



## 1. PARTNERSHIP

A partnership between private and public subjects who aim to reach the same objectives is more and more necessary in the development process of a project. This is due to the scarce public resources which often force to create public/private agreements. Also, it is difficult to reach public interest objectives by acting on private properties if there is no corresponding increasing interest from the private stakeholders.

### **Managing partnerships**

Partnerships correspond to a form of co-operation or governance which is becoming more and more frequent. It is based upon various kinds of formal agreement (contract, association, etc.) aiming at implementing a policy or project. It brings partners together who seek a positive and concrete outcome from the co-operation, which they would not be able to reach on their own.

The concrete achievements of such partnership depend on:

- ❖ the commitment of the partners to play their part in reaching the common goal and the resources they can invest in the partnership;
- ❖ the will to achieve a win-win outcome for all partners;
- ❖ the trust and respect between all partners;
- ❖ the common belief in the importance and value of the partnership itself (e.g. will it be more efficient or competitive than working separately?)

### **Vertical partnerships**

In most European countries, urban matters and metropolitan functions are the responsibility of several tiers of government (municipalities, regions, national state, Europe) that share competencies on different fields. The increasing need for vertical partnerships in large metropolitan areas is also due to urban spread: the traditional institutional boundaries no longer define relevant metropolitan territories. Moreover, in the context of globalisation, major cities develop those vertical partnerships to strengthen their position in their region,

their country or even at an international level.

### **Horizontal partnerships (public-public or public-private)**

To implement integrated strategies at the metropolitan level, cities need to build partnerships with local stakeholders that have different competencies and resources. Such partnerships can involve various types of partners, ranging from private firms, to public organisations or NGOs.



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They can be focused on very concrete projects or service delivery; but they can also have a strategic dimension and deal with global and long term issues. Therefore, they take different forms, from a straightforward contract agreement, to a long term organisation taking the shape of an association for example.

In all cases, these partnerships are complex systems, in which each partner has his own goals, his own mind set, his own ways of working, particularly in public-private partnerships.

### **The organisation of partnerships**

Partnerships can take various forms and have various goals, according to different national and local contexts.

Among those different forms:

- ❖ Associations or Agencies: debate platforms designed to address metropolitan issues between key partners;
- ❖ Charters: agreements on some general principles or strategic lines;
- ❖ Contracts or other types of specific agreements: focus on a particular policy/project and a comprehensive action plan (objectives, time table, funding);
- ❖ European projects: frameworks for both vertical and horizontal partnerships.

In fact, the issues raised by these different categories of partnerships are quite similar. However, two characteristics make the difference between them:

- ❖ the position of the municipality in the partnership: it is usually the most powerful partner at the metropolitan level, whereas in vertical partnerships, its capacity to negotiate and to make its views adopted is more limited ;
- ❖ the proximity of interests between the partners: in public-private partnerships, the profit orientation of the private sector businesses creates an important cultural gap.

### **Difficulties of a partnership process**

A partnership can be either a relationship amongst partners with equal rights and status in a consensual environment, or an arena for competition and conflict between partners with unequal power. Here are a few necessary elements to build a successful partnership:

- Partners must have similar goals in the project/partnership
- The role of each partner has to be clearly set up
- The importance of the relationship among stakeholders with different capacity to act in a becoming process.



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## Analyse your situation

Answer the following questions (only those in **bold**) about the partnership in which you are involved:

- ❖ **Which category does it belong to (vertical / metropolitan, public-public / public-private)?**
- ❖ Who are the partners?
- ❖ **What form does it take (contract, association, informal meetings, etc.)?**
- ❖ Where does its legitimacy come from (political decision, common interests, common culture, history, etc.)?
- ❖ **Does the partnership have precise and well defined goals and priorities?**
- ❖ **Are the roles of all the partners clearly set? What do they bring into the partnership?**
- ❖ Which role does the city level play in these partnerships? Does it have means and influence to negotiate on major points or just on details?
- ❖ **Is there a common culture? or what are the different cultures?**
- ❖ Do people trust each other and/or trust the partnership?
- ❖ How was this trust/mistrust built?
- ❖ **Is there one or several leaders? does leadership change over time?**
- ❖ **What are the resources of the partnership as a whole?**
- ❖ How is power shared among the partners? Who has power? What type of power?
- ❖ How is information shared among the partners?
- ❖ How is the communication system organised?
- ❖ How is the performance of the system monitored?
- ❖ How does the partnership learn collectively? How does it adapt to changes in the environment and improve?

## Analyse the different partners

Ask yourself the following questions about each partner and about each potential partner:

- ❖ What are his general interests and priorities?
- ❖ What are his goals regarding the project/partnership?
- ❖ What are his general resources (time, money, etc?)
- ❖ What are the unique and outstanding resources he can put into the project (energy, expertise, useful contacts, information, etc.)?
- ❖ What power does he have to influence the outcome of the project?
- ❖ What is the quality of your relationship with him?
- ❖ What are his cultural background and his type of mind-set?

Thank you very much for your attention and collaboration!