and Social partners	Other
		Local authorities	Regional Authorities	National Authorities	Education providers			
Ireland	30.0	18.5	3.7	66.7	11.1	20.0	34.4	15.6
UK	62.6	40.1	28.2	13.4	18.3	1.3	26.9	9.3
EU30	47.9	16.7	29.8	41.2	12.3	21.7	23.3	7.1

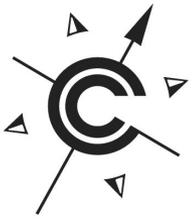


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Partnerships in the programming phase

- Partner involvement has generally been high in most countries, with partners being most commonly involved in the selection of thematic objectives/development of programme priorities and in the needs analyses.
 - The precise ways differ widely between the different Member States.
- Generally,
 - documents were accessible in time for partners to be involved and provide comments.
 - In a number of Member States it has been a challenge to allow enough time for partner involvement
 - Inputs from partners perceived to have been treated equally, but *public authorities are generally more positive compared to other types of partners.*
 - The results for the Partnership Agreements indicate that partner concerns had usually been taken into account, although the documents seldom described how the various comments were handled at a more detailed level.
 - **In ETC and single fund programmes partners' input is generally better taken into account than in other types of programmes.**

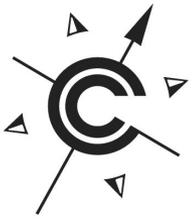


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Partnerships in the Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation phase

- Almost all programmes mention some sort of partner involvement during the implementation process, either through consultation actions or committee involvement.
- Programme partners will most often be involved through committees and only to a lesser degree through consultation actions.
- No major differences as regards the degree of involvement between different types of programmes.
- ***The main difference concerns the balance between public and non-public partners and how they will be involved.***
- ***Public authorities, especially from the national and regional levels, are generally overrepresented at the expense of the general public, civil society and the social and economic partners.***
- ***Substantial differences remain over what programme documents describe in respect of capacity building and the perception of the relevant stakeholders.***



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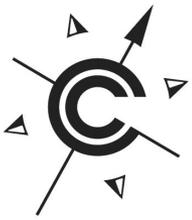
European Territorial Cooperation Programmes

- Cross Border Cooperation programmes (CBC)
- Inter Regional programmes (IR)
- Transnational Cooperation programmes (TNC)

- There is ***low involvement of civil society and social/economic partners*** and ***partnerships mainly build on already established structures.***

- Partners were in general directly involved in the drafting process
 - **some programmes mention a lack of institutional capacity** and a low level of commitment among partners.
 - procedures are mainly considered to be transparent
 - uptake of comments from partners has worked in a satisfactory way.

- Usually planned actions on how to involve partners during the implementation process, e.g. through topical or geographical expert groups.

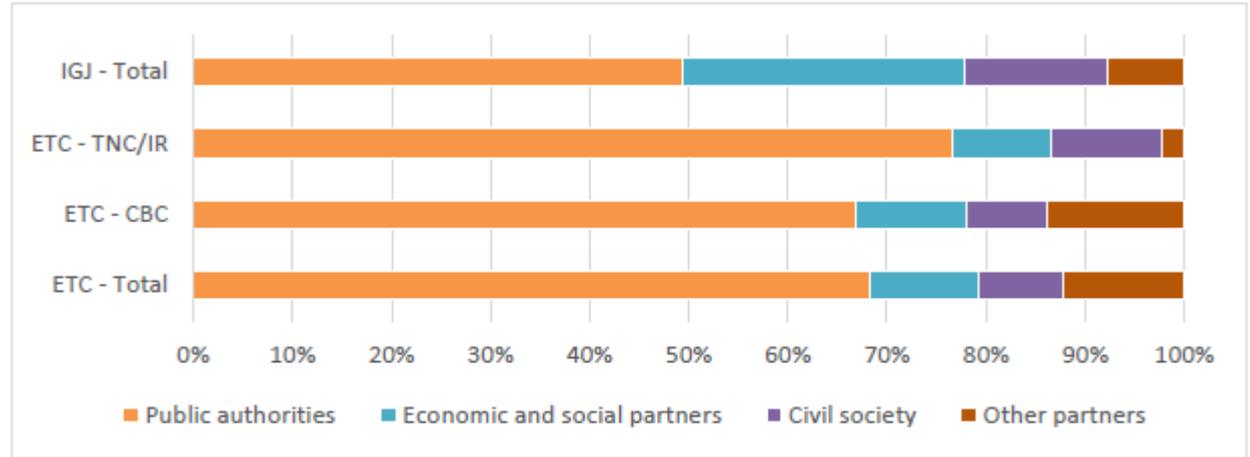


European Territorial Cooperation Programmes

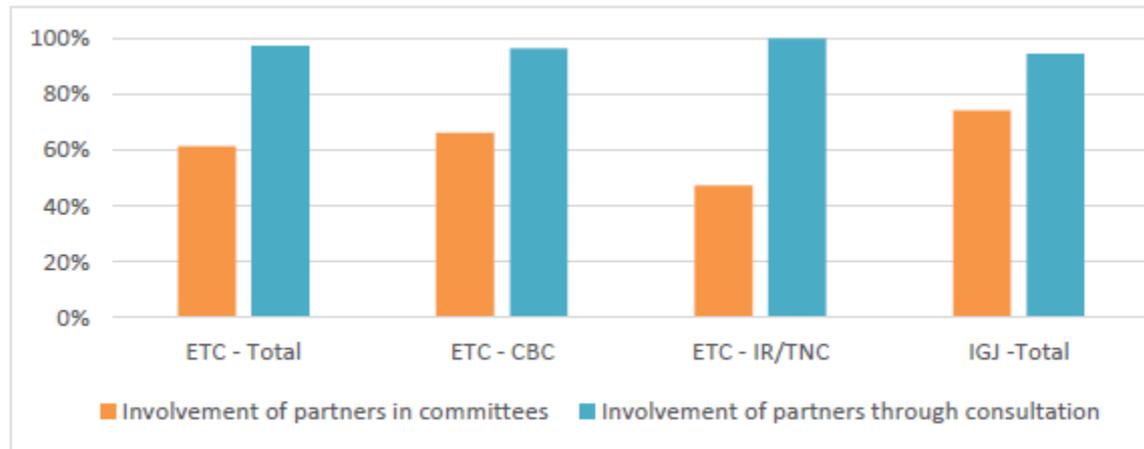
ETCs compared to Investments in Growth and Jobs (IGJ) programmes

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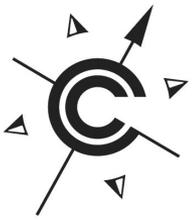
**Share of different types
of partners in the
partnership**



**Share of programmes where
partners will be involved in
committees/through consultation in
the drafting process**



Source: Project team 2015 (Sweco and Spatial Foresight)

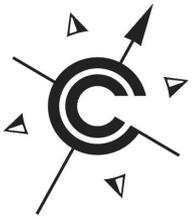


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Conclusions

- Application of the partnership principle has improved in the 2014-2020 ESIF period as compared to previous programming periods
 - The modified legal framework, including the CoC, is perceived as having contributed to it;
- Working in partnership brings added value;
- Implementation of the partnership principle is not without challenges:
 - In particular the mobilisation of partners, but also conflicting interest between partners need to be managed.
- Releasing the added value of the partnership work requires efforts, both to manage the partnerships and ensure that all partners have the capacities needed.
 - there may sometimes be a trade-off between effectiveness and efficiency,
- Stakeholder involvement and working in partnership constantly need to be adjusted to changing cooperation circumstances.



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TEIN Proposal



- qualitative research study of the implementation of the Partnership Principle in ETC programmes in selected EU border regions.
- build on the 2016 study outlined below, but would focus on the process of implementation of the partnership principle
- share learning of good practice in developing partnerships and engaging different levels of government with project promoters and programme beneficiaries