



**Putting partnership in practice:  
An NGO perspective on the Key Success Factors**

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- 1. What is EAPN?**
- 2. Stakeholder participation in governance (programme level)**
- 3. Creating the right environment for partnership at project level**



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## **1. What is EAPN?**



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### **1. What is EAPN? Activities**

What is EAPN?

- 24 national networks, European organizations


Why structural funds matter for social inclusion

- 12% ESF expenditure
- But also the ERDF (social infrastructures)

EAPN activities on structural funds:

- Active at EU, national, regional and local level
- Information, advocacy, capacity-building and delivery

### **1. EAPN, structural funds and partnership**



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Partnership crucial for social inclusion

- poverty multidimensional (employment, health, education, childcare....)
- need to involve different levels and actors (incl. NGOs)

Covering programme and project level

Some challenges (article 11, end of EQUAL)



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### **2. Stakeholder participation in governance (programme level)**

## 2. Partnership in governance: what for?



Good governance principles (democracy and legitimacy)

But not only this:

- more transparency and better information
- better absorption of funds (improved selection of projects and information to beneficiaries)

## 2. Golden rules for partnership in planning and design (1)



Opening up consultation (NSRFs and OPs)

- Transparency and openness of selection (expertise)
- Beyond traditional social partners
- Beyond gender equality and disability *only*
- Acknowledging diversity of the sector
- Not only one or two umbrella
- NGO coordination and mandate

## 2. Golden rules for partnership in planning and design (2)



Ensuring right timing and process

- Consult at several stages and early
- Publish a consultation plan with clear deadlines
- Sufficient time for feedback

Making it matter

- Take views into account
- Provide feedback
- Make a report on the consultation

## 2. Golden rules for partnership in monitoring (1)



Ensuring participation in monitoring committees

- opening up beyond "traditional" partners  
(2000 - 2006: social NGOs only in half of Member States)
- transparent selection process

Allowing a real participation

- make all documents available in advance to everybody
- equal status and voting right/ not information only

## 2. Golden rules for partnership in monitoring (2)



Strengthening the capacity to engage

- providing training, support and assistance to members to ensure quality participation
- cover travel costs

Ensuring monitoring and reporting of partnership in projects

- ensure specific indicators for participation
- specific section on partnerships in annual ESF reports
- reflect diversity of outcomes (*soft* indicators)

## 2. Partnership in evaluation



Putting in place a real consultation on evaluation


Is civil society involved in defining the topics and method?

Commissioning a specific evaluation of partnership



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### 3. Creating the right environment for partnership at project level




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### 3. NGOs as partners in project. Why?

*Who* delivers projects (and *how*) matters

NGOs as partners in structural funds delivery.

- need for multi-dimensional and integrated approach to inclusion (e.g. employment, social services...)
- adapt to needs of excluded groups (Roma...)




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### 3. Obstacles to partnership at project level

Obstacles faced by NGOs

- lack of information
- lack of resources in application rounds and follow up
- difficulty to use the funds for "micro-projects"

➤ Right environment needs to be created at programme level: role of the managing authority



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### 3. Using technical assistance to strengthen partners' ability to take part in projects

Providing targeted training (UK, MT, SP, FR...):

- information on ESF and other funds
- financial management
- project management, monitoring and control

Ongoing assistance for project preparation and appraisal:

- application rounds
- implementation and evaluation
- reporting




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### 3. Providing adequate procedures and financial mechanisms

Putting in place a **global grant** system (grant managed through intermediary body): UK, PT, HU, SP...

Providing:

- small-sized grants (as well)
- accessible application systems and procedures
- 100% up-front financing
- 'light touch' monitoring and reporting requirements
- support to applicants and grant recipients



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### 4. Conclusion (1)

Strong partnership needs strong civil society:

- Using the fund to strengthen civil society (ESF art. 5)
- Capacity building (training NGO staff, building networks...)
- Especially in convergence area

#### 4. Conclusion (2)



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Partnership at EU level important as well:

- EU NGOs liaise with national and local level
- Channel for information
- Liaising with relevant EU NGO networks (social inclusion, disability, social housing...)

ESF Committee could open up beyond social partners

Strengthening cooperation with COP on partnership?