OPERAČNÍ PROGRAM
LIDSKÉ ZDROJE
A ZAMĚSTNANOST

EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLE IN THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME HUMAN RESOURCES AND EMPLOYMENT

Final Evaluation Report

WE SUPPORT YOUR FUTURE

www.esfcr.cz



esf evropský sociální fond v ČR

EVROPSKÁ UNIE

MPSV

Contracting Authority:

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

Na Poříčním právu 1

128 01 Prague 2

Contractor:

IREAS centrum, s.r.o.

Registered Office: Mařákova 292/9, 160 00 Prague 6

Offices: Štěpánská 16, 110 00 Prague 1

E-mail: ireas@ireas.cz

In cooperation with

Tima Liberec

Erbenova 376/2, 460 08 Liberec, e-mail: tima@tima-liberec.cz

Centrum pro komunitní práci (Centre for Community Work)

Horní náměstí 9, 750 02 Přerov, e-mail: stredni.morava@cpkp.cz

This report is the outcome of the contracted project „**Evaluation of the Implementation of the Partnership Principle in the OP HRE**“ funded from the OP HRE technical assistance project *„Development of Evaluations, Analyses and Expert Studies for the OP HRE 2008-2015“* which is co-financed from the European Social Fund and the state budget of the Czech Republic.

22 April 2011

Prague

List of Content

List of Observations 5
Executive Summary 7
I. Introduction 7
II. Methodological Approach 8
III. Evaluation Results 8
IV. Conclusions 13
V. Recommendations 16
1 Introduction 21
2 Partnership Principle and Evaluation Methodology 23
2.1 Partnership 23
2.2 Evaluation Methodology 25
3 Projects In Practice When Applying The Partnership Principle 27
3.1 Patterns and Procedures for Identification of Partners (1.1) 27
3.2 Partner's Costs (1.2) 33
3.3 Establishment of Cooperation (1.3) 36
3.4 Cooperation with past partners (1.4 and 1.A) 43
3.5 Cooperation with new partners (1.5) 52
3.6 Involvement of Partners into Project Intention (1.6) 53
3.7 Partnership models vs. Quality of Project Intention (1.7) 56
3.8 Initiative at project preparation (1.B) 65
3.9 Involvement of partners, which are not eligible applicants (1.C and 1.D) 65
3.10 Reflections of efficiency criterion in proposal of project activities (1.8) 68
3.11 Changes in composition of partnership (1.9) 73
3.12 Partnership efficiency (1.10) 77
3.13 Setting of financial flows in a partnership (1.11) 80
3.14 Application of equality of approach in a partnership in respect of internal financial flows (1.12) 83
3.15 Conformity between the share of financial resources spending and the level of partners involvement in a project (1.13) 86
3.16 Consistency in experts´ pays in partnership projects (1.E) 88
3.17 Partnership substitutability (1.14) 91
3.18 Necessity of partnerships in projects (1.15) 93
3.19 Level of partners´ involvement in projects (1.16) 95

3.20 Impacts of hypothetical reduction of the number of partners on the material and financial implementation of a project (1.17) 98
3.21 Appropriateness of a partnership structure (1.18) 100
3.22 Necessary changes in a partnership structure (1.19) 102
3.23 Decision making organization and mechanisms (1.20) 104
3.24 Communication mechanisms in a partnership (1.21) 109
3.25 Partnership effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability (1.22) 113
3.26 Partnership effectiveness and other forms of implementation (1.23) 120
3.27 Regional partnerships in the JROP 3.3 (1.G) 129
3.28 Formation of intersectoral partnerships in rural areas (1.H) 138
4 Contribution of the Partnership Principle to the Successfull Implementation of the OP HRE 150
4.1 Contribution of partnership to the implementation of relevance of the OP HRE (2.1) 150
4.2 Partnership contribution to the achievement of OP HRE objectives (2.2) 154
4.3 Partnership contribution to efficiency (2.3) 156
4.4 Partnership contribution to sustainability (2.4) 157
4.5 Contribution of Partnership to Impacts of OP HRE (2.5) 161
4.6 Contribution of partnership to effectiveness of horizontal themes (2.6) 165
4.7 Partnership and Innovations (2.7) 167
5 Institutional, legal and financial frame of the partnership principle 171
5.1 Legal, institutional and financial regulations of partnership (3.1) 171
5.2 Perception of partnership by public administrations (3.2) 188
5.3 Opportunities, Threads, Weak and Strong Points of Partner Projects (3.3) 199
5.4 Minimizing of Threads to Partner Projects (3.4) 202
5.5 Alternative Methods for Minimizing of Threads to Partner Projects (3.5) 204
5.6 Possible Modifications of Legal and Institutional Frame of Partnership (3.6) 208
5.7 Causes of Different Legislative Frames in EU (3.7) 210
5.8 Consequences of Different Partnership Frames in EU (3.8) 213
5.9 Improvement of Legal and Institutional Frame of Partnership in CR (3.9) 216
5.10 Possible Legal Modifications in Partnership Area (3.10) 217
6 Conclusions and Recommendations 220
6.1 General Conclusions 220
6.2 Conclusions to Individual Evaluation Themes 221
6.3 Recommendations 226
7 References 236

List of Abbreviations

ANNO JMK	Asociace nestátních neziskových organizací Jihomoravského kraje (Association of Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations of the South Moravian Region)
CBA	Cost Benefit Analysis
CIP EQUAL	Community Initiative Programme EQUAL
DSO	Dobrovolný svazek obcí (Voluntary Association of Municipalities)
EC	European Commission
EC	European Communities
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
FB	Final Beneficiary
HRD	Human Resource Development
IB	Intermediate Body
ITS	Integrated territorial strategy (thematically comprehensive medium-term plan of objectives and intentions in the territory covered by the LAG)
JROP	Joint Regional Operational Programme
KPSS	Community Planning of Social Services (Komunitní plánování sociálních služeb ())
KÚ	Krajský úřad (Regional Office)
LR	Liberec Region
LAA	Local Area Agreement (Great Britain)
LLL	Lifelong learning
LAG	Local Action Group
MA	Managing Authority
ME	Ministry of Environment of the CR
MEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of the CR
MLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the CR
MRD	Ministry of Regional Development of the CR
MZ	Ministry of Agriculture of the CR (RDP Managing Authority)
NGOs	Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations
NM	North Moravia
NRF	Neighbourhood Renewal Fund
NSRF	National Strategic Reference Framework
OP	Operational Programme
OP EC	Operational Programme Education for Competitiveness
OP HRD	Operational Programme Human Resources Development
OP HRE	Operational Programme Human Resources and Employment
OP PA	Operational Programme Prague Adaptability
OP TA	Operational Programme Technical Asssistance
ORP	Municipality with extended competence (obec s rozšířenou působností)
PA	Priority Axis
PA	Public Administration
RDP	Rural Development Programme
RIA	Regulatory Impact Assessment
RIS	Regional Innovation Strategy
ROP	Regional Operational Programme

RRP	Rural Renewal Programme
SAIF	State Agricultural Intervention Fund (RDP Funding Agency)
SB	State Branch
SE	southeast
SF	Structural Funds
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SPL	Strategic Plan Leader
TEP	Territorial Employment Act, Austria
V4	Countries of the Visegrad Four (Poland, Czech republic, Slovakia, Hungary)

Executive Summary

I. Introduction

Partnership is an important principle in the area of economic and social politics both at the European and the national level. We can find it when drawing up economic and social policies and when preparing programmes and projects at the national level. The significance of partnership is particularly apparent in that it allows involvement of all actors in order to let them jointly contribute to solving problems that affect them directly.

This evaluation was executed from May 2010 to February 2011 by a consortium of companies - IREAS, Tima Liberec and CpKP – primarily concerned the OP HRE, a programme funded from ESF. Within this programme, it is particularly priority axes 3 and 5 where a large number of projects executed within a partnership can be found (in axis 5 it is mandatory to have an international partner).

The objective of the evaluation is to evaluate the implementation of the partnership principle in project practice and provide practical recommendations and tips for preparation of calls, application assessment and administration of projects based on the partnership principle in OP HRE.

The actual evaluation was divided into three basic groups:

- Evaluation of the practices of OP HRE projects while applying the partnership principle.
- Evaluation of the contribution of the partnership principle for achieving the objectives of OP HRE and for fulfilling the horizontal themes.
- Analysis, comparison and evaluation of the institutional, legal and financial framework of the partnership principle practice in the Czech Republic and in selected EU member states.

Therefore, the research carried out within this evaluation analyzed the creation, form, problems and possibilities of the partnership principle in OP HRE projects. The fulfilment of the partnership principle not only at the national level but also at the international level was evaluated. Even financial aspects of the execution of the partnership principle at the project level were evaluated. Parts or sections of the evaluation also concern the legislative and institutional framework of the partnership performance.

In the following chapters of the summary, you can first find a brief summary of the data and methods of information collection. In the next chapter, there are conclusions based on the findings. This entire section is then concluded with recommendations for further steps.

The output of this evaluation project includes three publications („Sborník dobré praxe partnerských projektů ze zahraničí“ – “Collection of good practices of partnership projects executed abroad”; „Sborník (nejen) dobré praxe partnerských projektů ESF“ – „Collection of (not only) good practices of ESF partnership projects“ and „Příručka pro partnerské projekty“ – „Manual for Partnership Projects“). There is also a collection of fifty case studies on which the above publications were based and an outline of a workshop on partnership projects.

II. Methodological Approach

Processing of the evaluation was based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. The objective was to obtain sufficient data and information for objective assessment of the implementation of partnership projects. In this regard, several methods of collection of relevant data and information were used.

A continuous activity, which has been implemented since the very beginning of the implementation, is processing of data from previously published studies on the partnership principle. Together with the above, an analysis of the legislative framework of the partnership principle was carried out.

In the following stage questionnaire surveys were carried out among the applicants for programmes funded by the ESF in the Czech Republic. In this survey, nearly one thousand responses from applicants for these programmes (divided by the support area) were obtained. Additionally a survey among international organizations implementing the projects in a partnership was carried out.

Information obtained through the previous methods was supplemented by information from in-depth guided interviews with fifty applicants for support from the OP HRE. This method was supplemented by information from focus groups.

Data from databases and information systems supplemented by other independently collected data were analyzed so that it was possible to obtain a relatively objective view of the situation in partnership projects and the environment in which they were implemented.

Where possible and appropriate, the data from the above collection methods were combined together and further analyses were carried out. A number of statistical analyses were created and are now part of the Technical Appendix. This appendix will be provided on request.

The evaluation results and recommendations arising were discussed at a panel discussion with representatives of the managing authority and intermediate bodies of the OP HRE. Incorporation of contributing suggestions led to greater viability of the proposed recommendations.

More detailed information about the methods of implementation of this evaluation is contained in the Technical Appendix.

III. Evaluation Results

The next part contains brief evaluation results (findings). These results are divided by topics of concern.

Partnership Typology

Most projects are implemented by limited liability companies (s.r.o.), civic associations, towns and municipalities. Basic partnership models:

a) By geographical location: local partnerships (cooperation of entities within a municipality or within region borders at most) are applied in nearly two thirds of the surveyed cases. A

minority are national or even international partnerships. A frequent case of intersectoral partnerships is cooperation of a non-profit organization and a town.

b) By sector: More than a third of partnerships are partnerships of entities from different sectors but intra-sectoral partnerships are also frequently found – that is, entities engaged in the same field of activities. Slightly less frequent are partnerships of entities from the same sector (intra-sectoral).

c) By the number of partners: nearly one half of the applicants have one partner, approximately one third of the applicants have three and more partners but there are also projects with eight and more partners (4.5% in total).

Beneficiaries in the OP HRE relatively more frequently (41 %) conclude a partnership within the same field than the beneficiaries of other OPs (27 %). Within the OP HRE, there are mainly intra-field partnerships (25 %), local intersectoral (22 %) and local intrasectoral (18 %) partnerships. The least frequent are intrasectoral partnerships within the EU (i.e. with at least one international partner).

Intersectoral partnerships with cooperation between a non-profit organization and a town were frequently found.

Establishment of Partnerships

Applicants carefully consider the contribution of partners before they begin with joint preparations of a project proposal. Approximately 90% of applicants address mainly those partners with which they have had good experiences in the past. The partnership initiative comes from the applicant as frequently in the OP HRE as in other OPs but the joint project preparations take place in the OP HRE less often (76.5 %) than in other OPs (89.5%).

In the vast majority of cases, those organizations are selected as partners with which the applicants had cooperated in the past and therefore there was mutual trust between them. The reason is mainly that the applicants want to be sure that the project implementation will not encounter any problems. The added value expected by most partners of the OP HRE projects is their ability to have contact with the project target group.

In some cases an organization, which was established on the basis of a previous partnership, became an applicant. This arrangement allowed them to fully meet the principle of joint decision-making of the partners.

Partnership in the priority axes 2 and 4 in the OP HRE was not common. These were usually individual projects and mainly intended for implementation in a single administrative district of the given institution. However, even though a partnership is possible, public administration beneficiaries often do not see any benefits which the partnership could bring to the project and themselves.

Composition of Partnerships

Most of partnerships in the implemented projects were composed appropriately in relation to the project objectives. The specific composition of partners was usually chosen in mutual harmony between the expected project objectives of the partners (79% of projects). On the other hand, many

projects appeared to include partners that only increased capacities for achieving the planned outputs and were not necessary in terms of functionality.

The composition of individual partnerships was working well in most projects. Within the implementation teams, there is currently a strong tendency not to make any changes in the partnership composition.

The need for an exchange of partners only occured in exceptional cases but it was assessed as rather complicated by the beneficiaries. It also happened that a beneficiary needed to exchange its partner but the partner did s not want it to happen (the partner had basically certain income and guaranteed work) and therefore this exchange did s not take place.

The number of partners ranged between one and nineteen. Most projects had one partner (43 %), two partners (25 %) and three partners (16 %). It had shown that the most usual were local intra-field partnerships (25 %), local intersectoral (22 %) and local intrasectoral (18 %) partnerships. The least common were intrasectoral partnerships with an international partner.

In the previous programme period, many beneficiaries (mainly out of the group of NGOs) complained about the ambiguity and legislative insufficiencies of the definition of a partnership. When comparing the situation in the current programming period, it was apparent that this situation mattered much less for the implementation of partnership projects. Experienced beneficiaries had apparently learnt how to use partnerships without its legal anchoring.

Decision-making in Partnerships

In more than half of the projects, some partners actually did not make decisions but only accept ed decisions. In 42 % of all cases respondents and partners talked about joint decision-making of all partners saying that their express consent was necessary for a decision. The highest occurrence of joint decision-making was in the area of support 3.3 Integration of Socially Excluded Groups in the Labour Market (approximately two thirds of projects).

The decision-making and financial flow systems in individual partnerships suited well to the individual partnership members in most cases. A typical feature of the current OP HRE was a highly centralized approach to the decision-making process setting within partnerships, among other things, even in terms of decisions on financial flows. This was influenced by the legal responsibility of the support beneficiary and not partial partners.

The Financial Aspect of Partnerships

The financial aspect of partnerships was evaluated from various points of view (e.g. economy of partnership projects, financial flow systems or the rate of involvement of partners). There were some changes in the project proposals and their budgets, however, they were very different in division on partnership projects and projects without partners. The budgets of proposed projects were modified by the evaluation committees in less than 1 % of partnership projects. In the case of non-partnership projects, it was much more (4.28 %). This suggests that budgeting within the partnership projects is

more realistic under the condition that the external evaluators were confident in their assessment and managed to distinguish realistic budgets of partnership projects.

The system of financial flows in individual partnership models mainly suited individual partnership members. A typical feature of the current OP HRE wad a highly centralized approach to the decision-making process setting within partnerships in terms of decisions on financial flows. This was influenced by the legal responsibility on the side of the beneficiaries. The questionnaire survey showed that in terms of the use of funds by individual partners and compliance with their level/intensity of involvement in the project activities, the situation in a vast majority of cases corresponded to the original expectations set out in the project application (approximately 80 % of respondents). In the case of about 8 % of respondents, the results and activity of partners exceeded their originally expected level of involvement. On the other hand, low involvement of partners and drawing of funds only occured in exceptional cases. The issue of possible introduction of co-funding could be very difficult in the case of non-profit organizations. On the other hand, it would increase the efficiency of the implemented project activities and the responsibility of the implementers and partly even the representatives of the project target groups.

Contribution of Partnerships to the Implementation of the OP HRE

The results suggested that even in the current programming period there are a number of projects that are heavily dependent on external (public) financial resources. Nearly 55 % of project partners believe that a certain number of activities will have to be limited unless a new source of funding is obtained and 10 % believe that most activities will be terminated.

About a third of partnership projects in CIP EQUAL from the previous programming period really continued in their joint activities even after the end of funding from the ESF. The sustainability of the results of projects was influenced mainly by the focus of individual partners. If partners operated in a similar field, it is more likely that they will continue to cooperate through joint activities.

Partnerships influenced the effectiveness and sustainability of the projects in that without a partnership 17 % of the projects would not have any planned outputs and 71 % would have only some output (partners individually). In terms of meeting project objectives, it was said that the existing partnership is irreplaceable in 81 % of projects.

It is apparent in projects implemented by beneficiaries who had experience with CIP EQUAL that they tried to apply the key aspects of this programme even in the current projects. It is particularly obvious in PA 5. International cooperation, partnerships, mainstreaming and also higher acceptance of the equal opportunities issues weree more apparent in these projects. Within these projects a number of long-term system measures for the labour market hade been created.

Furthermore, it was possible to prove the benefits of the partnership principle in terms of perception of horizontal topics at the project level. Organizations entering the partnership projects consider more the necessity of equality of men and women in the labour market.

It was not proven that partnership projects significantly contributed to the fulfilment of the objective of individual priority axis of the OP HRE. The role of programme partners was completely different. The concept of the OP HRE was based on partial analysis of a number of social partners. Some of

them contributed in a greater extent, e.g. Romany issues. The involvement of some partners was also well acknowledged abroad. Overall, the level of participation was appropriate, however, in some areas the programme partners could contribute more to the implementation of the OP HRE in terms of relevance.

In other aspects that were examined (efficiency, innovation), it was not possible to prove a different influence of projects with or without a partnership.

Legislative Framework of Partnerships

Currently, there is already legislative space in the Czech Republic in which the partnership can be applied and developed and thereby support its acceptance in the society.

When analyzing the legal environment, we often encountered the fact that the law of the Czech Republic does not contain a definition of partnership or a specific legal description of this term. Nevertheless, the application of the partnership principle is not excluded and may be even required in some exceptional cases.

The key legal norms regulating the legal environment is the Constitutional Act No. 1/1993 Coll., The Constitution (Art. 4) and Act No. 40/1964 Coll., Civil Code (§839 – Agreement on Association), Act No. 218/2000 Coll., on Budgeting Regulations (funding of partnerships §7), Act No. 250/2000 Coll., on Budgeting Regulations of Local Budgets (funding of partnerships §9 and §10) and Act No. 137/2006 Coll., on Public Procurement (funding of partnerships §2). These norms do not contain a specific legal definition of partnership but they create space for its application.

The analysis of legal obstacles revealed the absence of a legal framework which would allow funding from the state budget and the budgets of local autonomous regions provided to multiple entities in one joint project. The analysis of obstacles in financial flows also revealed that the current legal framework defining the mechanism of transfer of funds does not comply with the system of funding of European projects. In this case, it is a situation when the law defines who provides funds for institutions of the public sector but the law does not state that the funding organization may be a beneficiary of support from the ESF as it is not included in the current wording of the laws.

As a result of the fact that a municipality, a region and a state branch cannot be a partner with a financial contribution, there were situations that prevented the establishment of a partnership:

- in the event that the project is submitted by an ORP, municipalities under its powers may not be partners,
- if non-profit organizations initiate the partnership and large multiple partnerships, they lose the opportunity of financial motivation of municipalities, i.e. the key partners of KPSS,
- a lower number of projects is submitted in total,
- the quality of planning may be compromised.

The evaluation brings an overview of legislative, institutional and financial regulations and rules for partnerships set out in the Czech Republic and at the EU level, the consensual wording of the definition of a partnership and describes weaknesses and threats to partnership and proposes solutions how to eliminate these weaknesses and threats.

The beneficiaries are only able to eliminate weaknesses and threats at the internal level of partnerships. Therefore, it is possible to increase their capacities in the current system for the implementation of the partnership principle through education. That applies particularly to public administration where there is a relatively low level of perception of partnership as of a supporting factor.

IV. Conclusions

Overall, the partnership principle may be evaluated as a positive element in the implementation of OP HRE projects. The fulfilment of this principle at the project level brings a synergistic effect for the target groups in the form of mutual use of knowledge, skills and potential of partner organizations. Partnership seems to be a supporting element also for long-term sustainability of results of the project activities.

At the programme level, partnership brings higher effects in the form of harmonization of programme objectives with the needs of the target groups.

At the project level the most important feature of partnerships is joint work with joint decision-making and significant and irreplaceable participation in the project of all partners.

Ideally, the partnership should be in the form of (1) a long-term relationship, (2) mutual benefits of cooperation, (3) not only declared but real common objectives of partners shared in reality, (4) full acceptance of the content and forms of cooperation by all partners, (5) necessity and balance (each partner contributes something that would otherwise be missing and without which the result could not be reached), (6) the synergistic effect – overall positive effects are greater than the sum of effects of individual participants.

The proximity of the OP HRD, CIP EQUAL and OP HRE allowed massive transfer of former partnerships into new partnership projects. In the third priority axis, it was probably even a factor of growth of the number of project applications in the current period. Experience from the CIP EQUAL and other events and programmes, where a number of partnerships were established, seem to be very beneficial for the establishment of partnerships. Many institutions had the chance to gain first hand experience with the implementation of partnership projects and now they are developing the experience even further.

There was also a significant shift within the „financial inflexibility“. This was mainly related to the experience gained by individual partners. Currently, the system of partial payments is not considered to be a major problem by the beneficiaries. However, late payments within applications still cause major problems in a number of partnerships even today even though many more entities are now prepared for this situation than in the case of CIP EQUAL.

Experience from the CIP EQUAL helped to create outputs oriented at system changes within the priority axis 5. This particularly happened thanks to the implementation of projects in partnerships when some of the partners bore responsibility for mainstreaming.

Formation and Composition of Partnerships

Most applicants were relatively cautious and chose their partners from existing well-proven partners. On one hand, it reduced the potential innovativeness of the project activities but on the other hand it limited the risk of implementation of problematic projects.

In the case of OP HRE partnerships, there was a tendency toward centralized decision-making already at the time of preparation of the project application. This was due to the division of responsibilities for possible future implementation of the project. The applicant (potential beneficiary) tried to have everything under control. Transferring part of the responsibility to the partners would decentralize the decision-making.

For the parties involved, this meant extending the project by additional skills, knowledge, organizational capacities and possibly even financial resources (for co-funding or for the period of sustainability).

Involvement of partners in the project was of great importance especially for contacts with target groups and to achieve better project objectives. Less common but yet still significant benefits for the beneficiaries consisted in acquiring skills and knowledge for project management and cooperation beyond the project itself. In both cases, it wassuch a combination that could ultimately lead to impact on the target groups.

The Financial Aspect of Partnerships

Within the evaluation, no direct relationship was found proving real financial savings due to the partnership principle. We can objectively talk about time savings, higher efficiency of performed activities, direct influence on target groups etc. Projects with the partnership had better possibilities to influence target groups and adjust project outputs to them, however, no clear financial savings were proven in these types of projects.

Within the analysis of achieved and planned values of the monitored indicators, it was not possible to prove that there were differences between projects with and without partnerships. In the case of real values of monitored indicators after the completion of projects it was also caused by the fact that only a relatively small sample of cases was available.

Sustainability and Impacts of Projects in Partnerships

When projects were implemented in partnerships, they were apparently more sustainable in the long run. These were particularly cases when the partners were representatives of the target groups who also had the position of users of the project outputs. From this point of view, the actual partnership principle was one of the structures supporting sustainability.

It can be assumed that impacts of projects implemented in partnerships and their sustainability can be increased if the support beneficiaries also secure part of the funds from other sources than the OP HRE. This would increase their involvement and effort to reach the planned impacts. At the project level, this step would lead to an increase of potential impacts. However, on the other hand it must be pointed out that there was a risk associated with this step within partnerships at the programme level. It is highly probable that representatives of NGOs and other actors acted against this step. In this regard, an ex-post PO5 evaluation will provide interesting information as in PO5 international partners do not have a share in the project budget and therefore basically co-fund the project.

Orientation of Programmes and Calls

The reason for supporting partnerships is to improve the situation by involving actors from target regions and target groups. That will lead to better understanding of the issue and better priority setting. The following three expected benefits of partnerships are particularly emphasized:

- More participants take part in the solution and bring new perspectives and solutions.
- In the discussions, participants accept the decisions as their own and are more likely to follow its implementation.
- With a consensual decision on a solution, it is easier to sustain the results of this solution in the long run.

Partnerships between the MA OP HRE with representatives of the target groups and social partners in the preparation of a call could help clarify the current needs of target groups and increase the absorption capacity in terms of the ability to draw ESF funds and in terms of achieving effects. That can play a positive role when discussing allocations for the following programming period.

For the OP HRE, partnerships at the programme level are particularly important in terms of relevance. It has been long since the preparation of the OP HRE. The external environment of the programme had changed and even the needs of target groups have developed. Consultations with the target groups may help better aim the calls and the ability to address current needs and problems.

Legislative Framework of Partnership

The definition of partnership used for the OP HRE projects met the basic criteria for the implementation of partnership projects. However, the definition of partnership in the laws of the Czech Republic and related partnership project implementation processes obstructs better fulfilment of this principle. This is caused particularly due to lower involvement of actors from the public sector in partnership projects.

An amendment to the Act No. 218/2000 Coll., on Budgeting Regulations, and the Act No. 250/2000 Coll., on Budgeting Regulations of Local Budgets could lead to increased interest in partnership projects in public administration.

V. Recommendations

Recommendations are divided into five basic groups within which individual steps for implementation of recommendations are more closely specified.

1) The MA OP HRE should support the definition of partnership and conditions for suitable composition of partnership for more efficient project feasibility and benefits for the target groups

A clear definition of partnership could help a number of „applicants-beginners“ to apply for support from the OP HRE.

Involvement of partners in the project was of great importance especially for contacts with target groups and for better achieving of project objectives. Less common but yet still significant benefits for the beneficiaries consist in acquiring skills and knowledge for project management and cooperation beyond the project itself. In both cases, it is such a combination that can ultimately lead to effects on the target groups.

1.1 We recommend introducing provision of legal services for review and possible creation of appendices to the partnership agreement as eligible project costs. This eligible expenditure must be limited by a maximum amount per project (e.g. up to CZK 10,000 per project). Although it is considered as a strength that the MA provides a template of the partnership agreement, lack of experience with partnership and project management can be reflected in practice in that partnership agreements are only written according to this template formally. Only when the project is being implemented, the beneficiary sees that the partner does not provide anything that is not in the agreement and that the cooperation must be specified much more precisely (evaluation questions 3.1, 3.7 and 3.10).

1.2 For the project level, it is recommended to specify the terms partner and supplier in the OP HRE Implementation Document (page 12), in the Guide for Applicants (page 31), in the Guide for Beneficiaries (page 42) and in the relevant calls as follows: (evaluation question 1.23)

a) An entity, which only or mainly provides the beneficiary or other partners with access to the given target group without fulfilling any other important or irreplaceable tasks within the key activity, is not an acceptable partner;

b) An entity, which (besides participating in the project management) provides services to partners who ensure participation of a target group, is not an acceptable partner or beneficiary.

1.3 When submitting the application, the MA is recommended to require more carefully the statement of reasons for involvement of individual partners. We therefore recommend an assessment of suitability of a change in the C3 criterion (Partnership) in the OP HRE Guide for Project Evaluators in the regard that the evaluator also has to assess the functional irreplaceablity of partners in terms of the outputs. The evaluator would assess this by the rate of involvement and contribution of partners to the implementation of the project (in the category of monitoring indicators) and the rate of drawing of funds in the case of partners with a financial contribution.
The proposal of an amendment to the assessment criterion C3: The criterion also assesses whether all proposed project partners are necessary and irreplaceable in terms of the output or functionally. I.e. it must be clearly stated in the application (or in the appendices) what added

value the partner brings to the project and why the project could not be implemented or would be very difficult to implement if the partner was not part of the project. The irreplaceability can be of two types as follows: a) the partner is irreplaceable if the value of the monitoring indicators could not be achieved if the partner was not involved (e.g. if two businesses are partners who have their employees trained, they are both irreplaceable in terms of the output because each contributes with a certain number of supported persons, b) a partner is irreplaceable if it plays a significant role which cannot be played by any other partner (including the recipient) and which cannot be omitted without a risk of failure to meet the project objectives and monitoring indicators (evaluation question 1.23).

1.4 We recommend considering the possibility that in the case of more than two partners the applicant provides proof of previous experience with management of partnership projects and the ability to manage a partnership project. It will be part of evaluation of project applications (evaluation question 1.7).

1.5 We recommend including the following types of entities as possible partners in projects in the areas of support listed in the table. Thereby, a wider groups of target groups can be addressed and included (evaluation questions 1.7, 1.C and 1.D):

Area of Support	Type of Entity	Brief justification
2.1	Business associations, chambers of commerce, entrepreneur guilts	Entry only as partners without financial support.
3.2	Job centres	Extension of beneficiaries/partners by important entities in the area of integrations of Romani people.
3.3	Semi-budgetary organizations (e.g. schools, hospitals etc.), providers of social services who are not NGOs, job centres	Enlargement of the range of possible beneficiaries with relevant needs and capacities for meeting the objectives of the area 3.3.
3.4	Entrepreneurs and business associations.	This only regards explicit confirmation of their acceptability.

2) Through partnership, the MA OP HRE should encourage compliance of the focus of the programme and the calls with the needs of the target groups.

Partnerships of the MA OP HRE with representatives of the target groups and social partners during the preparations of the calls can help clarify the actual needs of the target groups and increase absorption capacity both in terms of the ability to absorb the ESF funds and in terms of the achieved effects. That could play a positive role in the discussions on allocations for the following programming period.

Application of the partnership principle may be helpful particularly for the long-term impact of support.

2.1 At the programme level, we therefore recommend greater involvement of representatives of target groups not only in the preparations of a new programme (for the following period) but also in designing the concept of new calls in the current period so that the needs of the target groups comply with the objectives of the programme, priority axes and individual calls. To fulfil the above, methodologies and techniques of involvement of affected groups and public should be consistently applied in the decision-making processes in which it is allowed by the current legislative and the establishment of horizontal (project) and vertical (when creating programmes and strategies) partnerships. We recommend to apply the Methodology for Public Participation in the Preparation of Government Documents which was approved by Government Decree No.

1146/2009 Coll. Particularly in accordance with the principles of involvement of public (chapter 1.6 of this methodology – timeliness, clarity, adequacy and expertise, resource availability, comprehensiveness, transparency, openness, trust and consensus). The following parties should be invited to join the discussions:

PA1: Business associations, chambers of commerce, entrepreneur guilts,

PA 2: Job centres,

PA 3: NGO associations,

PA 4: Municipalities, Association of Towns and Municipalities, Association of Regions and other associations in the public sector

PO5: the above.

(evaluation questions 2.1 and 3.5)

2.2 We recommend to the MA OP HRE to use representative studies, strategies and networks that have been established in partnership projects and use these results for planning next calls and the following programming period (e.g. study made for the issues related to persons over 50 years of age on the labour market in the project No. 48 in the Call No. 12 or projects No. 34 and 46 in the Call No. 51 even though these projects have not made any progress in their implementation). If using such studies, the MA would not have to spend any more funds when preparing the new programme because part of the analyses has been carried out (evaluation question 3.9).

2.3 We recommend the MA OP HRE to use in projects creating thematic networks and the results of these networks for information on creation of 2014+ programmes. For example, in the area of improvement of access and return to the labour market for persons who are difficult to integrate – projects 12.00001, 12.00037, 51.00042, 51.00047; strengthening the social economy, especially community services - projects 12.00021, 51.00010 and 12.00038, 12.00125 (community partnership projects), equal opportunities for women and men - project 51.00066 and labour market integration of foreigners in the project 12.00072. (Evaluation question 3.9)

3) The MA OP should support the partnership principle through building capacities of beneficiaries and partners.

The evaluation results showed that the overall view of the application of the partnership principle is positive. In a number of evaluated aspects, positive influences of partnership on the implementation of projects were found. From this perspective, this principle should be supported.

3.1 The partnership principle (and therefore also its positive effects – see summary of evaluation conclusions) could benefit from the use of the OP HRE support for building of capacities of beneficiaries and partners, particularly in skills which are necessary for the implementation of partnership projects:

- Creation of networking and building of partnership structures,
- Initiation, development and management of partnership projects,
- Management,
- Leadership,
- Performance Management,
- Communication.

It particularly applies to PA3 and PA5 where it regards strengthening of existing approaches. In the case of PA4 and PA2 it regards the use of the partnership principle as such. Publications have been issued within this evaluation and should be used for any possible educational activities (evaluation questions 3.4 and 3.9).

This type of education should lead to increased interest in partnership projects in PA2 and PA4, particularly for the programming period 2014 – 2020. The interest could be also encouraged by possible legislative adjustments.

3.2 In the long-term perspective, the partnership principle (and achieving greater effects of supports), the methodological support and education of public administration and other entities will help in the areas of good governance, management, leadership, partnership, quality management, communication, public participation in decision-making. This decision may be implemented through a change of focus of education of public administration (4th priority axis of the OP HRE). The ideal form of partnership in terms of implementation of ESF support is stated in the evaluation conclusions (evaluation questions 1.22, 3.1 – 3.10, particularly 3.4 and 3.9).

4) The MA OP HRE should support the growth of efficiency of partnership project financing

One of the most frequently discussed issues is the efficiency of interventions. It can be increased by implementing co-funding from the beneficiaries of support. This would increase the responsibility of beneficiaries for the implementation of projects. In many cases partnership projects would be implemented for financial reasons.

4.1 We recommend adding a criterion favouring those projects that do not require 100% funding in the system of evaluation of project applications for the programming period 2014-2020. This would increase the responsibility of beneficiaries if they provide part of the budget also from other sources. We suggest implementation of the following progressive system: 0% co-funding = 0 points, co-funding up to 5% = 5 points, co-funding up to 10% = 15 points (evaluation questions 1.10, 1.14, 2.5).

4.2 In the previous evaluations, co-funding within the OP HRE is suggested only for the priority axis 1 where the applicants are businesses. In the programming period 2014-2020 we recommend to introduce co-funding also in other priority axes (applicants will be competing among themselves in individual appeals within the appropriate priority axes). As a result, we expect that due to this step the applicants will plan more carefully which partners to include in the project. The partners will then expect that the project will bring real benefits for which they will participate in the project. Therefore, this is one of the key aspects of the benefits of partnership for the sustainability of activities (evaluation questions 1.10, 1.14, 2.5).

4.3 We can recommend carrying out an analysis of real impacts of the projects within PA5 where there are the most numerous partnerships and the roles of some partners are not entirely clear. However, this is a PA in which „hidden“ co-funding from the beneficiaries of support is already required (in that international partners are not able to get funding from OP HRE) and therefore certain pressure on achievement of higher effects can be expected (evaluation question 2.5).

4.4 In the area of support 5.1 (international cooperation) the MA should contact similar programmes (priority axes) in other EU countries and try to synchronize the dates for calls with at least some countries so that partnership projects can be submitted at the same time. These are particularly those countries that are the most frequent partners in Czech projects (Slovakia, Great Britain, German, Austria, Poland). The responsibility for harmonization of the project proposals can be transferred onto the applicant by drafting the calls as continuous (evaluation question 1.3).

5) The MLSA of the CR should support the legislative framework of partnership

From the long-term perspective, it is possible to support the partnership principle through legislative support.

5.1 The partnership principle would benefit from an amendment to the Act No. 218/2000 Coll., on Budgeting Regulations and the Act No. 250/2000 Coll., on Budgeting Rules of Local Budgets containing the possibility and conditions under which projects and activities carried out in a partnership of multiple entities may be funded (subsidies may be provided) from the state budget and budgets of local autonomous areas (performed by the MLSA CR in cooperation with the MF CR).

5.2 The partnership principle would benefit from an amendment to the Act No. 218/2000 Coll., on Budgeting Regulations and the Act No. 250/2000 Coll., on Budgeting Rules of Local Budgets containing the possibility and conditions under which projects and activities carried out in a partnership where one of the partners is a state authority or a semi-budgetary organization established by a state authority, a local autonomous area a semi-budgetary organization established by a local autonomous area may be funded (subsidies may be provided) from the state budget and budgets of local autonomous areas (performed by the MLSA CR in cooperation with the MF CR).

5.3 In any possible amendments of partnerships it is suitable to base the actions on the legal anchoring of an unincorporated association under the Civil Code (provisions § 829 – 841 of the Act No. 40/1964 Coll., Civil Code as amended). This recommendation may only be implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice. (MLSA CR, Government of the CR)

1 Introduction

A partnership is an important principle in the area of economic and social policies at both the European and national level. We can see it in designing economic and social policies and when preparing programmes and projects at the national level. The importance of partnerships is particularly apparent in that it allows involvement of all included parties so that they can jointly participate in the search for solutions to problems which directly affect them.

In the programming period 2000 – 2006 this principle was one of the key pillars of the Community Initiative Programme EQUAL. Although CIP EQUAL is currently no longer active, its principles were transferred into the current programmes. One of them is also the partnership principle.

This evaluation carried out between May 2010 and February 2011 primarily related to the OP HRE – a programme funded from the ESF. Within this programme, it is mainly the priority axes 3 and 5 where we can see a high number of projects implemented in a partnership (in the priority axis 5 it is mandatory to have an international partner).

The objective of the evaluation was to assess the implementation of the partnership principle in project practice and to provide practical recommendations and tips for the preparation of calls, evaluation of applications and administration of projects based on the partnership principle in the OP HRE.

The evaluation was divided into three basic groups:

- Evaluation of practice of OP HRE projects when applying the partnership principle.
- Evaluations of the benefits of the partnership principle towards fulfilment of the objectives of the OP HRE and horizontal themes.
- Analysis, comparison and evaluations of the institutional, legal and financial framework of the partnership principle application in practice in the CR and in selected EU member states.

Research carried out within this evaluation therefore analyzed the creation, form, problems and possibilities of the partnership principle within the OP HRE projects. The fulfilment of the partnership principle was evaluated not only at the national level but also at the international level. Financial aspects of the implementation of the partnership principle at the project level were also evaluated. Parts of the evaluations also regard the legislative and institutional framework of the fulfilment of partnership.

In the following chapters you will first find a brief summary of the data and information collection methods. It is followed by the evaluation results (findings) sorted by individual thematic groups. The following chapter contains conclusions based on the findings. This entire part is concluded by recommendations for next actions.

The text of the evaluation is sorted by individual topics and evaluation questions. There is also stated the actual evaluation question possibly also with a sub-question. This is followed by a description of the solution method with an analysis. Each of these parts is concluded by conclusions and recommendations. At the very end we included conclusions and recommendations of the entire evaluation including the logic of possible procedure from the tree of objectives.

The outcome of this evaluation project also includes three publications („Sborník dobré praxe partnerských projektů ze zahraničí“ – “Collection of good practices of partnership projects executed abroad”; „Sborník (nejen) dobré praxe partnerských projektů ESF“ – „Collection of (not only) good practices of ESF partnership projects“ and „
Jak na partnerské projekty? “ – „How to solve Partnership Projects“). There is also a collection of fifty case studies on which the above publications were based and an outline of a workshop on partnership projects.

2 Partnership Principle and Evaluation Methodology

2.1 Partnership

The partnership principle is a topic intensely developing in the Czech Republic in connection with funding from EU sources (whether as pre-accession or the Structural Funds assistance). A certain framework has been given to it by the conditions applied to the calls for submission of project proposals. However, this term is not legally defined and therefore its fulfilment is partly flexible and corresponds to the approach of the project partners themselves.

However, partnership is not perceived only as a matter of EU funds.[1] Partnerships at the local level (town, municipality) are not concluded only „ad-hoc", when implementing specific minor activities but they persist for development of the municipality or are aimed at specific policies of the municipality. Partnership is created not only in the rescue of individual cultural landmarks, renewal of traditions or solutions of sudden environmental problems. Partnership become a tool of openness of public administration and part of policies of towns, municipalities and regions, e.g. in planning and implementation of sustainable strategic / regional development, when planning and providing social services or waste management.

A pure and strong partnership significantly increases the efficiency and overall success of the EU sustainability policy. It is particularly apparent at the programme level where the programmes are strategically aimed at the needs of target groups. Partnership is a tool of sustainable economic and social development: thanks to it, EU funds are more sensitive to the needs of entities at the lowest level; partnership increases the visibility of the EU and strengthens democracy. Successful partnership must be based on a long-term perspective of real participation and provide equal opportunities to allow private partners to play an active role alongside public authorities.

Partnership is usually promoted by non-governmental non-profit organizations. Partnership between an NGO and public administration may be established at the local, regional or national level. Non-profit organizations enter a partnership with public administration in problem identification, search for solutions, specific implementations and evaluations of actions.

The OP HRE defines the following as **partnership characteristics**:

1. targeted association of various entities = **aimed partnership**
2. joint creation, coordination and evaluation of a project = **joint work with joint decision-making**
3. significant and irreplaceable participation of all partners in the project = **synergistic potential**

The following three rules create additional conditions or negatively define partnership as follows:

[1] Partnership means a common objective and interest, close cooperation and joint responsibility for joint projects, mutual support and trust, mutual respect for needs, equal position of partners, higher performance in implementation of various projects and their higher transparency. Mutual exchange of information and experience is important..." see document „Evaluation of the Concept of the Non-Profit Sector Development Support" approved by the Government Decree from 5 January 2009, page 41 (available at http://www.vlada.cz).

4. the partnership may not replace provision of regular project administration
5. the nature of legal relationships between the applicant and its partners may not be based on provision of services
6. a partner in grant projects may receive financial support for its share in the project implementation

Irreplaceability should probably mean **functional irreplaceability**, e.g. that in order to successfully meet the project objective, at least one school must be present. However, usually projects are approved for funding in which there are several similar partners in terms of function and type (e.g. several schools, business or towns).

Therefore, we relate the irreplaceablity to the outputs of the projects and we emphasize the word „significant" participation. According to this looser interpretation, we could consider even several businesses (schools, towns) as correct partners even though they act similarly in relation to the project (e.g. people are educated in the same course) but each one creates different - even though similar in type – output: different participants, different graduates.

An important characteristic is the **synergistic effect of partnership**, i.e. the ability to achieve results which could not be achieved if the potential partners did not associate and cooperate.

Another important characteristic of partnership is the partners' joint decision-making (not only their cooperation). It is joint decision-making that excludes the situation of a regular customer-supplier relationship as stated in condition No. 5.

Within the OP HRE there are two types of partnership:

a) **Project partnerships.** They already exist at the time of preparation of project applications and usually continue during the project implementation and sometimes persist even after its termination. They are mainly established during the project preparation but sometimes they even persist from the past (e.g. from the previous period just like in the case of CIP EQUAL) and they are renewed and activated again during the preparation of the application. In this case, the grant provider puts emphasis on the fact that the potential partners agreed on the cooperation in advance in order to jointly prepare and implement the project and even jointly „maintain" its selected results depending on the circumstances.

b) **„Resulting" partnerships**. The beneficiary of support is an entity initiating a partnership that does not exist yet and creates it during the project implementation and often maintains this partnership even after the termination of the project. In this case, the grant provider puts emphasis on the fact that the applicant has the necessary potential required for creation of a functioning partnership during project implementation, proves the existence of a partnership at the completion of the project and in some cases keeps and maintains the partnership after the project completion (this requirement results from the OP, the specific call and approved application) [2]. In this case, the main question will be whether the initiator (e.g. region) is not

2 See e.g. support are 3.1 OP HRE – Call No. 5 for submission of individual projects of regions for provision of social services or individual project within the call 50 Comprehensive support of development of further professional education in small and medium-size enterprises (ROZAM).

so hegemonic in the relationship (decision-making, financing, communication) that the partnership principle is reduced to a supplier-buyer relationship.

Managing authorities of the OP and other parties to EU funds assistance implementation operate with the term „partnership" so that it meets their intentions in project funding and attach a number of technical conditions to the chosen approach which the applicants/beneficiaries must meet.

In terms of fulfilment of the predescribed criteria by the applicant/beneficiary and practically also in terms of passing time of successful partnerships we can distinguish two types:

a) **„Technical partnership",** which meets conditions stated in the PD OP, is formalized by a partnership agreement and is usually given extra points during project application submissions;

b) **„Value partnership",** which is a higher development stage of partnership and brings additional values to the cooperation.

Partnership in its narrower „value" sense **brings results and impact which distinguish** it from other forms of cooperation. In the ideal case, such a partnership should have the form of (1) a long-term relationship, (2) mutual benefits of cooperation, (3) not only declared but also real shared common goals of the partners, (4) full acceptance of the contents and forms of cooperation by all partners, (5) necessity and balance (each partner contributes something that would otherwise be missing and without which the result cannot be achieved), (6) synergistic effect – overall positive effects are greater than the sum of effects of individual participant.

2.2 Evaluation Methodology

Processing of the evaluation was based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. The objective was to obtain sufficient data and information for objective assessment of the implementation of partnership projects. In this regard, several methods of collection of relevant data and information were used.

A continuous activity, which was implemented from the very beginning of the implementation, was processing of information from previously published studies on partnership principle. An analysis of the legislative framework of the partnership principle was carried out.

In the following phase of the solution, questionnaire surveys were carried out among the applicants in programmes funded from the ESF in the Czech Republic. In those surveys, nearly one thousand responses from applicants of these programmes (sorted by the support area) were obtained. A survey among foreign organizations implementing the projects in a partnership was carried out as well.

Information obtained through the previous methods was supplemented by information from structured interviews with fifty applicants for support from the OP HRE. This method was supplemented by information from focus groups.

Based on the interviews with the recipients and identification of successful partnership projects, case studies were prepared which can help future applicants in preparation of successful partnership

projects. The studies also included those projects that implemented partnership unsuccessfully or in an incorrect way. Even such cases can be very instructive.

Data from databases and information systems supplemented by other independently collected data were analyzed so that it was possible to obtain a relatively objective view of the situation in projects in partnerships and the environment in which they were implemented.

Where possible and appropriate, the data from the above collection methods were combined together and further analyses were carried out.

The use of individual methods is apparent from the analytical part of individual evaluation points. These analyses mention the source of information and the method by which this information and data were processed and which results the evaluation team reached.

3 Projects Practice When Applying The Partnership Principle

The following chapter contains analyses for each evaluation question which was discussed in this evaluation. It always states a specific research question, the answer to which is searched for by the evaluation team, the solution procedure and results. It always states conclusions resulting from the finding and possibly also recommendations for implementation.

3.1 Patterns and Procedures for Identification of Partners (1.1)

Already the actual selection of project partners will significantly influence future project implementation. Selection of suitable partners can greatly enhance the future impacts of the project but also paralyze the partnership. The evaluation question focuses particularly on patterns and procedures for identification of project partners.

The main evaluation question is: Which patterns and procedures did the recipients follow when identifying suitable partners?

To what extent did they consider the following circumstances when choosing their partner:

- Whether they have similar goals in their current activities
- Whether its participation brings clear benefits (increase of acceptability of the project application, partner's experience, place of operation etc.);
- How long they know each other from other activities;
- Whether the partner will be able to accept the contents of the prepared project and the form of future cooperation
- To what extent it is necessary and irreplaceable for the success of the application.

How did they find out about the possible partner? What did they consider before they decided to accept the partner / how important was it during the decision-making?

3.1.1 Data processing method and commented results

3.1.1.1 Identification of Partners

How did the applicants find out about possible partners? In 4/5 of cases they knew them from previous cooperation.

The methods of initial contact are more or less the same in the OP HRE as in other OPs (differences are statistically insignificant):

Table 1: How did you find out about possible partners?

	Applicants OP HRE		Total
	Yes	No	
We knew our partner from previous cooperation.	82.7 %	75.6 %	80.2 %
The partner was recommended by another partner or someone close.	4.0 %	9.8 %	6.0 %
The partner contacted us because they were interested in our activities.	1.3 %	7.3 %	3.4 %
Other	12.0 %	7.3 %	10.3 %
Total	**100.0 %**	**100.0 %**	**100.0 %**

Source: Questionnaire survey 1 Tima Liberec

In terms of areas of the OP HRE support we can evaluate only the most frequent method (familiarity from previous cooperation) because we do not have sufficient data for a statistical analysis[3]. Previous familiarity was used by 100% applicants in support area 3.2, 80-92% in 1.1, 2.1 and 3.1, 70-80 % in 3.3 and 3.4 and only 67% in 5.1. However, these are only approximate results because the number of respondents in individual areas ranged between 5 and 19.

Likewise, the relationship between the initial contact and the type of applicant are statistically insignificant (business, NGO or other). Most „other methods“ are seen in public administration where there are other selection procedures (hierarchy and subordination structures compared to the independence of businesses and NGOs).

We assume that in a number of cases the future partnership is „recommended“ by someone at seminars or meetings the objective of which is to bring together future partners. That could apply to 6-7% of all applicants in all OPs co-funded by the ESF.

3.1.1.2 Criteria for partner selection

The survey as a whole is focused on **project partnerships** which are established already at the time of preparations of project applications, last throughout the project implementation and sometimes persist even after its completion. The emphasis of the grant provider is on the agreement of potential partners on future cooperation in advance in order to jointly prepare and implement the project and jointly “maintain” selected results according to the circumstances.

The larger share of the evaluated project partnerships will show characteristics of so called value partnership, the deeper, more permanent and valuable it will be. Already earlier we have identified the following characteristics of partnership:

1. **not only declared but also real shared common goals of the partners;**
2. **mutual benefits of cooperation;**
3. **a long-term relationship**;
4. full **acceptance of the contents and forms of cooperation** by all partners;

[3] In this and similar cases of „data insufficiencies“ it is necessary to keep in mind that in the event of low frequency of occurrence of a certain event in reality, e.g. when only 6% originate from a recommendation, it would be necessary to ask a high number of respondents to obtain entirely correct conclusions (e.g. in the above example it would have to be 16x higher, i.e. in total obtain an answer from 1,856 applicants in the OP HRE which proved to be practically impossible with the given method and duration of the survey).

5. **necessity and balance** (each partner contributes something that would otherwise be missing and without which the result cannot be achieved);
6. **synergistic effect** – overall positive effects are greater than the sum of effects of individual participant

In the survey we only excluded the last characteristic (synergistic effect) because it is difficult to ask a simple question on the synergistic effect: even if limiting the suggestibility of the question, respondents would tend to answer positively because they assume that the synergistic effect is expected. In our opinion, for other items this effect – negative for a valid survey – is significantly lower.

The research showed that **when selecting their partners they mainly assessed whether they have similar objectives, what benefits their inclusion in the project will bring and whether they will be happy with the factual contents of the project and the project management method.** Less frequently it was of importance for how long they knew the partners and to what extent they are necessary for the success of the application. It is understandable that we could search for various interpretations within the general decisions of the respondents and their overall answer (in % of the number of responses) because already the understanding of the presented versions by the respondents could vary (e.g. the understanding of necessity, irreplaceability).

A detailed analysis through a comparison of differences of the arithmetic means of groups of applicants in the OP HRE and other OPs showed that **applicants in the OP HRE take into account all of these aspects in a lesser extent than applicants in other OPs.**

Table 2: Differences between applicants when selecting their partners (Full wording in the table)

	Applicants - OP HRE		Applicants - other OPs	
	mean	N	mean	N
To what extent did you consider similar objectives?	1.41	71	1.33	40
To what extent did you consider the benefits of your partner's participation?	1.53	72	1.32	40
To what extent did you consider familiarity from other activities?	1.63	71	1.56	36
To what extent did you consider the acceptability of future cooperation?	1.40	72	1.38	40
To what extent did you consider the irreplaceability of the partner for success of the application?	1.83	71	1.63	38

Source: Questionnaire survey 1 Tima Liberec. N = number of respondents.

However, these results are based on the assumption of equidistant scales where there is the same distance between the answers „we considered it very much" and „we considered it in a medium extent" and the answers „we considered it in medium extent" and „we considered it very little or not at all". This is a clear weakness of the measurement but it occurs commonly.

No explanation was found for these differences in data.

3.1.1.3 Other criteria applied during the selection procedure

The identification of criteria applied to the selection of partners continues with a similar question: „**What else did you consider before deciding to accept your partners?"** After elimination of a number of responses „I do not know" we calculated the results as a % of the number of answers in each partial question:

What else did you consider before deciding to accept your partners?"

The research suggested that most often a beneficiary considered the formal acceptability of the partner (in 97% of cases „definitely yes or rather yes"), the benefits brought by the partner to the project, its expected role, expectations of the application towards the partner's results and the balance of the partnership solution. Although the last two circumstances appear in a lower number of cases, it is still a clear majority (at least 87%). If we consider the answers as reliable, it suggests a mainly very careful selection of partners.

In smaller numbers there are also other circumstances considered by the applicants. However, it was always only one partial circumstance and always also most of those stated in Table 3 were present.

Similarly as in the previous question, we used a three-grade scale for further processing by merging „rather not" and „definitely not" and we calculated arithmetic means of all sub-questions for the group of applicants in the OP HRE and applicants in other OPs:

Table 3: Differences among applicants when selecting partners

	Applicants - OP HRE		Applicants - other OPs	
	Mean	N	Mean	N
To what extent did you consider the acceptability of your partner	1.19	69	1.37	27
To what extent did you consider benefits brought by the partner to the project	1.41	71	1.24	37
To what extent did you consider your partner's role in the project	1.55	69	1.31	36
To what extent did you consider your partner's ability to meet its obligations	1.63	70	1.59	37
To what extent did you consider the balance of the partnership etc.	1.60	70	1.38	37

Source: Questionnaire survey 1 Tima Liberec.

The comparison of applicants and non-applicants in the OP HRE once again suggests that **besides considering the acceptability of the partners these criteria were considered more often in other OPs than in OP HRE.** However, similarly as in Table 3, even here the quantification caused a loss of information about how careful or crucial this selection was.

According to the results of the survey in November 2009 among 495 applicants in the OP HRE, it may happen that „such a partner is invited to join the project with whom it is easy to meet the planned indicators even if the partner basically does not contribute to the project implementation" [4]. That

[4] See Evaluation in relation to monitoring – evaluation of the indicator system of the OP HRE. Final Report, MLSA, February 2010, page 78.

was the opinion of about a third of the respondents who admitted that there are practices to ensure the required outputs and results.

3.1.1.4 Creation of Partnership Profile Quality Index

In two questions (see Table 3) on the criteria for selection of partners we tried a slightly different scheme of answers (in the first case a three-degree scale, in the other one 4 grades + „I do not know“) to find out how large is the share of those who answered „I do not know“ and thereby filter out all those who consider themselves informed. It is generally true that if the respondent is not sufficiently informed, their answers are random or with a certain trend and the findings are unstable, unreliable.

On the other hand, we made the possibility of a combination or a single expression of the results in both questions complicated. Therefore, we first excluded the answer „I do not know“ and merged grade 4 („We definitely did not consider it at all.“) with „rather not“. The resulting merged scale is equidistant, it uses the grades from the first question transformed from the four grades of the second question and excludes the answers „I do not know“.

For those applicants who identified a grade, in which they considered the given criterion, in all ten sub-questions **we calculated „the partnership profile quality index“ as a weighted average of the responses from 10 criteria**. There are 87 respondents in the sample and the other respondent did not address one or more criteria. 24 respondents did not address one of 10 criteria and 13 respondents failed to address multiple criteria.

Table 4: Basic characteristics of applicants in terms of partnership profile quality index

Number of respondents	processed	82
	excluded	37
Arithmetic average		1.47
Quartile	25	1.20
	50	1.40
	75	1.70

Source: Questionnaire survey 1 Tima Liberec.

The value of the first quartile **can be interpreted as a sign of great attention which the applicant pays to the selection of their partner**s. To achieve this value, the applicant cannot have less than 8 of 10 criteria at the level „to a great extent“ or „definitely yes“ and only two or less criteria at the level „to a medium extent“ or „rather yes“. On the contrary, only in four cases (i.e. about 3%) the number of greatly considered criteria was lower than the number of criteria which were given no or little consideration. In other words, **only a negligible part of the applicants does not pay the necessary attention to the selection of their partners [5].**

The following table shows the index values and the corresponding frequencies. The lower the value, the more attention is reportedly paid by the applicant to the selection of its partners. The value of 1.0 may be reached if the applicant pays high attention to all 10 criteria of the selection. On the other hand, the lowest possible value of 3.0 would be reached if the applicant did not pay any or only a

[5] Out of these 4 cases, three are NGOs and one semi-budgetary organization; three entities applied within the OP HRE and two were granted support in areas 1.1 and 3.1.

little attention to all criteria. However, entities who did not address one or more criteria were excluded from the calculation even if they assessed all other criteria as very important.

Table 5: Distribution of the sample of applicants by the partnership profile quality index

index	1	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	2	2.1	2.2	2.4	Total (N=82)
%	11	6.1	12.2	9.8	12.2	8.5	8.5	11	9.8	3.7	2.4	2.4	1.2	1.2	100

Source: Questionnaire survey 1 Tima Liberec.

It must be stressed that this simple index a) is based on an arbitrary selection of partnership characteristics, b) uses the same weight for all characteristics, c) refers to the way how the partnership originated, d) is based on the answers of representatives of the applicants themselves, e) quantified the level of attention paid by the applicant to the given criterion using an equidistant three-grade scale. Due to these limitations, the index was not subject to a more sophisticated statistical analysis.

How large and how significant is the difference in average indices between applicants in the OP HRE and other OPs? Taking into account only the self-assessment of those applicants who addressed all 10 criteria (i.e. current 82 entities), the findings from sections 1.1.2 and 1.1.3 are confirmed saying that **applicants in other OPs claim paying more attention to the criteria when selecting their partners than applicants in the OP HRE.**

Table 6: Partnership profile quality index for applicants and non-applicants in the OP HRE – all criteria were assessed

	mean	N	group median	minimum	maximum
Applicants - OP HRE	1.51	60	1.50	1.00	2.40
Applicants - other OPs	1.38	22	1.35	1.00	2.10
Total	**1.47**	**82**	-	**1.00**	**2.40**

Source: Questionnaire survey 1 Tima Liberec.

If we expand the processing to all applicants who address more than half of the 10 presented criteria (a total of 114 respondents), this difference decreases only slightly.

Table 7: Partnership profile quality index for applicants and non-applicants in the OP HRE – most criteria were assessed

	mean	N	group median	minimum	maximum
Applicants - OP HRE	1.51	74	1.49	1.00	2.40
Applicants - other OPs	1.40	40	1.39	1.00	2.10
Total	**1.47**	**114**	-	**1.00**	**2.40**

Source: Questionnaire survey 1 Tima Liberec.

Analysis of variance and then a t-test of the difference between the average values of the index show that – if increasing the extent of the last sample – the significance increases but overall it does not exceed 0.076. Strictly speaking, **we should not accept the assumption of statistical significance of the differences in the reached level of index between applicants in the OP HRE and other OPs based on the acquired data.**

If the partnership has been already created, it was created for the purposes of long-term cooperation. This statement results from the survey results:

Table 8: How long have you been cooperating with most of these partners? (in %)

One project period or 1-3 years	35.4
Long-term cooperation	64.6

Source: Questionnaire survey 1 Tima Liberec.

3.1.2 Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

Identification and selection of partners is conducted very carefully. The applicant mainly considers the formal acceptability of the partner, the benefits the partner brings to the project, the partner's expected role in the project and the balance of the partner solution. Most applicants know their partners from previous cooperation. The decisive and more frequent aspect of the search and selection of partners is their familiarity with the applicant from previous cooperation.

When selecting partners for a new project, the applicants consider whether they have the same goals, which benefits their inclusion in the project brings, whether the material contents of the project and the management method suit them and reportedly also even to what extent the partnership will be balanced, logically interconnected and without gaps, frictions and possible conflicts. In a minority of cases, they consider the necessity and irreplaceablity of the partner.

Most applicants considered the formal acceptability of the partner, the benefits brought by the partner to the project, the partner's expected role, the expectations of the applicant towards the partner's results and the balance of the partner solution. According to their statements, applicants in other OPs pay more attention to the criteria when selecting their partners than applicants in the OP HRE.

Most applicants know their partners from previous cooperation. If the partnership has been created, it was created for the purposes of long-term cooperation (i.e. more than 3 years).

3.2 Partner's Costs (1.2)

The selection of suitable partners is made based on certain criteria. One of them, which is important, are also financial relations within the partnership. Implementation of a project „for a good purpose" without a high-quality financial security can lead to bad results. Therefore, the following analysis is focused on the selection of partners according to the costs associated with them.

Two questions were evaluated:

What role did the costs associated with the participation of the given organizations in the project solution pay in deciding on the selection of suitable partners compared to the costs incurred by similarly oriented organizations?

Does the involvement of partners lead to an expansion of the project resources with further skills, knowledge, organizational capacities and financial resources (for co-funding or for the sustainability period)?

3.2.1 Data processing method and commented results

It is generally expected that the costs incurred by partners will play a small role because operational programmes are generally considered generous and they usually do not force applicants and partners to save costs. They cannot get outside the limits though (e.g. ratio of costs of service purchases and the total direct project costs) but not even inadequacy of the budget itself is a reason for rejecting the application and many applicants use this fact and „inflate" the budget sometimes. This is also shown by some material evaluations of project applications.

Even the evaluators themselves (in external material evaluation) in most OPs have to take into account the efficiency of the proposed investment, i.e. the ratio between the outputs and costs, however, this aspect is usually not clearly highlighted in the requirements for an evaluator. E.g. instructions for the OP EC (version 6 from April 2010, page 24) in the sub-criterion 4.1 „Adequacy of Budget" state: „The merits of the budget and individual budget items will be assessed in regard to the size of the target group, duration of the project and the content of key activities...".

The analysis of the rules for external material evaluation of the OP HRE, OP EC and OP PA shows that in **OP EC and OP PA the emphasis on the budget adequacy in terms of the efficiency of the spent funds is lower**.

OP HRE introduced a special criterion F3 for material evaluation – „Adequacy of results in terms of the required funds". Additionally, even the common criterion of adequacy (criterion E1 in OP HRE) is defined here with reference to the planned project outputs. Therefore, it can be confirmed that the **OP HRE creates environment for not increasing the planned costs incurred by the applicant and partners through material evaluation of project applications.**

However, it does not mean that this circumstance becomes a factual criterion for selection of the project partners. Therefore, we had this option a subject to questioning.

When selecting their partners, two third of applicants took into account their financial requirements or proposed costs, one third did not. The least often was done so by businesses (only 50% of them) as shown below:

Table 9: When selecting your partner, did you take into account what amount of financial funds they will require for their participation in the project?

Type of applicant	Yes	No	Total
Businesses	50.0 %	50.0 %	100.0 %
NGOs	65.9 %	34.1 %	100.0 %
Other	70.0 %	30.0 %	100.0 %
Total (N=71) [6]	**62.0 %**	**38.0 %**	**100.0 %**

Source: Questionnaire survey 1 Tima Liberec.

The overall results correspond to the finding in the parallel questionnaire survey conducted with a different sample of applicants. As stated in more detail with the assessment of the evaluation

[6] Share in % is always calculated based on those who answered the questions and therefore the data in one row in individual tables may differ depending on how high the number of answers is and in the case of a combination of two questions which one of both number of respondents is lower. For example, in this table answers of 77 respondents, who were involved in the OP HRE, are processed.

question 1.8, **about one third of respondents would have not been able to put the project together or implement it without their partner and therefore did not consider the connection to the financial demands of the budget**. Another third of respondents pointed out that their costs rather decreased with the involvement of other partners while the last third stated that the project costs increased due to inclusion of a partner or multiple partners in the project.

Table 10: Did you take into account your partner's costs in the operational programmes?

		Did you take into account your partner's costs?			Number of respondents
	Application status	Yes	No	Total	
OP HRE	approved	62.8 %	37.2 %	100.0 %	43
	pending	61.1 %	38.9 %	100.0 %	18
	rejected	60.0 %	40.0 %	100.0 %	10
	total	**62.0 %**	**38.0 %**	**100.0 %**	**71**
Other programmes	approved	65.4 %	34.6 %	100.0 %	26
	pending	33.3 %	66.7 %	100.0 %	3
	rejected	100.0 %	0.0 %	100.0 %	10
	total	**71.8 %**	**28.2 %**	**100.0 %**	**39**
all OPs - total		**65.5 %**	**34.5 %**	**100.0 %**	**110**

Source: Questionnaire survey 1 Tima Liberec.

The share of those who considered their partner's costs is the same for successful and unsuccessful applicants and those whose applications have not been decided yet. However, if we take into account also other OPs within the ESF, we will find a surprising yet large difference: applicants in other OPs take the planned amount of their partner's costs in account reportedly in 72% of cases and even more frequently it is done by rejected than approved applicants. This is claimed by 10 out of 10 rejected applicants from other OPs while only by 6 out of 10 applicants rejected in the OP HRE (see the following table). Therefore, if we do not doubt the quality of the answers within this survey, we have to admit that applicants in other OPs put more importance on their partner's costs during the project preparations but it is less useful because in spite of that they are rejected more often – maybe even for other reasons.

In terms of the OP HRE support, we can say that **the partner's costs are taken into account by applicants in areas 3.4 and mainly 5.1:**

Table 11: When selecting your partner, did you also consider how much money they will request for their participation in the project?

OP HRE support area	Yes	No
1.1	66.7 %	33.3 %
2.1	60.0 %	40.0 %
3.1	54.5 %	45.5 %
3.2	40.0 %	60.0 %
3.3	37.5 %	62.5 %
3.4	72.2 %	27.8 %
5.1	83.3 %	16.7 %
Total	**62.0 %**	**38.0 %**

Source: Questionnaire survey 1 Tima Liberec.

Both these support areas are primarily the domain of NGOs. However, out of all NGOs, only 66% took this fact into account (compared to the above total share of 62%) whereas businesses in 50% and other types of organization in 70%.

Above all, statistical significance of the differences between support areas in terms of emphasis on financial requirements of the partner was not confirmed and therefore we cannot state that there are observable differences in behaviour of the applicants.

3.2.2 Conclusion Summary and Recommendations

In the OP HRE there is more emphasis on the adequacy of the budget in terms of the efficiency of funds spent than in the OP EC and OP PA. Two thirds of applicants took into account their partners' financial requirements or proposed costs when selecting their partners and that means that one third did not. Applicants in areas 3.4 and mainly 5.1 most often took their partners' costs into account.

Involvement of partners means an expansion of project resources by other skills, knowledge, organizational capacities or financial resources (for co-funding or for the sustainability period). This finding is documented within the evaluation question 1.7.

3.3 Establishment of Cooperation (1.3)

In many cases the choice of a partner is influenced only by the focus and experience of the partner itself but also the method how the partner is searched for and addressed for cooperation. Nowadays, the most important role is played by electronic exchange of information and the search for project partners is faster. On the other hand, the low costs of the search for partners may lead to the selection of „faster adequate" partners rather than high-quality partners.

The main addressed evaluation questions is: By what pattern and procedure did the beneficiary establish cooperation at the national and international level?

3.3.1 Data processing method and commented results

3.3.1.1 Methods of establishing cooperation with partners

Nine tenths of the applicants approached partners which whom they had **good experience already in the past as beneficiaries. A quarter of the applicants used networks associating organizations of the same type.** The total results are stated in the table (in % of 100 respondents). Because the respondents could have used more than one method, the total % is higher than 100 – on average, 1.4 methods were used.

Table 12: Which methods of establishing cooperation with partners did you use?

	%
a) addressing partners with whom you had good experience during similar activities in the past as beneficiaries?	91
b) internet search – use of national and international databases (NGOs, educational institutions, business entities etc.)	15
c) use of networks associating organizations of the same type	24
d) obtaining contacts at workshops intended for beneficiaries in the given support area	8

Source: Questionnaire survey 1 Tima Liberec.

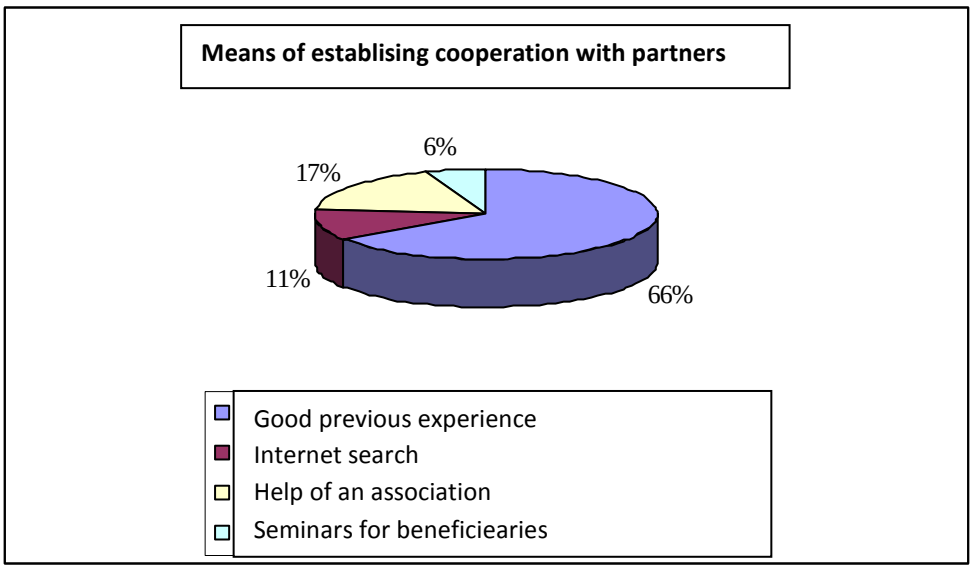
In this case, we let the beneficiaries name all methods of establishing cooperation with partners. Familiarity from previous cooperation was the dominant source of information about the partner in 81% of projects while in 91% of cases the method of addressing partners from the past – among other above methods – was used.

The vast majority of selections of well-proven partners is understandable but it may also be a sign of low courage to seek new relationships, new partners.

However, many applicants use multiple methods: **70% of applicants used one method, 24% two methods, 4% three and 2% four methods of establishing cooperation with partners.**

The share of individual methods of establishing cooperation is expressed graphically as % of all stated methods. The graph shows that **two thirds of the used methods of establishing cooperation are based on the use of good experience from previous cooperation.** This method – as stated above – is however used by 91% of applicants.

Figure 1: Methods of establishing cooperation with partners



Source: Questionnaire survey 1 Tima Liberec.

95 respondents mentioned not only the number of partners but also the methods for their acquiring. Therefore, we can find out for each number of partners how many methods were used (in order to increase statistical reliability we merged some numbers of partners). However, **a deeper analysis did not show important relationships between the number of partners and the number of methods used for establishing cooperation** [7].

Table 13: Number of partners and establishing cooperation

	Number of methods				Total
Number of partners	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	
1	77.3 %	20.5 %	2.3 %		100.0 %
2	68.4 %	21.1 %	5.3 %	5.3 %	100.0 %
3	60.0 %	33.3 %	6.7 %		100.0 %
4-5	75.0 %	12.5 %	12.5 %		100.0 %
6-7	83.3 %	16.7 %			100.0 %
8 and more	33.3 %	66.7 %			100.0 %
Total	**71.6 %**	**23.2 %**	**4.2 %**	**1.1 %**	**100.0 %**

Source: Questionnaire survey 1 Tima Liberec.

The table shows that **from 6 partners up, no more than two methods of establishing cooperation are used**. Which ones are they?

From 6 partners up the applicants were nearly exclusively oriented only at previous experience with the same partners. That does not exclude the possibility that their projects are innovative but it

[7] As a criterion we used the value of adjusted standard residuals that are sensitive to the size of the group (the number of respondents) and do not allow them to say that – simply speaking – a certain combination of a number of partners and a number of methods of establishing cooperation is significantly more frequent than another one (in spite of observable numerical differences – e.g. in rows with 6-7 and 8 and more partners) if only too few cases are processed.

rather shows that these applicants did not have the courage or time to start new relationships. Applicants with two partners rather more often preferred internet search, applicants with three partners most often used networks of similar organizations. However, it does not represent absolute popularity of these methods: in all groups, the most frequented was addressing previous, well-proven partners (occurrence in 86-100%). The general conclusion of this analysis is that **applicants with various numbers of partners do not differ significantly in terms of the methods for the search for partners.**

3.3.1.2 Methods of establishing cooperation in various groups of applicants

Assessment of methods of contacting partners in terms of the OP HRE support areas brings a more interesting result. However, we have to omit the analysis of occurrence of internet search and workshops (i.e. the second and four methods) because we do not have sufficient number of respondents for statistically reliable conclusions. We can mention that **for applicants in the area 3.2 (Support of social integration of members of Roma communities) a particularly important source of contacts are workshops for interested entities** (for 40% of them) **and for applicants in 5.1 (International cooperation) it was the Internet as expected (**again 40%). However, even in these cases the method No. 1 – use of good experience from the past – was dominant.

Good experience from the past was used in establishing cooperation in preparation of new projects by 80% (support areas 2.1, 3.2 and 5.1) – 100% (3.1) of applicants. There is greater variance in the organization networks: here this method is used in 40% of cases in areas 2.1 and 3.2 while in only 9% in the area 3.1 (12 responses were processed).

The overall results of the questionnaire survey 1 carried out by Tima Liberec suggest [8] that **in areas 1.1, 2.1 and 3.4 previous experience and networks are most frequently used, in 3.1, 3.3 and 5.1. previous experience and the Internet and in 3.2. previous experience, Internet and workshops**. You can see in the table that we rely on low frequencies (7 – 21) which are burdened with considerable statistical error.

[8] This interpretation is based not on the analysis of percentage of the number of respondents (as in other tables) but also on the number of selected answers. As mentioned above, many applicants use more than one method (on average 1.3). Therefore, we recalculated the final % to a number of responses to capture the extent of use of individual methods. There were 84 responses from 66 respondents.

Table 14: Preferences of methods of establishing cooperation in individual support areas

OP HRE support area		Good previous experience	Internet search	Network of similar organizations	Workshops for interested entities	Number of responses
11	*preference*	*1.*	*4.*	*2.*	*3.*	
	% of the number of responses	71.4 %	0.0 %	23.8 %	4.8 %	21
21	*preference*	*1.*	*3.*	*2.*	*4.*	
	% of the number of responses	57.1 %	14.3 %	28.6 %	0.0 %	7
31	*preference*	*1.*	*2.*	*3.*	*4.*	
	% of the number of responses	78.6 %	14.3 %	7.1 %	0.0 %	14
32	*preference*	*1.*	*4.*	*2.-3.*	*2.-3.*	
	% of the number of responses	50.0 %	0.0 %	25.0 %	25.0 %	8
33	*preference*	*1.*	*2.*	*3.*	*4.*	
	% of the number of responses	72.7 %	18.2 %	9.1 %	0.0 %	11
34	*preference*	*1.*	*3.*	*2.*	*4.*	
	% of the number of responses	81.3 %	6.3 %	12.5 %	0.0 %	16
51	*preference*	*1.*	*2.*	*3.*	*4.*	
	% of the number of responses	57.1 %	28.6 %	14.3 %	0.0 %	7
Total preferences		*1.*	*3.*	*2.*	*4.*	
Total number of responses		59	8	14	3	84

Source: Questionnaire survey 1 Tima Liberec.

Even preferences of individual types of applicants – business entities, non-profit organization and others – are more or less in compliance with the preferred methods in individual support area. **Businesses use nearly exclusively previous partners, but never workshops; NGOs use all methods** (naturally most frequently – 87% - again previous experience) **and other applicants** out of whom the most frequently represented are organizations of public administration and the chambers of commerce – **they use previous experience and networks but never the Internet and workshops.**

Which number of partners is typical for individual legal forms? Being aware of the low frequencies (in individual forms 8-81 respondents) we can say that there are only two findings: NGOs almost never (90%) enter partnerships with more than three partners and on the contrary towns, municipalities and regions as applicants typically enter projects with four or more partners. That does not mean that in the case of towns, projects with less than four partners. However, while a third of towns etc. have four and more partners, it is only 10-20% for other legal forms. Towns and regions are known to participate mainly in projects in the support area 3.1.

As we will show in the evaluation of the evaluation question 1.18, in a number of projects each partner is not in charge of something different, a different activity, and a different task. On the contrary, **in partnerships there are several entities which have the same subject of activity or the**

same relationship to the target group and they are mainly different in that each of them is active in a different location. We believe that this multiplication is often motivated by the applicants' effort to ensure sufficient „demand" for its services. It is basically working at two or more individual projects at the same time – with the project with each partner separately but with significant savings on their own costs and costs of public budgets used for management of individual projects (if the entity obtained a grant for a repeated project).

As far as individual OPs are concerned, we do not statistically observe significant differences in the use of individual methods of establishing cooperation.

3.3.1.3 Special aspects of partnerships with international entities

The vast majority of applicants in the support area 5.1 used their contacts from the past. However, it is apparent from the previous table that in the area 5.1 we only surveyed 7 applicants and in other support areas there were no international entities within the partners. This circumstance is the reason **why we cannot make a reliable conclusion on the specificity of establishing partnership cooperation at the international level** (as assumed by part of this evaluation question).

It was also identified that a large majority (from 80%) or all entities chose not to use networks associating organizations of the same type and contact workshops. This is at least strange considering that there is a number of networks and associations working within the EU that operate in the areas in which the applicants in 5.1 are interested[9]. However, our applicants did not confirm that they would turn to them (only 1 out of 5). But the low numbers of respondents do not allow us to make this fact a sufficiently strong and general conclusion.

Outside the area 5.1, cooperation with foreign partners appears only rarely. An example may be the Community Work Centre Usti nad Labem with its project „Support for implementation of a partnership for family policy at the local and regional level and processes of community planning in the area of harmonization of the work and family life" in the area 3.4. The partners are Chemnitz Town Hall and a Czech NGO called Gender studies.

In terms of nine types of partnerships defined in the evaluation question 1.7, we can say the **applicants and beneficiaries in the support area International Cooperation have mainly established intersectoral (that means that not e.g. intra-field) partnerships within the EU** (this was done by 4 out of 6 applicants while it was only 2 out of 68 applicants in other OP HRE support areas).

The basic obstacle to higher numbers of international partnership is well known – it is the inability to properly finance the activities of the international partner.

Beneficiaries and applicants in the support area 5.1 express it as follows:

- In the area of international cooperation we see as the main problem the inability to financially award international partners even though we require them to participate in project activities. The original idea of the axis International Cooperation was built on the assumption that individual calls in individual European countries will intersect and the

[9] These are for example: European Platform for Social NGOs, International Centre for Volunteering, European Citizen Action Service (ECAS), European Platform for National Non-Profit Umbrella Organizations of NGOs CEDAG, the European Network against Poverty and Social Exclusion EAPN and more.

partners will be paid for the activities each from the ESF funds allocated for their countries. However, that never happened in practice. Financially interested international partners who carry out their project activities basically in good faith could significantly benefit the increase of impacts of the projects of its multiplications effect.

- The only funds for international partners and travel expenses and accommodation and possibly per diem during their visit to the Czech Republic. In this regard, it is not possible to require the international partners to require such intensity of cooperation that would be appropriate. Therefore, they are not sufficiently motivated for cooperation and even though they like to cooperate whenever there are any complications in their organization they prefer to solve them to being involved in cooperation within an OP HRE project.

We identify with these opinions. However, it definitely does not mean that the support area 5.1 faces indifference or condemnation. On the contrary, some beneficiaries refer very positively already to the possibility to obtain funds for international cooperation.

3.3.2 Summary of conclusions and recommendations

The vast majority (about 90%) of applicants addresses those partners with whom they had good experience in the past as beneficiaries. A quarter of them use networks associating organizations of the same type. 70% of applicants used one method, a quarter of applicants used two methods of cooperation with partners, and others used more methods. Applicants with various numbers of partners do not significantly differ in terms of the methods by which they searched for their partners.

In the areas 1.1, 2.1 and 3.4 of the OP HRE previous experience and networks are most frequently used, in the areas 3.1, 3.3 and 5.1 experiences from the previous period and the Internet and in 3.2 previous experience, the Internet and workshops, however, the results are not statistically significant due to low numbers of respondents. Businesses almost exclusively use previous partners, NGOs use all methods and other applicants use previous experience and networks.

Most applicants in international cooperation also used contacts from the past and established intersectoral partnerships. The basic problem of international cooperation is the inability to finance activities of international partners.

Outside the area 5.1, cooperation with international partners only appears rarely. Applicants and beneficiaries in the support area International Cooperation mostly established intersectoral (that means not e.g. intra-field) partnerships within the EU.

Recommendation:

- In the support area 5.1 (International cooperation) it should be attempted to unify the dates of announcement of calls in the EU / EFTA countries so that the partnership projects can be submitted simultaneously. Or at least for those countries from which the most frequent partners of Czech beneficiaries are.

3.4 Cooperation with past partners (1.4 and 1.A)

This evaluation question builds on the previous one and searches for reasons for the selection of partners that the applicants eventually made. It also finds out why the applicants sometimes changed their procedures.

The main evaluation question 1.4 is: To what extent and why did partners establish cooperation particularly with those organization with which they had cooperated in the past? Why (in other cases) did they not establish cooperation with previous partners?

The main evaluation question 1.A is: Why did partners not establish cooperation with previous partners?

3.4.1 Data processing method and commented results

3.4.1.1 Cooperation with previous partners

We should not forget the frequent experience of the applicants that „it is disadvantageous to have a partner“ and the fact that most applicants in the OP HRE (four fifths) actually do not have a partner[10]. However, the evaluation question 1.4 refers only to those cases where there are partners.

Repeating cooperation with the same partners is surprisingly frequent in the OP HRE: it was used by 88% of the surveyed organizations (successful and unsuccessful applicants). In other OPs, the share of partnerships is slightly lower (80%).

Table 15: Did you establish cooperation mainly with organizations with whom you had already cooperated in the past?

	OP HRE Applicant		Total
	Yes	No	
Yes	87.7%	80.0%	85.0%
No	12.3%	20.0%	15.0%
Total	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Source: Questionnaire survey 1 Tima Liberec

[10] The applicants assess this disadvantage in terms of the requirements and possible risks of the project implementation. They do not mean that partnership projects would be less successful already in the stage of selection of applications. Coincidentally statistics correspond to that: as of 18 August 2010 the share of partnership projects in all applications in the OP HRE was 19.5% but their share in approved applicants was only 14.4%. However, we had to state right away that the share of pending applications was as of the above date above average in the support areas of the third axis where the occurrence of partnership project is high and that could possibly decrease the share of partnership projects in the total of approved projects.

Vast majority of applicants therefore did not search among new potential partners. That could mean a higher stability of project partnerships and better results and even that „since it worked out last time, we will try again“. In these cases, the applicants usually submit formally high-quality projects and it is up to the evaluators to critically assess the relevance and effectiveness of the proposed solutions.

Table 16: Did you establish cooperation mainly with organizations with whom you had already cooperated in the past?

	Application status			Total
	Approved	Pending	Rejected	
Yes	87.5%	85.7%	75.0%	85.0%
No	12.5%	14.3%	25.0%	15.0%
Total	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Source: Questionnaire survey 1 Tima Liberec.

Those, who want to work with new partners, were most frequently rejected (25% compared to 13% in approved applications). However, we cannot see any direct relationship (that the existence of new partnership means higher risk in approval of the application) but simply that:

a) They were more often applicants outside the OP HRE
b) If they applied within the OP HRE, they were mainly NGOs among whom there is generally a higher share of rejected applicants or pending applications.

A detailed analysis of relative frequencies within the groups of applicants sorted by their affiliation with the OP, the application status (approved, pending, reflected), legal form etc. did not show any statistically significant deviations from the overall results. In other words, in all these sub-groups the ratio of old and new partners is approximately 85:15. Differences between beneficiaries and applicants in individual OP HRE support areas may not be evaluated due to low numbers of respondents.

3.4.1.2 Motivation for entry to the OP HRE

Why is cooperation with previous partners established? A simple answer would be that it basically worked out. However, it is necessary to find the real motives for the cooperation. Unfortunately, those are not sufficiently complete and cannot be reliably checked by a direct question or studying project documentation.

We have to begin from the motivation of the applicants themselves. If we summarize our experience from the job of an external evaluator of project applicants, author of project applications, consulting work for the applicants and now even from the questionnaire survey and the focus group, we can distinguish several groups of motives:

<u>Applicant Type No. 1 – OP HRE as a tool for its own goals</u>

The subject of the project represents the applicant‘s „core business“ on which the applicant has been concentrating in the long term and which is perceived as its mission. Therefore, the applicant continuously monitors all opportunities related to its area. These opportunities include suitable sources of funding, potential clients and suitable partners for such cooperation that will comply with the applicant’s mission and will help him fulfil its own goals. Therefore, it is basically an organic

interconnection of powers and means for the purpose of achieving materially-oriented objectives and fulfilment of the authentic mission of the organization.

We can see this motivation in both businesses and NGOs.

It is typical for a small or medium-size enterprise whose trade policy was seriously hurt by the recent recession. In 2008-2009, sales started to diminish while competition became fiercer. Takeover (acquisition) bids stopped (or were never there) and the understanding deepened that without further investment in human resource qualification and technologies it will not even be possible to keep the current position. Such a business is still following its mission and that is the reason why is appreciates the possibility of external funding even though they may be warned by many that the transaction costs (in terms of finance and time) of the administration of OP projects are high. Whenever the business is then applying for a contribution, it adds other needs to the current needs which can also be eligible for funding in compliance with the call.

Let's have a look at an example of a producer of components parts for the automotive industry from the Liberec Region (quoting from its own written communication):

"Over the last 20 years, the automotive industry has experience a long-term growth with an increase in production capacities and expansion of the leading companies to the east (e.g. Turkey, China) with a permanent improvement of quality of all production and management of production and non-production processes. The current fall in demand then sharply intensified competition on the European market where the applicant also operates…

The company management therefore seeks to prove the long-term viability and a **substantial increase in competitiveness – that is a strategic priority for its further existence**. That is the only way how to avoid a transfer of the production to a country with lower wage levels.

Comprehensive and systematic professional training of all employees is one of the main tools for achieving this goal. The strategy also includes three education priorities: soft skills, lean production management, computer and language skills.

Education itself is part of the company initiative "Employees pushing the company forward". It is **a programme of total and continuous improvement of competences of all employees based on innovations in education** in the next two years…"

This is brilliant capturing of the main purpose of the priority axis 1 of the OP HRE !

This applicant received a contribution from the support area 1.1., programme Training is a chance. Unfortunately – 13 months after submission of the application. Now the company is deciding whether to accept the contribution or not. It is understandable – situation on the market, company owners, own production programme etc. are constantly developing and changing.

Type 1 is less probable for public administration institutions. The awareness of the common objective and mission is not as strong as in private entities of business and non-business nature. But yet still – as an example:

We monitored the activities of the Job Centre in Liberec that implemented a project of financial literacy (with a special focus on unemployed persons) in 2010 within the Active employment policy.

The project has been recently accepted by the Job Centre in Olomouc, a cycle is organized in Frydek Mistek (http://www.vzdelanimprotikrizi.cz/), Jablonec nad Nisou etc.

Immediately after the August (2010) floods in the Liberec region, the Job Centre originally wanted to stop its project of financial literacy (it is time to help and not train!) but it immediately correctly evaluated the increasing risk of usurious credit offers for people affected by the floods and it intensified its activities in the flooded municipalities and helped people better evaluate offers of financial institutions. At that time, it was possible to see the enthusiasm of the officers and external collaborator as they set up their "training tent" in town squares as soon as the water level decreased and they were inviting people to their speedy course. Their experiences including pride of successful work may be only compared to the experience of workers and volunteers of non-profit organizations who help their fellow citizens in various life situations.

Applicant type No. 2 – OP HRE as the primary source of income

The call for submission of applications is also „an offer of money". The applicant knows that certain outputs must be provided and it is understandable that those will be outputs from the area in which the applicant operates. In the call, the applicant sees an opportunity for funding of its own activities which it can address broadly (as any other income, material outcomes of the project are not the primary motivation) or specifically (if there is a lack of clients, jobs, regular income). We could say that as Applicant Type No. 1 is searching for anything that could help it fulfil its mission, this applicant is searching for anything that helps it increase income.

A specific example is a company operating in education in companies, mainly through outdoor forms (experiential activities of teambuilding type). In the years 2008-2009 the demand decreased significantly. Therefore, the company is searching for entities to which it could supply its programme and tries to turn them into partners so that the planned output performance is fulfilled (number of participants etc.). This way the client ensures sales of the applicant's products because it ensures a target groups and for this it participates in the drawing of funds. It is low-risk behaviour because it is only up to the external evaluator to what extent they will decrease the point value, e.g. in the criteria of the necessity of the project, efficiency of achieving outputs and budget adequacy.

The question of necessity and efficiency is crucial where one applicant with various partners or individually submits several project applications of identical or similar focus. In the OP HRE (as of 6 August 2010) the most frequent applicants were:

- 37x Petr Otáhal s.r.o.
- 31x Marlin s.r.o.
- 27x CC Systems a.s.
- 26x bfz o.p.s. + 2x bfz s.r.o.
- 26x Institut profesionálních kadeřníků a stylistů (Institute of Professional of Hairdressers and Stylists)
- 25x Institut profesionálních cvičitelů – specialistů (Institute of Professional Trainers – Specialists)

Some, often recently established entities, spread their projects in multiple regions. For example, Institut vzdělávacích programů (Institute of Educational Programmes) has an identical basic

accounting course in seven regions. This is supplemented by an advanced accounting course in the same seven regions. Etc.

It would seem to be instructive to analyze their projects and budgets, the ownership of the applying entity (or its founder) and its implementation team, reports on work of implementation team members etc. Our attempts to contact both above institutes have failed and it is possible that there organizations are not carrying out any activities (unless they have been meanwhile successful with an application). In other words that some of them (?) were established only for the purposes of drawing funds from the ESF.

However, this does mean in any way that we are evaluating these organizations as a fraud. On the contrary, their goal is simply to use all possibilities of public financing from their educational, consulting or other activities.

Combination of the Types 1 & 2

We clearly believe that there are many more applicants of type 1 than type 2. Type 1 includes most NGOs and production businesses, and less other companies providing services (consulting services, education etc.).

Both groups of motives may interconnect or combine in practice. An example is a semi-budgetary organization that was affected by a loss of its traditional activities in 2008-2009. However, it enriched its activities by education for those returning to work and it succeeded. Simultaneously, it reacted to the latent demand in its catchment area.

As far as partnership is concerned, the typical combination of both motives can be expressed as follows: „We were successful together last time and we want to do this so let's try again." Sometimes with an additional phrase: „We don't need to too much but why not do something interesting for someone else's money?"

Although most of the mentioned examples are unfortunately not partnership projects, they illustrate well the basic types of applicants in terms of their motivation to participate in the OPE HRE.

Applicant Type No. 3 – The smart partner

A number of applicants become partners only if they are contacted by another entity (future applicant) and invited to cooperation. It seems that a number of project partnerships were established mainly in the second and the fifth priority axes. These cases occur also in other OPs that are co-funded from the ESF. For example, in the OP EC schools are obtained this way in the first, second and third axes. This version is dominant for the Czech Republic. The other method is that the partner contacts a potential beneficiary and asks it to submit a project application.

Motivation of these entities to participate is apparently diverse but it is important that they are either impressed by the expected contents of the project or the opportunity to participate in a joint project or both.

Already in the part on further aspects applied in the selection partners we pointed out the cases which we identified in connection with the selection partners:

Having a partner results in an increase of the project image and a better fulfilment of the monitoring indicators (the partner's name attracts the attention of the target group and increases participation in project activities):

- The founder of the beneficiary was included in the project as a partner which significantly increased the awareness of the necessity of project activities, their further support and extension.
- The partner's influence in the region and its good image.
- Mutual benefits, exchange of practical knowledge and its connection to the current theory (the partner is the intermediary).

A special case are quite frequent cases in the support area 1.1 when the **beneficiary's partner is a different entity which is linked to the beneficiary**, e.g. a subsidiary or affiliated company. We have not been able to surely identify the motivation for this connection but it seems that the main reason is simply to also train the employees of the partner within one project. However, in these cases we cannot say that such partnership is necessary, adding any higher value or otherwise relevant, maybe except for its additional benefit: the partner will save on transaction costs and maybe even indirect costs.

Calls in which a partnership is mandatory (support area 5.1) or expected (as e.g. in the support area 2.1) **enhance the applicants' motivation to obtain a partner also through specific criteria** which often specify the expected effects of the project and direct the applicant towards a search for partners who appropriately supplement the possibilities of the applicant itself. This way effective combinations are created such as Sdružení pro probaci a mediaci v justici – Association for Probabtion and Mediation in the Judicial System (an experienced civic association) with Probační a mediační služba – Probation and Mediation Service in the support area 3.1. The partner brings a target group to the project and guarantees the basic condition for achieving the planned outputs.

If the partner is a job centre (mainly with a non-profit organization) it is nearly always in the support area 3.4. Here the partner operates as an intermediary or a guarantee for the applicant's activities. In other cases, the partner may provide at least the necessary feedback (schools).

As stated in connection with the solution of the evaluation task 2.4, „the main impulse for the establishment of partnership projects is particularly the thematic orientation at a certain target group or problem. The same or a similar topic as in the CIP EQUAL project is than emphasized by two thirds of organizations supported with CIP EQUAL. In such case, the given organizations are then more likely to continue the cooperation."

If the initiative for the establishment of a partnership comes from the applicant, these partners (even the „old" ones) **join the project often in the stage of its preparation, at a certain level of development of the application or they even limit their activities to just a general approval of the applicant's procedures** as the applicant processes the entire application and uses data obtained from the partner at request. That does not means that it is an unreal, unnecessary or „fake" partner. In

many cases, there is full development of cooperation and representatives of the partner do not consider the circumstances of the origination of the project partnerships as discriminatory.

Other cases

Unfortunately, out typology of motives is not complete. In particular, it does not explain behaviour of institutions in priority axes 2 and 4. Representative of these institutions knew from the beginning that the funding offer is also already in the OPs and then it is well adjusted to their needs in the calls. We believe that this is typically true for job centres and other state institutions, partly for regions and towns.

In these priority axes, partnership is only allowed in some calls (for some objectives of types of activities). For example, in priority axes it was in calls No. 44 and 63 where it was mainly about „development of cooperation with social partners and other institutions cooperating in the labour market".

Partnership in priority axes 2 and 4 is not common – those are often individual projects and mostly they are intended for implementation in a single administrative area of the given institution. However, even when partnership is possible (e.g. in calls No. 44, 53 and 63) it is used scarcely – **beneficiaries from public administration apparently do not see any benefits that a partnership could bring to the project and themselves**. In the database of project applications (MONIT7+ as of 25 January 2011) we found only 11 cases of partnerships of a public administration institution (job centres only).

There is a special position of an applicant who is a partnership by itself. We know two types:

1. In the last period, project implementation with multiple partners was so difficult (administratively) that **the participants now associated and are an applicant as a whole,** that means without other partners. A participant of a Prague focus group referring to this problem admits that a potential problem could be sustainability because this association was only formed for its purpose of simplifying the procedure during implementation.
2. **Local Action Groups** (LAG), which work with the Leader method in the Czech Republic and other part of the EU, are primarily established as local intersectoral partnerships. Local administration may be only represented by up to 50% [11] in their managing bodies. Compared to the CIP EQUAL partnership, LAGs are highly multisectoral and the connection of municipalities with non-profit organizations and local businesses, private capital with local budgets and contributions from public sources: and partnership cooperation of local entities when solving specific problems of the given rural region create a huge development

11 Since approximately 80% of the currently active 145 LAGs in the CR are civic associations and in accordance with the act on municipalities, municipalities are not allowed to be members of civic associations, the actual share of public administration representatives in LAGs is much lower – the municipality is usually represented by the mayor as a natural entity!

potential. In the OP HRE, only four LAGs have submitted their applications so far. None of these applications has been approved for funding [12].

3.4.1.3 Why is there cooperation with previous partners?

Now we can answer the original (evaluation) question: Cooperation with previous partners is established mainly due to the following reasons:

1. Applicants want to make sure that the project implementation will not encounter any problems.
2. The partner fits into the „portfolio" of the project implementator.
3. The applicant believes that the partner will lead to better trust from the authorities evaluating the application.

Did the applicants also choose these partners because they share information, contact, ideas, work and money with the applicant in a sufficient extent? As we mentioned in the Initial Report (section 2.1), „it seems that the quality of partnership may also be assessed by what the partners have in common and what we are willing to share." Therefore, we formulated five sub-questions. The overall results are in the table.

Table 17: Partners additionally share with the applicant… (data in %)

	Yes	No
a) information regarding the project topic	97.3	2.7
b) contacts to target groups, suppliers, authorities etc.	93.1	6.9
c) ideas on what could be done within or outside the project	93.4	6.6
d) effective share in cooperation (timely, high quality etc.)	91.7	8.3
e) financial resource (shared budget)	48.7	51.3

Source: Questionnaire survey 1 Tima Liberec.

According to the responses of successful and unsuccessful applicants, **the vast majority shares contacts, ideas, project work and naturally even information regarding the project topic**. It should be mentioned with the responses regarding the shared budget that we asked this question in the context of the project preparation, not implementation. Therefore, it is possible that some organization reacted with their negative responses to the fact that their project has not yet or at all implemented.

Not even here we found statistically significant deviations in the sub-groups by the OP status, application status (approved, pending, rejected), legal form etc.

As far as the other cases are concerned – **why the applicants did not address their previous partners** – we only have a few responses available.

12 Within the support area 5.1 an application was submitted earlier by a civil association and it suggested that even entrepreneurs may benefits from the project activities (who must be ex definition part of the LAG member base) and the applicant could not refuse their participation in workshops which were aimed at supporting employment through entrepreneurship. The application was rejected with the explanation that the financed activities are not intended for businesses.

3.4.2 Summary of conclusions and recommendations

A vast majority of applicants did not choose among new potential partners. The beneficiaries cooperate with previous partners because their cooperation worked well in the past. The reason is mainly that the applicants want to be sure the project implementation will be free of problems. Very often the partner fits into the „portfolio“ of the project implementator. Sometimes, the applicant believes that the specific partner will lead to higher trust of the authorities evaluating the application.

Basic motives for the entry to the OP HRE and establishment of cooperation may be described as follows:

a) **Objective-oriented applicant**: By implementing partnership projects, the applicant/beneficiary can fulfil its long-term objectives.
b) **Money-oriented applicant**: For some applicants, the OP HRE projects are mainly a source of income. These entities use all available financial sources and aim their medium-term objectives according to the calls. The question of necessity and effectiveness is crucial especially in those cases when one applicant with various partners and individually submits multiple project applications of the identical or similar focus.
c) **Additionally entering partner**: A number of applicants become partners only if they are contacted by another entity (future applicant) and invited to cooperation. Motivation of these entities to participate is diverse and it is important that they are either impressed by the expected contents of the project or the opportunity to participate in a joint project or both. If the initiative for the establishment of a partnership comes from the applicant, partners join the project often in the stage of its preparation, at a certain level of development of the application or they even limit their activities to just a general approval of the applicant’s procedures as the applicant processes the entire application and uses data obtained from the partner at request.

The vast majority of beneficiaries reportedly already earlier shared contacts, ideas, project work and naturally even information regarding the project topic.

Partnership in priority axes 2 and 4 is not common – these are often individual project and mostly intended for implementation in a single area of the given institution. Even when partnership is possible, beneficiaries from public administration cannot see any benefits that a partnership could bring to the project and themselves.

There is a special position of an applicant who itself creates a partnership. These are: a) participants who cooperated in the past, created an association and are an applicant as a whole, that means without other partners (e.g. coalitions of NGOs): b) local action groups operating in rural areas (Leader approach).

The main reasons for the establishment of cooperation with previous partners are: a) applicants want to be sure that the project implementation will be free of problems: b) the partner fits in the „portfolio“ of the project implementators: c) the applicant believes that the partner will lead to a higher trust of the authorities evaluating the application.

3.5 Cooperation with new partners (1.5)

Another topic closely related to the previous evaluation questions is the question of the establishment of new cooperation and the intensity of this phenomenon in the OP HRE partnership project.

The main evaluation question is: To what extent and why do partners establish cooperation with entities with which they did not work before?

3.5.1 Data processing method and commented results

When preparing this question it showed that it will not be possible to bring quantitative results with sufficient reliability. The main reason is a very low number of cases when the applicant established cooperation with new partners. This concerned 18 out of 119 respondents and 4 more while some partners were former partners and some of them new ones.

Therefore, we have received 22 responses **to the question „If you established cooperation with new partner** (with whom you never worked before), **what were the reasons?“.** To show the diversity of responses and to increase their number, we included applicants in the OP HRE and other programmes in the summary.

Sometimes a partner brings know-how that the beneficiary does not have. It is typical in those cases where a partner is a specialized commercial organization with consulting specialization:

Ostravský Institut pro ženy (Ostrava Institute for Women), a civic association, with its partner Institut rozvoje podnikání s.r.o. (Institute for Entrepreneurship Development) concentrated on manufacturing and sales of craftworks. The creator of the project is the Institute for Women that has been associating manufacturers of craft items (mainly women over 50 years of age) and their sellers (mainly women under 25 years of age) – through an e-shop. They will help each other.

In some cases, the accompanying reason for a search for a new partner is that it was not possible to work with the previous one. The material proximity of the OP HRD and OP HRE allows a massive transfer of previous partnerships into new ones and it was a factor of growth of the number of project applications in the current period.

3.5.2 Summary of conclusions and recommendations

There are a low number of cases when the applicant established cooperation with new partners.

The reasons for establishing new partnerships are very individual but the general reasons for a selection of a high-quality partner remain the same: the assumption of the partner's conscientiousness and successful cooperation, the need for know-how or the necessary capacity of the partner (mainly personnel and information) or it is not possible to work with partners from previous projects.

The motive of experience of the new partner is typical where a partner is a specialized commercial organization specializing in consulting services. However, the opposite case is more frequent – a consulting or education organization is the initiator of the partnership and the future applicant and it

is searching for partners for „its projects“ who can provide participation of target groups and inflow of money without a selection procedure.

The material proximity of the OP HRD and OP HRE allowed massive transfer of former partnerships into the new ones and in the third axis it was probably a factor of growth in the number of project applications in the current period.

3.6 Involvement of Partners into Project Intention (1.6)

We have stated common decision as one of definition features of partnership. This is crucial already in preparation of project application, as it will affect eventual subsequent solving of the project.

Main solved evaluation question is as follows: In what scope and how were the partners involved in creation of project intention?

To answer this question, we have put number of partial questions: What had the partners in common in various stages of project cycle? What did they exchange, mutually provide, jointly assess? What of the items were applied in the preparation stage of the project intention? Did they cooperate before starting of project preparation? Did they prepare the project jointly (or one of them had „clearly main and decisive vote“, e.g. later applicant)? Did later applicant address the partners with offer to participation in the project? Did they start cooperation only after the project realisation start? Did they decide jointly within the project, i.e. Had vote of each partner its weight? Did or do they cooperated in same activities after completion of the project? Do they now cooperate in other activities different from the project?

3.6.1 Data Processing Method and Commented Results

Roughly two thirds of applicants cooperate with its partners for longer period than the period of one project, or 1-3 years. This ratio (65%) is equal both for applicants in OP HRE, and in the other OP. More cases of long-term cooperation are observed in NGOs rather than in business subjects, particularly rather than in the other partners, i.e. municipalities, associations of municipalities, economic chambers etc. However we have available only 11 statements from them, which increases error rate of this partial finding.

Already stated experience and examples indicate that **project partnerships are not characterised featured by joint creation of project** – which is partial definition feature of partnerships as understood by OP HRE.

The survey itself was focused to findings, **what passed between the partners during project cycle.** Due to this we have however limited the answers only to these, which realise its project, and this decreased the number of valuable answers (to 28 - 64) and thus exactness, or reliability of numerical results.

Questions of questionnaire survey of 1 Timy Liberec „What had the partners in common in various stages of project cycle? What did they exchange, mutually provide, jointly assess? What of the items

were applied in the preparation stage of the project intention?“ showed that **large majority of respondents stated that the applicants themselves addressed partners with offer to participate in project, that they cooperated already before launching of project preparation, that the decided jointly during the project, that their cooperation continues also beyond the project and that they prepared the project jointly.** Although significant minority (39%) admits that they started cooperation after starting of the project realisation. Here is maybe fault context of question d), which could be understood as question to cooperation generally, or that during the project preparation the cooperation was substantially lower, which besides corresponds to common experience with role of applicant during the project preparation.

We have traced following items to individual characteristics:

- Between recipients in OP HRE and the other OP there is equal share of participating with partners formerly (88:12). However cooperation before launching of the project preparation does not guarantee accepting of project. 100 % rejected applications feature former cooperation. Particularly enterprises (100 % answers) had partners cooperating formerly, then NGOs and others (both groups 83 %).

  Within projects with one partner the share of formerly cooperating was even 97%. In other words: **If the recipient has single partner, it almost always prefers such partner, with whom it cooperated formerly.**

  Acc. to our opinion it is just **reflection of wholly principal effort not to take a partner, which could cause problems during realisations.** But nature of the difficulties surely not lays only in situation, when it e.g. stops helping to fulfil the output indicators. As indicated by so-far interviews, it is much more frequently concern that the partner would not fulfil its administrative obligations and that it would be left to recipient both huge volume of work with control and administration of the projects, and full risk with improper progress of project. If the consequences of fault work of the partner have not been so severe or fatal, the interest to include new subjects into solution would have been supported.
- **Joint preparation of project was less frequent at applicants in OP HRE** (76.5 %) rather than in the other OP (89.5 %), coincidentally also at all so-far non-decided applications, and more frequently at enterprises (87.5 %) rather than in the other legal forms (73-75 %). Apparently the partial findings do not offer any knowledge for eventual change of practice. However we should notice the basic fact that respondents do not notify 100% participation of partners in preparation!
- **Initiative of partnership from applicant is equally frequent in OP HRE as in the other OP.** Regarding OP HRE, it was 100 % in recipients of type municipality, county, economic chamber etc. and relatively less frequent at enterprises.
- **Cooperation after launching of realisation of project** was admitted roughly **in one third of approved projects (1:2).** It is typical particularly for OP HRE, whereas in other OP the ratio of early cooperation / non-cooperation is 1:1. Basis ratio 1:2 applies to recipients of all legal types. Recipients with single partner started cooperation after launching of realisation in one quarter of cases.

- **Joint decision-making during the project realisation is a fact in majority of cases approved for support**, equally in OP HRE as in the other OP, and more often at recipients from enterprises (100 %) than NGO (80 %) and others (75 %).
- Majority of projects assessed by respondents was not completed; therefore we have not sufficient data to the sustainability question. From the finished projects the cooperation continues on average in 82 % cases, out of which in OP HRE 74 % project cases, but in the other OP it is 94 %. The cooperation allegedly continues in 100 % in other types of recipients, excluded enterprises and NGOs, in enterprises it is only 67 % and in NGOs it is 71 %.
- Ca 81% recipients cooperate with partners also in other activities outside the project related actions. But it is only 76 % projects in OP LZ7Z, whereas 90 % in other OP. Again, the least frequency of cooperation beyond the project is in group of enterprises and mostly in the other types of recipients.

None inter-group difference proved to be statistically significant.

3.6.2 Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

Minority of applicants cooperates with majority of partners for period of one project or 1-3 years, but roughly two thirds of applicants cooperate with their partners in longer term.

Majority of respondents stated that the applicants themselves addressed partners with offer to participate in project, that they cooperated already before launching of project preparation, that the decided jointly during the project, that their cooperation continues also beyond the project and that they prepared the project jointly. However the project partnerships are not always characterised by joint creation of the project.

If the recipient has single partner, it almost always prefers such partner, with whom it cooperated formerly. It is reflection of wholly principal effort not to take a partner, which could cause problems during realisations. The partnership initiative goes from the applicant equally in OP HRE as in the other OP, but joint preparation occurred less often at applicants in OP HRE (76.5 %) than in the other OP (89.5 %). Cooperation after launching of realisation of project was admitted roughly in one third of approved projects. Ca 81% recipients cooperate with partners also in other activities outside the project related actions.

Joint decision-making during the project realisation is a fact in majority of cases approved for support, equally in OP HRE as in the other OP, and more often at recipients from enterprises (100 %) than NGO (80 %) and others (75 %).

<u>Recommendations:</u>

- Consider joint decision during preparation, and particularly during project realisation, for explicit requirement for partnership (definition condition). State requirement to joint decision in Manual for Applicant, as well as in Manual for Recipient.

3.7 Partnership models vs. Quality of Project Intention (1.7)

Setting of relations inside the partnership affects realisation of the partner projects. Tested question focused also to legal form of applicants, geographic location of partnership and amount of partners in project, i.e. it goes beyond the scope of used typology of partnership (centralised – decentralised, horizontal – vertical).

Main solved evaluation question is as follows: How and in what extend did the partnership models the quality of project intentions?

3.7.1 Data Processing Method and Commented Results

It must be said, that **we have not been able to find out sufficiently reliable rate of „project intention quality"** and intensity of new assessment of selected project applications; the assessment of quality is rather question of achievement level of project objectives, effectiveness of ESF intervention or achieved innovation rate, ant it all presumes completion of projects. However number of completed and for this purpose suitable projects is low and thus we have focused particularly to description of various types of partnerships regarding the geographical and sector (or industry) aspects, to effect of former experience with partner projects and to comparison of former and actual projects by the recipients themselves.

3.7.1.1 Basic Partnership Models

In OP HRE one may encounter various types of partner structures both regarding geography, and sector. Although **majority is taken by intra-sector and inter-sector partnerships**, various combinations are applied.

To increase the stability of results, we have used in this section data from both questionnaire surveys. These are **219 recipients and partners**[13], again particularly from the aid area 1.1 (28.3 %), 3.4 (20.5 %), then 3.1, 5.1, 3.3 and others. Regarding the legal forms, again these are particularly NGOs (44.7 %) and business subjects of all sizes (31.5 %). This extended set is identified by information on source below the tables.

Geographic Dimension of Partnership

Local partnerships are defined for purposes of our assessment as cooperation of subject within municipality or maximum within the borders of county. Such partnerships **are applied almost in two thirds of evaluated cases:**

[13] Apparently it is not substantial, as e.g. in first questionnaire survey there were 63% of local partnerships, in the second 64% and in both totally 63.4%, thus no significant difference. However in other items the differences are more substantial and particularly, high similarity between results from both sets indicates (does not prove) that the samples of respondents are not deviated and that we would have gained similar results under similar circumstances (interviewing time and method) even with additional extension of sample of respondents. Thus it is statistical improvement; or rather increase of credibility of the results.

Table 18: What partnership type did occur regarding the partner operation place? (%)

Local (max. within county)	63,4
Within CR (some partners are from other counties)	22,2
Within EU, EEA (come partners are not from CR)	14,4

Source: questionnaire survey 1 and 2 Tima Liberec.

From the set of all applicants, we have chosen 48, which have the projects approved, realised in OP HRE. Most frequently (always one fifth or fourth) they are from aid area 1.1, 3.1 and 3.4. These recipients were again sorted from the specified aspect, compared with the 70 other recipients, and it was shown that no statistically significant differences are between both groups. In other words, from the selected territory aspect the partnerships are created roughly equally in OP HRE as in the other OP.

Sector aspect

The situation is more balanced from the sector point of view: **more than one third is formed by partnerships of subjects from various sectors, but the occurrence of intra-sector partnerships is equal** – i.e. subjects engaged in the same branch of activities.

Table 19: What type of partnerships occurred regarding the sectors? (%)

Intra-industrial (partners are from one industry)	37,3
Intra-sector (partners are only from public sector, only from non-profit sector, only from business sector)	26,9
Inter-sector (partners are from various sectors)	35,8

Source: questionnaire survey 1 and 2 Tima Liberec.

At first view it might seem that the partners will search partners, who supplement their own activity, and thus originates from different industries. But often these are cases, when there are joined e.g. two children and youth houses, two public service organisations with similar engagement etc., and one of them is usually more experienced than the other, or operates in larger scope of activities.

There are also many cases **in area 1.1, when the business subject creates partner project with other business subject.**

E.g. Přerovské kotlárny Vlček, s.r.o. realises approved project under name „By improvement of language skills of employees against economic crisis“ with six partners, among others with Pare servis, s.r.o. and Piccola-M, s.r.o. The business subject of the first one is ensuring of project documentation and expert reports for immovable assets, provision of advisory services in the area of subsidies from funds and engineering activities, the business subject of the other one is production and sale of roof racks. (Unfortunately we have not been able to find out, why the employees of boiler works combat the crisis by increase of language skills just with these partners.)

We will return back to the question of so-called un-substitutability in evaluation question 1.18.

Regarding the inter-sector partnerships, **often case is cooperation of non-profit organisation and municipality.**

E.g. citizen association Centrum pro komunitní práci západní Čechy has in area 3.1 approved materially the same projects in cooperation with nine municipalities in Plzeň County. However in total five projects with similar content significantly increases effectiveness and decreases the price of work of the recipient.

Situation is worse in cooperation of enterprise and NGO.

Data from IS Monit 7+ do not show more frequent origination of partner projects with participation of subjects from business and non-business sector. Many business companies (such as Business Link, Onyx engineering, InBit ČR, Grafia) have joint project with partners beyond own industry – with economic chamber, however still only few of them have project with non-profit organisation. **Particularly in 3rd axis, the OP HRE could accept more projects, in which the employers are partners of the service provider from the start.**

If we compare the recipients themselves in OP HRE with the other ones (similarly as in previous question), one can see higher, but again statistically non-significant differences: **Recipients in OP HRE conclude relatively more frequently** (41 %) **partnerships within the same industry than the recipients in the other OP** (27 %). However it could be due to nature of both types of activities, or aid areas in other OP. But there are no sufficient data available for more detailed analysis of e.g. recipients in OP EC.

In questionnaire survey 1 Timy Liberec the respondents answered to question **„What type of partnership did originate?“.** The answers show that **outside OP HRE the most frequent model is inter-sector, not single-industry partnership.**

Number of partners

The third criterion is number of partners (again we rely on extended set, in this case 207 subjects). **Almost half of applicants have single partner,** but there are projects with eight and more partners (in total 4.5 %). **Number of partners ranges from 1 to 19. Average value is 2.6, median 2.** The cases with higher number of partners are gradually grouped in the table.

Table 20: Number of partners in made applications in OP HRE

Number of partners	%	%	%
1	43,0	43,0	43,0
2	24,6	24,6	24,6
3	15,5	15,5	15,5
4	5,8	8,7	16,9
5	2,9		
6	1,0	3,4	
7	2,4		
above 8	4,8	4,8	

Source: questionnaire survey 1 and 2 Tima Liberec.

It shall be noted that roughly one third of applicants have minimum 3 partners. **Partnership of three, 4 and more partners is much more intensive regarding the internal management, occurrence of conflicts, effective communication, joint sharing of continuous results etc.** We believe that **the more partners, the more requirements from MA, or IB to former experiences of the applicant and**

its competence to effective management of the project. However if it is not confirmed by end of next period, when the realisation of projects will be completed, that the projects with more partners are more intensive for the recipient, or more risk to MA, no particular recommendation may be given.

More detailed finding of number of partners and their diversity was based on data from IS Monit7+ to 24th November 2010. By then it contained data on **8353 projects, out of which almost one fifth (18.9 %) had partners**:

Table 21: Number of projects and partners in made applications in OP HRE

Number of projects in OP HRE	8 353
Projects with min. 1 partner	1 579

Source: own calculations from the Monit7+ system databases to 24th November 2010

Out of 1579 partner projects, 53 % have one partner, over 20 % two partners etc. Contrary to it, out of questioned (207) subjects (recipients) only 43 % have one partner, but almost one fourth has two partners. At recipients with three partners it is by 5.5 % more than data from Monit7+.

Table 22: Numbers of partners in one project in made applications in OP HRE

	Databases of Monit7+ system		Questionnaire surveys	
Number of partners	Number of projects	%	Number of projects	%
1	837	53,01	89	43,0
2	325	20,58	51	24,6
3	164	10,39	32	15,5
4	87	5,51	12	5,8
5	58	3,67	6	2,9
6	24	1,52	2	1,0
7	19	1,2	5	2,4
8	15	0,95	3	1,4
9	11	0,7	0	0,0
over 10	39	2,47	7	3,4
Total	**1579**	**100,0**	**207**	**100,0**

Source: own calculations from the Monit7+ system databases to 24th November 2010

Maximum found number was 60 partners(!). It is project „Innovations in training of employees of ČIA, o. p. s. - Brno affiliate and cooperating subjects“, no. CZ.1.04/1.1.02/23.00666, where applicant is Český institut pro akreditaci, o. p. s. But the project application did not meet the acceptability conditons. The highest but ine number of partners (64) is in project „Application of new forms of management education -training to leadership“, no. CZ.1.04/1.1.02/23.00349, where the applicant is Pokorný, spol. s. r. o. But the project application did not meet the formal requirements. The partners were tens of natural persons and several legal persons.

By the way it is obvious that the structure of sample of respondents acc. to number of partners is similar to structure of set of all applicants.

In 1579 projects there is totally 3897 partners (the same partner may be stated in more projects). The partners are from CR and also from other EU countries.

Most projects are realised by limited liability companies, then citizen associations, towns and municipalities. Remember that it is only analysis of subjects, which created partnership in OP HRE, not all applicants.

3.7.1.2 Application of various partnership models

Now we combine partnership regarding territory and partnership regarding the sectors into one table:

Table 23: Types of partnership

Type of partnership	%
intra-industry local	24,6
intra-sector local	17,5
inter-sector local	21,8
intra-industry within CR	8,5
intra-sector within CR	6,6
inter-sector within CR	6,6
intra-industry within EU	4,3
intra-sector within EU	2,4
inter-sector within EU	7,6

Source: questionnaire survey 1 and 2 Tima Liberec.

It may be seen that relative majority is taken by intra-industry partnership (25 %), local inter-sector (22 %) and local intra-sector (18 %). The lowest frequency is taken by intra-sector partnerships with foreigh partner. As in other cases, this phenomenon is not result of single factor. It is rather concurrence of circumstances, among other particularly fact the **partnership with foreign subject almost do not occur, except area 5.1.**

Applicants and recipients in the aid area 5.1 International Cooperation established within EU most frequently the inter-sector (i.e. not e.g. intra-industry) **partnerships**. It was made by 4 out of 6 applicants, whereas between the applicants in other aid areas of OP HRE there were only 2 out of 68.

Example of international inter-sector partnership is project of Farní charita Starý Knín (Parish charity).

In November 2010 the Parish charity Starý Knín (near Dobříš) began to realise in the aid area 5.1 the project named „New forms of individual care for children from 7 years of age by non-parental person as tool for removal of obstacle to enter the labour market and source of job opportunities in Central Bohemian County“. By the way, it is very actual topics of the MLSA social reform.

The project partners are Council for advisory services in social work (Slovakia); Institut für Ehe und Familie (Austria); National Centre for Family; Parish charity Kralupy nad Vltavou; Parish charity Beroun; Parish charity Roudnice nad Labem; Dobříš Municipality; Votice Municipality. Please note that there are three and then 2 type equal partners (Parish charities, or municipalities).

Which partnership types are typical for individual legal forms (meaning: relatively most frequent as compared to other combinations of legal forms and types of partnerships) [14]? In case of subsidized organisations and o.p.s. (public service organisations) established by county or municipalities these are international partnerships in the same activity branch. In case of NGO of civil type, these are inter- sector international partnerships. In case of counties, towns and municipalities, these are national local partners (i.e. within one town, maximum within one county). Save to exceptions, these subjects do not form partnership outside own county at all. In case of business subjects and other types of applicants the partners are so diverse that similar simple conclusion cannot be given.

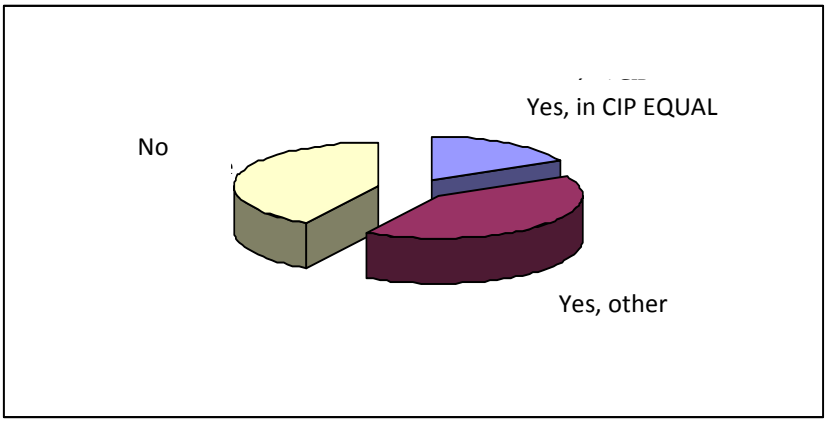
It can be seen from collected data from applicants and recipients that number of local and national intra-sector partnerships is relatively higher than in the approved recipients. In other words, applicants created by the inter-sector partnerships (except international in 5.1) are rejected more frequently. It is not statistically provable phenomenon, but it could be monitored at some future occasion (annual assessment of OP HRE).

3.7.1.3 Experiences from former partner projects and their comparison with the actual ones

Only **below 60 % of all applicants gained experience from former partner projects co-financed from ESF.** May be it is not so low value in respect to the fact that majority of applicants has no partner.

Rather significant minority (17 % from 115 respondents) **has experience with CIP EQUAL and it is probably the largest „sub-group" of experienced recipients from previous period.**

Graph 2 Experience from former partnership projects co-financed from ESF (v %)



Source: questionnaire survey 1 Tima Liberec.

As expected, the lowest experience with the partnership projects are inside the business sector: whereas from the other subjects the partner project has not been realised so-far by 24-27 %, it is 59 % of business subjects.

[14] Assessed on basis of joined questionnaire surveys no. 1 and 2 (for particular questions the results are based on analysis of answers from 207 applicants and recipients).

Most applicants without former experience with partnership are between subjects, which now have single partner – 59%, whereas subjects with more partners achieved value of only 32-38 %. This fact however cannot be explained only by factor that selection of single partner for first partner model occurred due to precaution of the applicant, as it is influenced also by simple fact that the priority axis 1 includes high number of business subjects, for which the creation of project partnerships is not generally common.

Analysis of answers from 75 respondents, who applied for grant from OP HRE, showed one expected and one maybe surprising fact[15]:

1. In the aid support 3.1 (Support of social integration and social services) and also in 3.3 there is majority of subjects with experience from partner projects; this confirms effect of previous period (OP HRD),
2. But EQUAL was not main experience for applicants in 3.1 (only one tenth), whereas in 3.3 and 5.1 alway one third has experience with CIP EQUAL.

Table 24: Do you realise formerly other partner project co-financed from ESF?

Aid area OP HRE	Yes, EQUAL	Yea, other	Not so far	Total
1.1	10,5%	47,4%	42,1%	100,0%
2.1	16,7%	50,0%	33,3%	100,0%
3.1	9,1%	72,7%	18,2%	100,0%
3.2	20,0%	40,0%	40,0%	100,0%
3.3	33,3%	44,4%	22,2%	100,0%
3.4	26,3%	31,6%	42,1%	100,0%
5.1	33,3%	33,3%	33,3%	100,0%
Total	**20,0%**	**45,3%**	**34,7%**	**100,0%**
out of which recipients	*27,7%*	*44,6%*	*27,7%*	*100,0%*
Others	*10,3%*	*38,2%*	*51,5%*	*100,0%*

Source: questionnaire survey 1 Tima Liberec.

Another data is in last two lines: 47 respondent subjects in OP HRE have the project applications approved. Among them there is relatively higher number of subjects, who already have realised a partner project (28 % vs. 10 % others) and lower number of subjects without such experience (28 % vs. 52 % others). It clearly indicates that **previous experience with partner projects favourably affect the approval of the new project.** However it cannot be interpreted as exclusive cause of success, as OP HRE includes very diverse aid areas and the invitations are not declared evenly in particular aid areas. Thus previous experience cannot be the sole factor of the approval result.

75 recipients, or applicants assessed „level“ of partner cooperation in actual and previous project. However not all projects are from previous period – some recipients obtain means for more projects in actual period, out of which some are already completed. But it was assessment of „growth“ of experience with partnership projects. One third of recipients did not expressed their opinion to the question, particularly as there is too short time in realisation of their actual project.

[15] In total these are low number of applicants (in individual aid areas from 5 to 19), which decreases evidence of findings. And these numbers may cover also subjects, who realised the partner project already in this period, which was not subject of the question.

Table 25 **Are you able to compare the partner cooperation in former and in actual project?** (regardless to the same or different partner), data in %

Former cooperation seems to be better	5,3
Actual cooperation is better	10,7
It is roughly equal	50,7
Do not know, not able to state	33,3

Source: questionnaire survey 1 Tima Liberec.

Acc. to half of respondents their cooperation with partners is the same as in former projects and it cannot be assessed in whole one third of cases. In spite of this and regarding the residual assessments, the survey indicates that actual cooperation seems to be better than the former one in ratio 2:1.

Table 26: Assessment of cooperation with partners

	Is recipient in OP HRE?		Total
	Yes	No	
Former cooperation seems to be better	8,1%	2,6%	5,3%
Actual cooperation is better	5,4%	15,8%	10,7%
It is roughly equal	54,1%	47,4%	50,7%
Do not know, not able to state	32,4%	34,2%	33,3%
Total	**100,0%**	**100,0%**	**100,0%**

Source: questionnaire survey 1 Tima Liberec.

As in the previous question, now we compare successful applicants in OP HRE (total 37 organisations in sample) with all other recipients, which provided answer.

The table shows that:

- Whereas **between the other recipients excl. OP HRE the ratio of subjects, who are more satisfied with actual state, is 6 times higher,** the recipients in OP HRE show rather contrary trend,
- **A little more recipients in OP HRE assesses the former partner project as better than the actual one,**
- **and there is roughly equal ratio of subjects refusing clearly assess the state.**

The most often negative assessment of actual partner project in OP HRE need not to be necessarily attributed to actual or imaginary complexness or disadvantage of conditions and rules in OP HRE. We must consider also possible impact of higher intensity and volume of actual projects, effect of higher experience and thus criticality of the recipients, and also influence of time shift, when former events and activities seems to be less problematic than the actual ones. In spite of it we consider the unfavourable ratio of positive assessment of actual period as alarming. The reasons of non-satisfaction were not revealed, as the inquiries were held anonymously and several interviews could not five clear picture. The respondents having experience with CIP EQUAL show higher flexibility (see evaluation questions 1.9 – 1.17).

3.7.2 Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

Involvement of partners into the project had high importance particularly for contacts with target groups and for better achieving of program objectives. Less frequent, but still important benefits

from the recipients lay in gaining of skills and know-how for management of project and for cooperation outside the project itself.

Most partner projects are realised by limited liability companies, then citizen associations, towns and municipalities. Basic partnership models:

a) Geography aspect: Local partnerships (cooperation of subject within municipality or max. within borders of one county) are applied in almost two thirds of assessed cases. National, or even international partnerships feature lower frequency. Often case of inter-sector partnership is cooperation of non-profit organisation and municipality.
b) Industry (sector) aspect: More than one third is formed by partnerships of subjects from various sectors, but the occurrence of intra-sector partnerships is equal – i.e. subjects engaged in the same branch of activities. Another variant is intra-sector partnership.
c) Regarding number of partners: Almost one half of applicants have one partner, roughly one third of applicants have 3 and more partners, but there are projects with eight and even more partners (total 4.5 %).

Recipients conclude relatively more frequently (41 %) partnerships within the same industry than the recipients in the other OP (27 %).

Almost half of applicants have single partner, but there are projects with eight and more partners (in total 4.5 %). Number of partners ranges from 1 to 19, average value is 2-3 partners. Roughly one third of applicants have 3 and more partners.

Most partner projects are realised by limited liability companies, then citizen associations, towns and municipalities.

It may be seen that relative majority is taken by intra-industry partnership (25 %), local inter-sector (22 %) and local intra-sector (18 %). The intra-sector partnerships within EU are the least frequent ones. Partnership with foreign subject is almost zero, excl. the area 5.1. Applicants and recipients in the aid area 5.1 established most often the inter-sector partnership.

Typical partnerships for individual legal forms are as follows: In case of subsidized organisations and o.p.s. (public service organisations) established by county or municipalities these are international partnerships in the same activity branch. In case of NGO of civil type, these are inter- sector international partnerships. In case of counties, towns and municipalities, these are national local partners (i.e. within one town, maximum within one county). In case of business subjects and other types of applicants the partners are so diverse that similar simple conclusion cannot be given.

Involvement of partners into the project had high importance particularly for contacts with target groups and for better achieving of program objectives. Less frequent, but still important benefits from the recipients lay in gaining of skills and know-how for management of project and for cooperation outside the project itself.

Only below 60 % of all applicants gained experience from former partner projects co-financed from ESF. Rather significant minority (17 %) has experience with CIP EQUAL and it is probably the largest „sub-group“ of experienced recipients from previous period. Previous experience with partner project has positive influence to approval of new project.

Out of subjects with former partner project one half of inquired organisations identified their cooperation with partners as "equally well" as in former projects. Two-times more recipients assess the actual situation as between as the former one.

Recommendations:

Consider possibility that in case of more than two partners the applicant would document previous experience with management of partner projects, or its ability to manage a partner project. It will be part of material assessment of project applications.

3.8 Initiative at project preparation (1.B)

In many cases the applicant, who is simultaneously in position of the project leader, takes the initiative. Thus the initiative in preparation and realisation of the project goes usually from the applicant. This evaluation question analyses situations, when contrary to it some of partners initiate the topics and it does not enforce its leading position in the project.

Main solved evaluation question is as follows: To what extent do the recipient and partners come with idea to preparation of the partner project?

3.8.1 Data Processing Method and Commented Results

As expected the table shows that **in majority of cases the initiator of the partner project is later applicant.**

Table 27: Who did first come with idea to this partner project? (data in %)

Later applicant	87,0
Partner of applicant	5,2
I do not remember	7,8

Source: questionnaire survey 1 Tima Liberec.

3.8.2 Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

In large majority the recipients of the subsidy come with idea to preparation of the partner project.

3.9 Involvement of partners, which are not eligible applicants (1.C and 1.D)

In many cases an organisation seems to be suitable partner, but the OP HRE rules for particular invitation do not allow accepting it as project partner. In some cases the accepting of this organisation would increase the impact to target groups. On the other hand the potential extension may be „misused".

Main solved evaluation question 1.C is as follows: To what extent is it possible within OP HRE and other programmes by the partnership principle to involve into the project realisation also such subjects, which do not belong to eligible applicants in particular invitation?

Main solved evaluation question 1.D is as follows: To what extent is this possibility used by partner projects of OP HRE?

3.9.1 Data Processing Method and Commented Results

Present formal conditions in OP HRE do not allow involving as project partners such subjects, who do not belong to types approved in OP and in invitations. **Recipients** – as indicated by questionnaire survey and result of focus group – **use two methods for involvement of other subjects**: as suppliers, or as clients:

- They work with them as with service providers (e.g. in educational activities), thus „saving" in need of intra-project management and administration of partnership,
- They cooperate with them informally as with partial clients – e.g. one employment office from Moravia had 27 partners in project, actually mainly clients of activities of this recipient.

To be able to get valid answers, we have used in the questionnaire survey following explanation: „Through following question we do not try to find so-called hidden suppliers, but to create space for recognition also such groups of partners, which are not usually stated in the invitations between the eligible types of applicants. It is often case of more complex and long-term projects that other subjects start to participate in solution at larger scope (such as municipalities, employment offices, enterprises, organisations from the same sector etc.), and they were not stated as partners in the project application. However their factual position and significance are crucial for the project results."

Table 28: Is there acc. to your experience a need to involve into the project additionally other subject than the eligible applicants?

Yes	43 %
No	57 %

Source: questionnaire survey 1 Tima Liberec

It is maybe surprising that **almost half of respondent applicants and recipients would approve involvement of other type of partners.** Even if some of them are not right, as the partners proposed by them are actually possible, there remains question, whether the control body should not consider the possibility of more liberal approach regarding other then listed types of partners, if the applicant defends it on basis of clear criterion.

If acc. to respondents there is a need for other types of partner, we have examined **what types of partners they are.** In all aid areas we have gained answers from 27 subjects, who **most often stated employment offices (16x), elementary (6x), secondary (8x) schools and universities (6x), entrepreneurs and companies (8x), NGOs (7x)** and others.

The respondents miss following partners in individual aid areas of OP HRE [16]:

[16] Here we only reproduce opinions of the survey participants, not opinion of evaluator.

- **In area 1.1:** schools and educational organisations, secondary schools and universities
- **In area 2.1**: universities, NGO, employment offices, associations of enterprises, economic chambers, profession associations, craft groups
- **In area 3.1**: municipalities, counties, employment offices, other non-profit organisations engaged in the same target group, companies (employers of handicapped persons)
- **In area 3.2**: employment offices, elementary and secondary schools, vocational schools, social depts. of local administration
- **In area 3.3**: subsidized organisations (such as schools, hospitals etc.), providers of social services, who are not NGOs, employment offices and self-governing administration, municipalities, towns etc.
- **In area 3.4**: job agencies, employers, social dept., employment offices, school subjects, municipal authorities, other non-profit organisations and entrepreneurs, associations of companies
- **In area 5.1:** particularly private companies, non-profit organisations and other organisations engaged in education of adults, economic chambers [17].

However we must admit that these types of partners were missed by the respondents just in the invitations, which were related to the respondents themselves. It could happen that in other invitation of the same aid area the particular type is eligible. In brief summary we may confirm missing of following partners:

- **In area 2.1**: associations of enterprises, economic chambers, profession associations, craft groups
- **In area 3.2**: employment offices (however grant projects allow state administration bodies, organisation units and subsidized organisations of state)
- **In area 3.3**: subsidized organisations (such as schools, hospitals, etc.), providers of social services, who are not NGOs, and employment offices,
- **In area 3.4**: entrepreneurs and associations of enterprises,
- **In area 5.1:** economic chambers.

It is however not our recommendation, that these partners would be included into future invitations. It is only **suggestion for control body, which could assess the information regarding wider intentions of individual priority axes. Acc. to our opinion, the decisive criterion for inclusion or non-inclusion is approved objective of priority axis.**

3.9.2 Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

Present formal conditions in OP HRE do not allow involving as project partners such subjects, who do not belong to types approved in OP and in invitations. Recipients use two methods for involvement of other subjects: as suppliers, or as clients.

The recipient cooperates with other subject by the same manner as with its partners, but due to certain reasons (non-compliance of formal requirements, low experience, small capacities etc.) it does not list it between the project partners.

[17] Applicant in the aid area 1.1 proposed to include into next invitation the economic chambers. They have experience from EQUAL initiative, where the chambers could apply the projects, and additionally they are very suitable subjects for realisation of projects for the target group.

Almost half of respondent applicants and recipients would approve involvement of other types of partners.

Recommendation for MA:

- **Consider involvement of these types of subjects:**
  - **In area 1.1:** economic chambers,
  - **In area 2.1**: association of enterprises, economic chambers, craft groups,
  - **In area 3.2**: employment offices,
  - **In area 3.3**: subsidized organisations (such as schools, hospitals, etc.), providers of social services, who are not NGOs, and employment offices,
  - **In area 3.4**: entrepreneurs and associations of enterprises.

3.10 Reflections of efficiency criterion in proposal of project activities (1.8)

Efficiency of public means is significant and discussed theme. This part of evaluation tries to find out an answer to question, whether the projects realised in partnership contribute to efficiency of the ESF assistance in OP HRE.

Main solved evaluation question is as follows: How is the efficiency criterion considered in proposal of project activities and to what extent was the project preparation regarding its contents affected by level of costs, which was to be paid by form of required subsidy (e.g. what type of activities or expenditures was not included into the project due to high financial intensity of some of the partners)?

3.10.1 Data processing method and commented results of partial evaluation question 1.8.A

Criterion of project efficiency from aspect of applied and approved projects and their budgets

Key methodology part of the evaluation question should be assessment of compliance of proposed and realised budgets in classification to main recipient and its partners. However MONIT7+ has no available data related to budgets of the project partners**, but only data for project as a whole. In this regard this area could not be adequately assessed by this method flatly for all projects in partnership.**

This was solved by means of the questionnaire survey. The solution team processed data from MSSF MONIT7+ for OP HRE to 18th August 2010. Modifications of budget in projects with partnership were created by the subsidy provider during approval process only in 2 cases out of total 240 approval projects, i.e. in less than 1 % of total number of so-far approved projects. Moreover, both modifications of the budget in projects with partnership feature less important nature rather than significant intervention into its size and structure, and they did not means decrease, but negligible increase of the budget.

Situation of project without partnership is somewhat different, as the modifications of relevant budgets were performed at 61 projects out of total number of 1424 approved projects, i.e. ratio 4.28 %. Therefore it may be stated that **projects without partnership included modifications in the project budgets on basis of recommendation of evaluators of the project application in 5x higher range as compared to projects with partnership.** Additionally, decrease of budgets by the evaluators of the projects was realised in majority part of the projects with modified budget.

Assessment of protocols of assessment commissions in relation to adequacy of budgets

Assessment of protocols of assessment commissions is integral part of question related to assessment of compliance of proposed and realised project budgets. The MONIT7+ system includes information on assessment of partial parts of project applications. The solution team focused to part **E1 - Adequacy of project budget to its contents and scope**.

Regarding the fact that processing of all assessment statements of evaluators for 240 projects would be very difficult, the solution team compiled sample of projects, which it in detail processed regarding the assessment statements related to adequacy of the budget. This sample includes min. 1/3 of all projects in partnership (incl. aliquot classification acc. to individual aid areas). The sample includes in total 89 projects with partnership. For this part of evaluation, we always used 2 variants of assessment, i.e. statements at lowest and highest point assessment, which were classified as so-called budget adequacy variants, i.e. **pessimistic budget adequacy variant** (statement at lowest point rating) and **optimistic budget adequacy variant** (statement at highest point rating). In these assessment variants we have classified in total 4 categories of the budget adequacy, i.e. (A) adequate budget, properly compiled, (B) slightly overrated budget or some items are slightly overrated, (C) some items are very overrated, (D) budget overrated as a whole, (E) inadequately compiled budget.

In case of pessimistic variant, the total relations in problem classification are roughly a thirds. Actually 29 % projects (category C+D) showed elements of strong overrating of the whole budget or its partial components. Slightly overrated budget (category B) was at ca 34 % of project applications. And 37 % project applications exhibited completely problem-free budgets (category A) without any overrated elements. Part of the evaluation question 1.8 is also evaluation of typology of eligible expenditures, which were mostly overrated or inadequately adjusted. This part is solved below in partial evaluation question 1.8.B. Regarding individual aid areas, the worse results of adequacy assessment were in OP 1.1 and 3.2, and partially also in OP 3.1. Conversely, relative best assessment of the project budget adequacy were achieved by applications in OP 3.4 and 5.1.

Regarding the optimistic variant, the evaluators considered budgets of 60 % of all applied projects in partnership as completely problem-free and adequately compiled. Totally 27 % of all applied projects in partnership were assessed as slightly overrated. If we combine the results in A and B categories, we may state that the optimistic variant of the budget adequacy covers 87 % of all applied projects in partnership. 12 % of projects feature significantly overrated partial items of budget, and only one project was overrated as a whole.

The optimistic variant of the project draft budget adequacy assessment then offers a conclusion, that the **projects in partnership have been compiled very effectively and in compliance with content of planned activities and their scope.**

Assessment of project preparation affecting rate regarding its expensiveness

Second part of the evaluation question 1.8.A focuses to assessment of rate, in which the project preparation regarding its contents was affected but the cost level, to whose payment should occur by form of required subsidy. These relations are assessed by means of continuous results in the questionnaire survey.

On basis of available data in MONIT7+ it is possible to evaluate relation between number of partners and project financial scope. In total figures (to 18th August 2010) the projects with budget up to 50 mil. CZK usually have more partners and the tendency features increasing character. Contrary to it, in the projects exceeding the level of 50 mil. CZK the tendency is decreasing. However it must be stated that there are only few projects with budget over 50 mil. CZK and total regressive coefficient je is in this case very low, and the stated trends are not statistically significant. Thus the solution team examined in detail the situation of projects with budget up to 14 mil. CZK, which are represented in OP HRE with highest number. Also in this case the regressive coefficient is very low in spite of the fact that polynomial trend indicates that the costs of the project will slightly increase with increasing number of partners.

In the questionnaire survey, totally 60 applied respondents answered question related to rate of contribution of partner to potential decrease of most of project activities. Performed survey showed that 41 % of all project partnerships in OP HRE could not successively execute the project activities or even work without relevant partner or partners. At almost 30 % of projects the involvement of partner resulted in decrease of the project costs (e.g. potential of execution of activities and project outputs with non-financial partners, or with financial partners with specific know-how). Contrary to it, 30 % of projects were subject to increase of the costs due to involvement of partner.

The above stated shows **that general premise on increasing costs for management of projects with partnership is not always cleat in OP HRE projects and it is clearly indicated in one third of cases**. The same share was registered in cases of decreased costs due to involvement of partner into the project activities.

3.10.2 Data processing method and commented results of partial evaluation question 1.8.B

Key results of this evaluation question are compiled on basis of questionnaire survey. As to 26th November 2010 totally 60 from addressed respondents answered in the questionnaire survey (i.e. 25 % of all projects realised in partnership).

In most cases the respondents included into the budgets all categories of eligible expenditure enabled within the conditions of OP HRE. Partial exceptions are represented by purchase of services, minor constructional modifications and direct aid. Regarding importance in particular ranking categories, the expenditure of staff feature very important nature and were not ignored. It does not

apply to projects with partners without financial contribution, in which the costs are not claimed regarding the application for payment from partners.

Additionally, the questionnaire survey includes question related to types of eligible expenditures of major modifications in the budget with respect to the applicant itself and the partner. The questionnaire survey proved that the modifications in the project budgets were made only in minimum scope. Actually, no significant changes were made in all cases of possible eligible expenditures. At the project bearers themselves the modification were made in minimum scope, particularly in relation to costs for staff, travelling expenses, non-depreciated tangible assets, purchase of service and project costs related to local office. In the partner budgets the situation was almost the same as for the recipients. Only minor modifications were made in costs of staff, purchase of services, and partially also in item of travelling expenses and project costs related to local office.

Assessment of protocols of assessment commissions and structured interviews with recipients

In relation to assessment of problems of eligible expenditures and their eventual including / non-including into the budgets, an analysis was performed regarding textual evaluation of „evaluators of project applications“ in MONIT7+, part „**E1 - Adequacy of project budget in relation to its contents and scope**, which contains critical comments to compiled budgets, their structure and level of eligible expenditures. Sample of monitored projects is also in this partial evaluation question the same as in presented methodology of evaluation question 1.8.A, i.e. the sample includes in total 89 projects with partnership.

The protocols of evaluators usually do non include cases, when the evaluator would explicitly notify the missing eligible expenditures, which were not included into the project due to their high financial intensity. Only in several few cases the evaluator notified missing costs for audit, which was not included in the budget as separate item, and the project scope required the execution of audit.

In assessment of partial items of eligible expenditures there was proposed their decreasing:

1) Costs for staff – the proposed decrease usually took the form of decrease of workload of persons engaged on management of projects, in tens of percents (5 – 40 %);
2) Purchase of minor material – proposal for decrease of potentially ineffective types of items were usually realised at purchase of HW and SW;
3) Reserves towards proposed services without proposal to their decrease.

Main reasons for above-mentioned proposals of evaluator to decrease the eligible expenditures lay particularly in inadequately set costs for staff; in improperly justified purchases of services or planned scope of tangible assets within the project; and in non-compliance of planned project expenses with the project time schedule, size of target group.

The structured interviews with final recipients show that there are certain types of expenses, which were not included into the budget proposal and KP finances them from own sources. There are 3 main reasons for it:

1) Concern that the project will not be accepted due to inadequately set level of eligible expenditures;

2) Relevant potential expense or activity belongs to set of eligible expenditures of OP HRE, but final recipient has its own capacities for financing of certain types of education with minimum fixed costs.

3) Relevant non-included activity or expense does not belong to set of eligible expenditures of OP HRE.

3.10.3 Summary of Conclusions

This evaluation question enabled assessment of scope of reflection of effectiveness of proposed project activities by means of questionnaire survey, partial analysis of statements of project application evaluators related to adequacy of budget and assessment of results of structured interviews with final recipients. On basis of performed analyses it may be generally stated that projects in partnership were complied effectively and in compliance with contents of planned activities and their scope.

There were modifications in proposals of projects and their budgets, but very differentiated regarding projects in partnership and without partners. In projects with partnership, the modifications were made in minimum scope and only in less than 1 % of total number of so-far approved projects. Contrary to it the projects without partnership included modifications in the project budgets on basis of recommendation of evaluators of the project application in 5x higher range as compared to projects with partnership (i.e. 4.28 %).

The questionnaire survey showed that the applicants in most cases included the categories of eligible expenditures, which were enabled within the conditions of OP HRE. Partial exceptions are represented by purchase of services, minor constructional modifications and direct aid. Costs for staff feature rather important nature regarding their significance in particular categories and were not substantially ignored; however it does not apply to projects with partners without financial contribution. They do not apply the costs in application for payment. The structured interviews identified totally 3 reasons for non-including of some financially intensive types of expenses. It is particularly concern that the project will not be accepted due to inadequately set level of eligible expenditures, further that the recipients owns in long-term its own capacities and infrastructure for payment of specified eligible expenditures, and last reason is that the particular expense is not included in set of eligible expenditures of OP HRE.

3.11 Changes in composition of partnership (1.9)

Project realisation course never corresponds exactly to the plan. The same holds also for the partner projects. On one hand, eventual changes in composition of partnership may help to the projects (e.g. in leaving of non-active partner), or it may cause damages (in leaving of active, needed partner).

Main solved evaluation question is as follows: To what extent would / would not the replacing of some of the partners by another partner and change in composition of partnership lead to significant saving of the project costs?

On basis of performed examinations it may be stated that replacing of one of the partners by another partner and change in the partnership composition would not lead to significant saving of costs. The project costs do not depend on type of partner, or legal subject of relevant institution. Clear majority of actual partnerships is fully satisfied with its composition and does not consider any changes. In several cases the partner organisation resigned.

3.11.1 Data Processing Method and Commented Results

Very high number of partners in partnership may not be necessarily effective for implementation of particularly content and process matters (see IREAS 2008).

The results show that ca 40 % of partnerships are fully satisfied with the partners regarding the composition and structure. In other words it may be stated that all relevant subjects are satisfied in the partnership and no other institutions are needed. Additionally it may be stated that no direct relation can be determined between size of partnership and „satisfaction“ with its composition. Almost two thirds of respondents miss some subject (partner). The results show tha the public administration institutions are the most demanded ones.

The public administration institutions play significant and specific role in partnerships. Their role is very important regarding determination of basic principles / strategies and their use, providing of information and partial inputs into projects in form of identification of most significant needs and their solving. Additionally, these institutions play very important role in enforcement and application of outputs in praxis.

However there are many partnerships, which do not search any public administration subject and are able to fulfil scheduled activities of good value. One fifth of respondents would like to involve a private company. Regarding wide spectrum of private subjects it is not possible to state any particular added value. Generally it may be said that they brings into the project mechanisms the view of commercial principles; their role in providing of view from the position of employers is important, too.

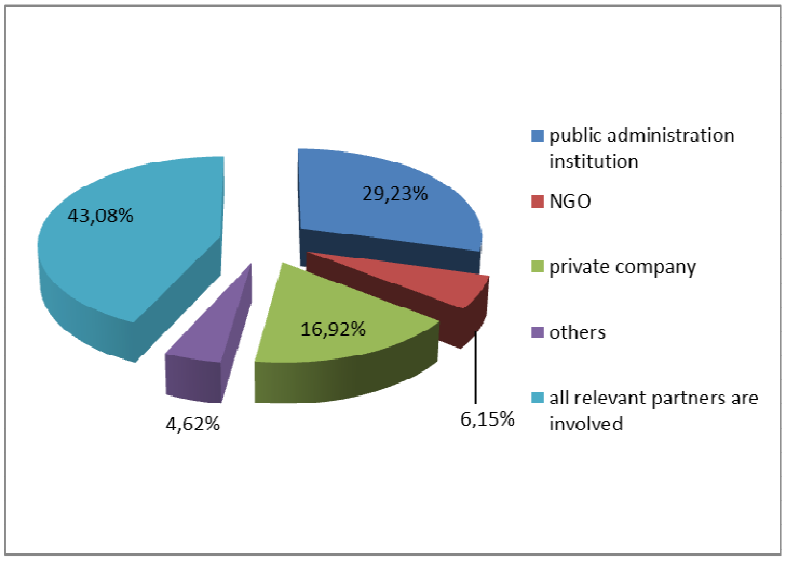
Resigning from partnership

Termination of partnership by one or more partners may be identified as clear obstacle (see IREAS 2008), particularly if it is (are) partner(s) bearing key activity. These aspects and detailed analysis of

changes of partners were solved also within OP HRE. The results show that such changes occurred in many partnerships, even in actual programme period. The results of questionnaire survey and structured interviews show that resigning of partner did not cause any serious problem and the partner was always replaced, or the project activities were reorganised.

Replacement of partner is relatively easy for most projects in initial realisation stage or in middle of project solving. Acc. to responses of recipients, problems may occur in last third of realisation, when main obstacle related to resigning of the partner may be incapability to fulfil monitored indicators. Additionally it must be said that in several cases the partner resigned due to impacts of economic crisis, or due to financial problems or complete liquidation of business.

Graph 3: Acc. to your opinion, what type of organisation, which is not represented in your partnership, would be suitable to involve while fulfilling the partnership principle with view to achieve better effectiveness during the project realisation?

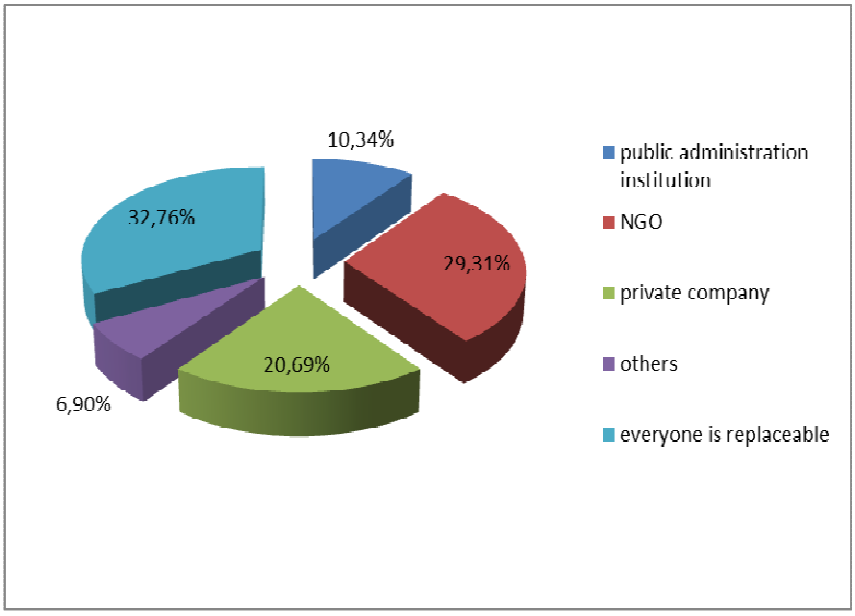


Source: questionnaire survey IREAS 2010

Above described facts may be summarized into key knowledge. The most required institutions are public administration institutions (29 %) and private companies (17 %). However 43 % of partnerships do not require any change regarding the involved subjects and general structure of the partnership.

The information may be supplemented with other facts related to the partnership structure. The graph shown below displays results of additional question of the questionnaire survey. Purpose of the question was finding out the opinion of individual partners, without what type of organisation the partnership would not been able to effectively work. Although these are very subjective opinions, the results will help to clear relations between individual types of partners and their real benefit. The results do not show prevailing dominancy of any category of options. Rather surprising may be the fact that one third of respondents believe that each type of organisation is replaceable in the partnership! But this partially denies added value of individual organisations. However it is obvious from structured interviews and from focus group that experience of partner and willingness to cooperate are much more important thane legal form and type of organisation.

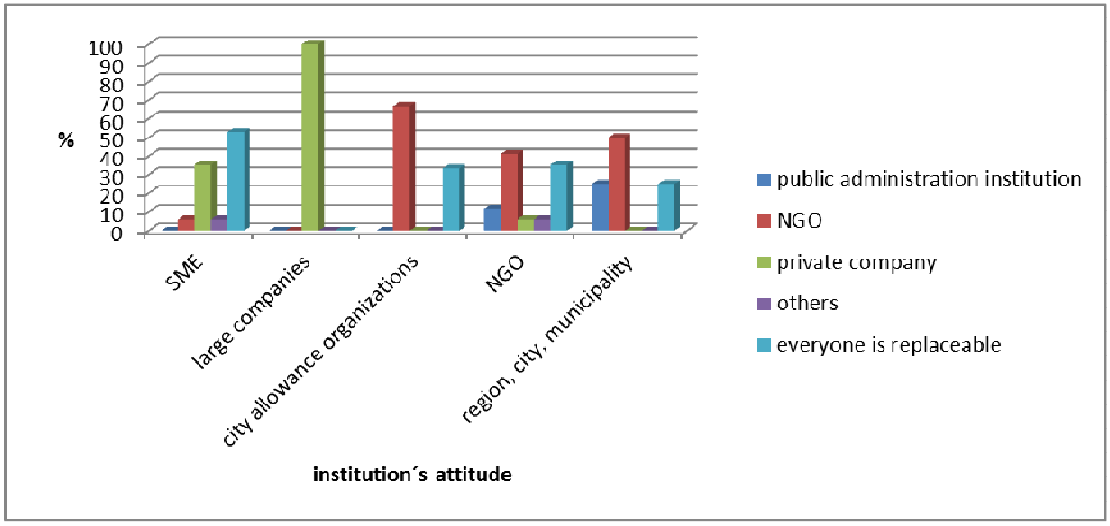
Graph 4: Without what type of organisation could your partnership not effectively work?



Source: questionnaire survey IREAS 2010

The below displayed graph shows opinion of various types of institutions to benefit of individual types of organisations. The objective was detection of differences between answers acc. to individual types of organisations. Please notice interesting contrast of opinions. Simply it may be said that each type of organisation is persuaded on highest benefit of just its type of organisation. E.g. private enterprises consider just their benefit for the most effective one. And the residual types of most frequently occurring partners are not sure in it. The situation is similar in NGOs or subsidized organisations of towns and municipalities. But the territorial self-governing units stated, except themselves, also NGOs as most effective and most beneficial ones in the partnership. Similar situation was detected in evaluation of CIP EQUAL and it is obvious that characteristic behaviour and opinions are very similar in course of time.

Graph 5: View of individual types of institutions to benefit of selected partners



Source: questionnaire survey IREAS 2010

3.11.2 Summary of Conclusions

Performed assessment shows that clear majority of projects in the partnership principle do not plan to change the partnership structure. Even if a partner resigned in some projects,, this change usually did not have significant influence to functioning of partnership.

On basis of structured interviews and questionnaire survey it is not possible to determined significant demand in particular type of partner from the institutionalised point of view. It is obvious that the experience and willingness to cooperate is crucial aspect of the partner. The most required institutions are public administration institutions (31 %) and private subjects (20 %). Reason is particularly work with target groups. Additionally, these public administration institutions play very important role in enforcement and application of outputs in praxis.

Relation between type of partner and allocated financial means has not been verified regarding the non-available data related to partial budgets of individual partners. Nevertheless the question was considered within structured interviews and the results show that allocated financial means are subject to many other factors (experience and know-how of partners, size of partnership etc.) rather than type of partner. Additionally, in number of projects the partners play a role of „supplier“ of target groups and they do not have own budget, as only ravelling expenses and wage compensation is paid to them.

The project costs do not depend on type of partner, or legal subject of relevant institution. Allocated financial means are conditioned by number of other factors, different from type of the partner. Additionally, the partners in many projects play the role of „supplier“ of target groups and they do not have own budget.

Clear majority of actual partnerships is fully satisfied with its composition and does not consider any changes. The most required institutions are public administration institutions (31 %) and private subjects (20 %). However 40 % of partnerships do not require any change regarding the involved subjects and general structure of the partnership.

Also potential barriers, which could affect the partnership, were monitored within the evaluation question. However in comparison with CIP EQUAL the situation improved in all cases, or the recipients of the aid see the situation related to individual potential problems more positively. But there are still substantial differences between the partial areas. Above all, the rate of attitude change can be identified. Clearly largest shift was registered in case of „resigning of partner organisation". It is clear that resigning occurs in actual programme period, too, the subsidy recipients manage to solve the problem much better, whereas in CIP EQUAL they perceived it as very significant problem.

3.12 Partnership efficiency (1.10)

A question to be solved is whether a partnership contributes to a more effective implementation of projects. In various sources partnership benefits are mentioned in the form of long-term sustainability of results. On the other hand, however, a partnership is connected with higher costs of communication and achievement of a consensus in decision making.

The main discussed evaluation question is: To what extent is partnership more effective in respect of project costs than other forms of implementation?

3.12.1 Data processing method and commented results

The size of a project budget is an important factor having a role (not only) in projects applying a partnership principle. When evaluating this principle, one has to ask what savings a partnership provides, whereas the savings can be financial, time etc.

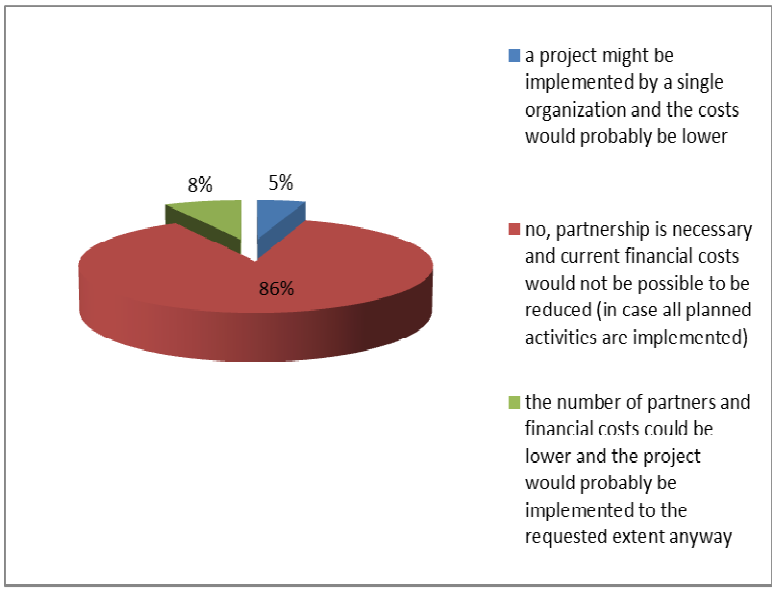
It was examined within a questionnaire survey whether it would be possible to implement the same project with a lower budget if the project was implemented by fewer partners. The results clearly show the domination of an opinion that partnership as it looks now is necessary and that the approved costs would not be possible to be reduced (in case all planned activities are performed). A minor part of respondents (5 %) believes that the project could be implemented by a single institution and that the costs would be probably lower as result. Another 8 % of respondents think that the number of partners and financial costs might be probably lower.

More specific details in respect of budget settings in individual projects were identified within structured interviews. Budget setting was in principle affected by whether the project had been worked up by a consulting company to order or prepared by a partnership. Relatively substantial budget reserves were identified in the first case. Another important aspect of a lower budget is the extent of impacts on the target groups. In most cases, it would not be possible to implement the project to the same extent with a lower budget. It was discovered in some cases that partners (especially in the private sector) tended to overestimate project´s sub-budgets (especially in IT equipment etc.); nevertheless, this was corrected by the recipient. However, a large number of partnership regime projects within the OP HRE include partners without financial claims or the partners are only paid wage compensation during training and are reimbursed for travel costs.

The system of evaluation of partnership projects when the evaluators suggest often a relatively substantial budget reduction at the evaluation stage can be positively assessed. It is obvious from the structured interviews that a project is well and fully implemented despite this budget reduction.

In the theoretical level, the number of partners might be reduced in a number of projects, i.e. by a private company for example, but the activities concerned would have to be ensured in another useful way. In this case, they would choose the path of a selection procedure in which another company would win, e.g. an education one, that would probably require a higher financial compensation for the activities performed as contrasted to a private company in the role of a partner when the price can be corrected already at the time of project preparation. Projects would be possible to be implemented with a lower number of partners but probably with an increased budget. Moreover, an official partner means security in providing "quality" outputs.

Graph 6: Would it be possible to implement the same project with a lower budget if the project was implemented by fewer partners?



Source: IREAS 2010 questionnaire survey

Based on the questionnaire survey results it is possible to define other savings generated by individual partners thanks to the partnership principle in contrast to individual projects. The results can be categorized into several areas; some of the information is generally known but the answers point out new facts as well. The main advantages (savings) related to the implementation of a project within a partnership include:

- possibility to share experience and consultations;
- coordinated approach to the fulfilment of crucial activities;
- higher efficiency of publicity;
- direct influence on the target groups;
- ensuring broad political and professional consensus within a region;
- effective distribution of activities in a project.

Nevertheless, a lot of respondents believe they do not have any benefits or savings generated thanks to a partnership. Opinions occur at the same time that a partnership was a condition and they had to find "some" partners. Thus, it is obvious that there are formal partnerships in the current programming period as well. Controversial or contradictory statements on the real benefits of a partnership have occurred also within the structured interviews. The recipients talked about entirely insignificant savings (financial or other) in some cases but a conviction of substantial savings in partnership regime projects is dominant in a number of other projects at the same time. These differences are very closely related to recipients´ attitudes towards possible co-financing of projects. Entities seeing partnership regime benefits would be willing to co-finance up to 20 % of costs (this is what the structured interviews show). On the other hand, partnerships more of a formal character have been identified, unwilling to implement current activities if co-financing was introduced.

3.12.2 Summary of conclusions

No direct relationship confirming real financial savings thanks to the partnership principle has been identified within the evaluation process. Yet it has been determined based on structured interviews that real savings can be found in some projects. It can be savings in personnel costs incurred according to the Programme´s conditions and an agreement with the recipient. In principle, a partner does not generate profit but receives payment of demonstrated costs without making profit. If training had been provided by applicants on a commercial basis, the costs would have been on a much higher level. However, these are selected specifics of some of the projects but it is not possible to generally find such savings in respect of the whole group of partnership projects.

Objectively, we can speak about time savings, higher efficiency of the activities performed, direct influence on the target groups. It is also possible to identify a number of indirect savings related to the possibility of sharing experience and consultations, effective distribution of activities in a project etc. Nevertheless, in this case, too, substantial disparities among projects have been identified. In isolated cases, recipient´s representatives cannot see any partnership benefits and substantiate the existence of the partnership with a MA´s requirement. These partnerships are more of a formal nature.

This evaluation sub-question has not been evaluated with respect to the limited availability of data from the monitoring system. Financial specifics have been examined within structured interviews and it is obvious from the results and more specific project details that a uniform size limit of financial efficiency cannot be determined.

The fundamental reason and added value of a partnership is building and strengthening interorganizational trust that is reflected in current as well as future cooperation. This is an irreplaceable benefit for which there must be enough time. For this reason, experience from CIP EQUAL as well as other programmes seems to be highly beneficial: a number of partnerships were established then and a lot of institutions had a chance to obtain their first experience along with the implementation of a joint project.

3.13 Setting of financial flows in a partnership (1.11)

The process of financial flows both inside and outside a partnership is an important factor of the willingness to cooperate. Money only comes first.

The main evaluation question to be solved is: How best to set the system of financial flows for individual partnership models?

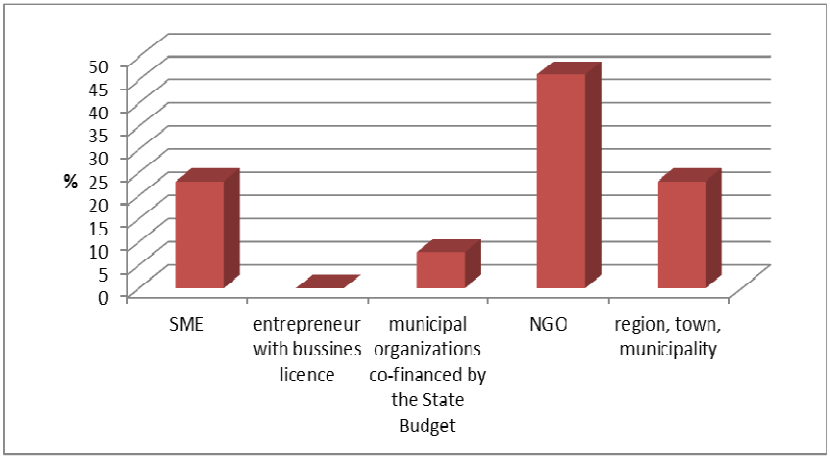
The system of financial flows in individual partnership models is set appropriately in most cases and suits individual partnership members. A strongly centralized approach to setting and decision making processes within a partnership is a typical feature of the current OP HRE. This is affected by the legal responsibility of a beneficiary for the project. It is necessary to point out that this system suits most of the institutions. A partnership with partners with financial contributions only in the form of reimbursement of travel costs of training, payment of wage compensation etc. is a frequent model in the CR. This is a very passive partnership model in which the dominant role is played by the beneficiary, who creates education modules in which individual partners´ representatives are trained. Viewed in a long-term perspective, such a partnership does not have a great chance and often not even ambitions to maintain the cooperation.

3.13.1 Data processing method and commented results

The results of a questionnaire survey clearly show that almost 80 % of respondents are satisfied with the current system of financial flows. Almost one fifth has certain reservations to the setting and 3 % are dissatisfied with the financial flows within a partnership. Individual connections (types of partners, partnership sizes etc.) are specified in the next part. In this moment we can add that the setting of financial flows within a partnership has changed in only 6 % of partnerships since the beginning of the implementation of this project. This step did not have to be taken in the remaining cases. This is evidence of a suitable setting and supported by the already mentioned relatively high proportion of satisfied entities and institutions within existing partnerships.

The graph below shows a group of questionnaire survey respondents who have reservations to the internal setting of financial flows within a project and reflects their structure by institution types. The results confirm the long-term trend associated with the lack of financial resources in the non-profit sector. NGNPO are strongly dependent on grant headings and delays in payment cause huge problems in the project implementation. Similarly tight budgets are evident in the case of territorial self-governing units.

Graph 7: Structure of institutions having reservations to financial flows in a partnership



Source: IREAS 2010 questionnaire survey

In current partnership regime projects it is possible to find several partnership models having different approach to the setting of financial flows:

- Partnership without financial partners is a very frequent phenomenon. Real financial flows within a partnership do not in fact exist in this case and cooperating institutions participate without having a budget of their own.
- Full-value partnership with sub-budgets for each of the partners is another model that is being applied in the current OP HRE although to a lesser extent. A strongly centralized approach to setting and decision making processes relating, inter alia, to financial flows is a typical feature within a partnership. Partners usually have a chance to express their opinion on financial matters bus since the legal responsibility is with the beneficiary, they are usually the ones to make the final decision. It is necessary to mention that this approach and partnership setting suit most of the individual partners who do not demand any changes.
- Partnership with partners with financial contributions is a frequent model; however, the contributions are only in the form of reimbursement of travel costs of training, payment of wage compensation etc. Individual partners do not have any problems with their budgets and are only paid demonstrated expenses associated most frequently with education of their own employees. This is a very passive partnership model in which the dominant role is played by the beneficiary, who creates education modules in which individual partners´ representatives are trained. The questionnaire survey feedback and, in particular, the structured interviews suggest that this model suits most of the institutions as well.

There is a connection between the above mentioned partnership models and their basic characteristics, and potential barriers of the financial flows determined. The main strong points and weak points of the current methods of financial flows in a partnership have been identified within the questionnaire survey and structured interviews.

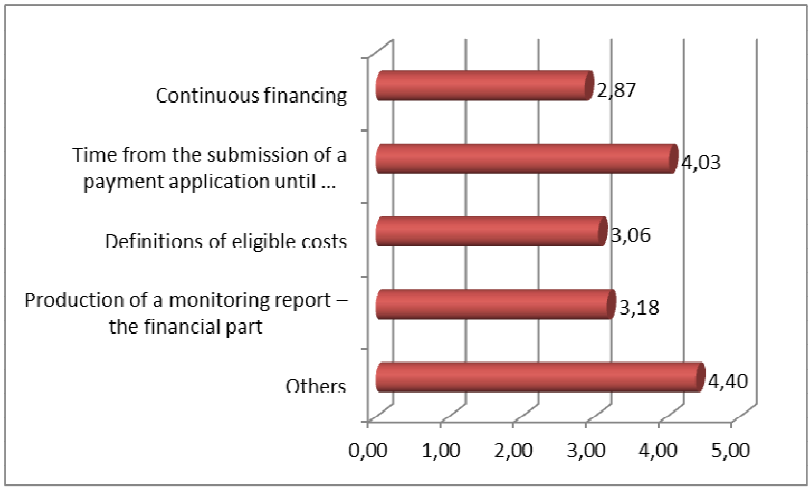
The time from the submission of a payment application until the actual reimbursement is a continuing long-term problem relating to financial mechanisms and flows within a partnership. Although the duration of the examination of a monitoring report and the actual reimbursement of a

payment application has been significantly reduced in most programmes, beneficiaries and partners still have complications with that.

A detailed analysis shows that the biggest problems are in non-profit organizations that often involve in partnerships and do not have sufficient reserves to ensure cash flow due to their nature. However, this is not just a non-profit sector issue; partial problems have been identified in private companies as well. In a partnership model in which the beneficiary is a dominant participant in the partnership and disposes of a majority of the budget, the beneficiary is not able to provide high advances when payments are delayed. Therefore, reimbursements and payments between the beneficiary and remaining partners have been partially discontinued in many partnerships. In most of the partnerships dealing with this problem there is a clear willingness of the partners to wait for advance payments. It is also obvious that most of the applicants do not mind continuous financing but the beneficiaries perceive the practical management of the whole administration and reimbursements as a problem. Likewise, definitions of eligible expenditures and administration, and production of the financial part of a monitoring report, are perceived negatively by some of the partners.

There are also decentralized partnerships in several cases in the CR when a partner receives a part of the budget from the beneficiary and may handle it freely (provided that the conditions determined by the OP HRE are met). Therefore, the partner can implement some insignificant changes on its own but the respondents see that as a problem since the responsibility towards the managing authority is with the beneficiaries. This area should undergo some changes in the future. The purpose should be to strengthen decentralization in a partnership but also to transfer a higher level of responsibility to individual partners.

Graph 8: What are the strong points and weak points of the current methods of financial flows in a partnership? (scale 1 – 6, 1 is the best/easygoing and 6 is the worst)



Source: IREAS 2010 questionnaire survey

3.13.2 Summary of conclusions

We can identify several models within current partnership regime projects in the OP HRE, which differ not only with their management forms but also with their actual implementation and financial flows. In this connection we can identify partnerships without financial flows, further, full-value

partnerships with individual budgets for each of the partners and partnerships with partners with financial contributions that are, however, only in the form of reimbursement of travel costs of training, payment of wage compensation etc.

We cannot normatively identify one of the models to be better or worse. From the perspective of financial flows one has to say that a large majority (79 %) of respondents believe that the system of financial flows is fully functional and they do not have any reservations in this respect. However, sustainability of individual partnership models is a problem. Some partnerships are formal and established only because it was required by the Programme conditions.

There is a connection between the above mentioned partnership models and potential barriers of the financial flows determined. The time from the submission of a payment application to the actual payment is a continuing long-term problem concerning financial flows in a partnership. This results in discontinuance of payments within a partnership and, therefore, discontinuance of financial flows. This does not mean serious problems in some cases, especially when the main beneficiary is a private company that has its own reserves and OP HRE grants do not represent pivotal financial resources with respect to the company´s overall turnover. On the other hand, such delay represents more serious problems in small companies and non-profit organizations. It was found in some cases that continuous delays may cause some partners to withdraw from the partnership.

3.14 Application of equality of approach in a partnership in respect of internal financial flows (1.12)

As stated in the definition of a partnership, partners should make decisions together. This is of course true not only of the substance of a project but also in the case of financial evaluation and financial flows in a partnership.

The main evaluation question to be solved is: To what extent has equality of approach been (not) applied in individual partnerships by beneficiaries towards their partners in respect of internal financial flows?

3.14.1 Data processing method and commented results of an evaluation sub-question

An answer to this evaluation question was only possible to be obtained by means of a questionnaire survey and discussions with final beneficiaries.

The survey results have shown that the partners are actively involved in decision making processes relating to financial flows in most cases. However, the applicant decides alone in approximately 42 % of cases. This significant percentage embodying a centralized form of management of financial flows is caused, in particular, by the fact that the crucial responsibility for the project implementation is with the final beneficiary, not with individual partners, who are bound only by their partnership agreements relating to individual project activities.

Moreover, the structured interviews have shown that decision making processes relating to the setting of a draft budget of a project involved not only financial but also non-financial partners: budgets were submitted to the partners and individual budget items were subsequently discussed with them. This level of involvement was very important mainly as regards correct determination of the scope of the planned activities which often depend on partners irrespective of their financial or non-financial nature.

In isolated cases reasons have been mentioned that indicated increase in the credibility of a partnership in the sense that the final beneficiary did not benefit from its partners beyond its own activities (merits-related and coordination activities). These indications of a decentralized model of functioning were generally implemented in the beginnings of the preparation of project proposals when the final beneficiaries gave their partners certain freedom in their decision making on the structure and amount of costs in the budget. Nevertheless, they commented on their respective requirements and corrected them by reference to the conditions and options specified in the OP HRE. Individual partners did not have any problems with this model of cooperation, though, and tended to endorse the beneficiary´s responsible and active approach.

The questionnaire survey results suggest that the most important factor affecting the level of involvement of a partner in decision making processes relating to financial flows is the partner´s relationship and closeness to the target group. Indeed, partners (both financial and non-financial) significantly affect the costs of the planned activities in some cases, tending to reduce a many of them with respect to their relationships with the target groups. In this sense, the role of partners is very important as regards compliance with the planned indicators and ensuring contact with the target groups.

Factors relating to geographic distance/closeness among project partners and their specializations are of roughly the same importance. In particular, this concerns “new” and “traditional” partners with whom the project implementer is continuously in contact. In the case of new partners, a centralized model of decision making on financial aspects is always applied in general, i.e. the final beneficiary is the primary decision maker; on the other hand, the level of involvement of partners in decision making processes increases with the beneficiary´s growing experience and mutual trust with the relevant partners.

A high number of partners and possible differences in the levels of involvement of partners in project activities or project phases are insignificant factors. As to internal financial flows, equality of approach by the beneficiary to participating partners is not affected by the scope of activities or the complexity of the created partnership but in particular by the experience the final beneficiary has made with relevant partners and their possible influence on target groups.

3.14.2 Data processing method and commented results of an evaluation sub-question

A large majority of project partnerships use experience from the previous programming period when determining decision making processes relating to financial flows in a project. Only 26 % of respondents do not have any previous experience and 5 % of respondents do not use their previous experience in current projects financed within the OP HRE.

This conclusion has been confirmed by structured interviews with final beneficiaries, who assessed the current system of providing grants as more elaborated and better functioning. The main identified experience from the previous period used in the current programming period is communication (e.g. predefined mechanisms of communication through electronic mail, regular meetings with certain rules), project preparation (e.g. experience with division into administrative and material preparatory activities) and setting of financial mechanisms of a project.

The use of experience from the previous programming period was mostly based on tried and tested cooperation with partner entities and project proposals for follow-up activities were created accordingly. In this connection, special attention should be paid to the levels of involvement of partners in decision making processes on one hand and the extent of transfer of experience from the previous programming period on the other hand. Only a very small part of respondents did not reflect any of the experience from the previous period in the decision making competencies at all.

The division of answers shows that the more experience individual partnerships had, the higher the involvement of partners in decision making processes relating to financial flows was. It has to be said, however, that a lot of final beneficiaries involved partners without financial contributions in these processes, especially as regards the above mentioned determination of the scope of activities in a project application and specification of these activities during the implementation. If applicants did not have any experience from the previous programming period, they chose a strongly centralized model for decision making mechanisms relating to financial flows, especially due to aversion towards a potential risk in the case of bad cooperation with new partner entities.

The survey results imply that projects with higher budget proportions on the part of the partners clearly have more experience from the previous period. This means support of continuous cooperation with traditional and tested partners, which leads to higher involvement of the partners in project activities in financial terms.

A relatively high percentage of respondents identifying a zero share of partners in the budget has been verified within structured interviews and a focus group. A number of final beneficiaries applied their experience from the previous programming period to the preference of partners without financial contributions due to subsequently lower administrative load that had been very extensive in the previous period. If necessary, these final beneficiaries endeavour to involve a minimum number of partners with financial contributions to manage the administrative aspect of the project.

3.14.3 Summary of conclusions

The most important factor affecting the level of involvement of a partner in decision making processes relating to financial flows is the partner´s relationship and closeness to the target group. Nevertheless, this factor concerns non-financial partners as well. Factors relating to geographic distance/closeness among partners and their specialization are of roughly the same importance. They are mostly “new” and “traditional” partners. In the case of new partners, generally, a centralized model of decision making on financial aspects is always applied, i.e. the final beneficiary is the primary decision maker; on the other hand, the level of involvement of partners in decision making processes increases with the beneficiary´s growing experience with the relevant partners. This fact is supported, in particular, by the level of responsibility borne by the beneficiary alone.

A large majority of project partnerships use their experience from the previous programming period when determining decision making processes relating to financial flows in a project. Only 26 % of respondents do not have any previous experience and 5 % of respondents do not use their previous experience in current projects at all. The use of experience from the previous programming period was mostly based on tried and tested cooperation with partner entities and project proposals for follow-up activities were created accordingly. There was direct proportionality between the amount of experience with partners and their more active involvement in decision making processes relating to financial flows. If applicants did not have any experience from the previous programming period, they chose a strongly centralized model for decision making processes relating to financial flows.

3.15 Conformity between the share of financial resources spending and the level of partners involvement in a project (1.13)

A question arises, in connection with already discussed financial issues in a partnership, whether the share in the budget corresponds to the share in activities of financial partners. This topic is dealt with by the following evaluation question.

To what extend does the share in the consumption of financial resources by individual partners correspond to the level of involvement of partners in implemented project activities?

3.15.1 Data processing method and commented results of an evaluation sub-question

The survey carried out implies that 45 % of those polled have non-financial partners, i.e. partners with a zero share in the budget of the whole project. In these cases, however, partners without financial contributions sometimes receive reimbursement for some activities (e.g. travel costs).

The share in the consumption of financial resources in partners and adherence to the intensity of their involvement in project activities corresponds in a vast majority of respondents to assumptions laid down in project applications (about 80 % of respondents) and the results and partners´ activities even exceed the originally assumed level of partners´ involvement in roughly 8 % of respondents. On the other hand, low partners´ involvement and consumption occur in isolated cases.

Structured interviews with final beneficiaries and a focus group have implied that the reasons of low or inadequate involvement of partner in project activities usually include “force majeure” effects. The main reasons of “more intensive involvement” of certain partners in projects generally include higher interests of target groups in relevant project results. Individual problematic cases occurred in partnerships in preceding years 2008 to 2010, especially with regard to the negative impacts of the economic crisis, due to which a lot of companies had to cease their activities. These trends have been negatively reflected in some of the OP HRE partnership projects in terms of lower levels of involvement of partners or substitute institutions.

Table 29: Relationship between the financial share of a partner in the budget and the intensity of the partner´s involvement in the material implementation of a project

Level of conformity between the intensity of partner´s involvement in project activities and its share on financial sources spending					
Financial share of a partner in the budget	**Exceeding**	**Adequate**	**Partially adequate**	**Inadequate**	**In total**
0%		4			4
1 – 10 %		6	1		7
11 – 20 %	1	8	1		10
21 – 30 %		5			5
31 – 40%	1	3		1	5
41 – 50 %	1	2	1		4
In total	3	28	3	1	35

Source: IREAS questionnaire survey of 26 November 2010 (final results; N=35)

The table above clearly presents the relationship between the share of a partner in the budget and the intensity of the partner´s involvement in the material implementation of a project. A situation that the involvement of a partner in a project did not correspond to the partner´s financial share occurred just once; it was in a project category in which the financial importance of partners is on a very high level of 31 – 40 % of the overall budget. Other cases suggest conformity between project implementations and the originally planned levels of involvement of partners in projects.

Evaluation of factors affecting the level of material involvement of partners in project activities and importance of non-financial partners.

A discussion has taken place on this topic within structured interviews and a focus group, implying that current project implementers very carefully choose their project partners before the projects are commenced, i.e. at the time when proposals of project activities are prepared. There was bad experience with some partners in the previous programming period in terms of the intensity of their involvement in the material implementation of a project (e.g. CIP EQUAL). Nevertheless, beneficiaries have tried and tested their partners. Moreover, approaches to mutual cooperation have improved and there are clearly defined procedures in case there are problems in the partnership agreement. The human factor and mutual long-term relationships providing for relatively smooth practices in projects have been mentioned in this connection to be of fundamental importance.

As stated above, the financial crisis has negatively affected some of the partner projects. It was the cause of bankruptcy of some entities participating in OP HRE projects as partners (financial and non-financial). These situations have subsequently led to complications on the part of the final beneficiary, who had to secure project activities or a specific target group alternatively (e.g. by including another similar entity in project activities or by itself alone).

The importance of the role of partners without financial contributions in OP HRE projects was examined within a questionnaire survey. If we deduct projects with financial partners from the total number of respondents, the role of this type of partners turns out to be important to fundamental in 60 % of all projects in which there are partners without financial contributions. Specific reasons of this state have been monitored in structured interviews with final beneficiaries, who, in principle,

classified the importance of non-financial partners in the light of the partners´ potentials to access target groups. The following categories have been identified accordingly:

1. Potential of a non-financial partner in terms of the partner´s ability to access target groups
2. Potential of a non-financial partner in the light of the partner´s ability to apply results in practice
3. Excellent image and prestige of a partner without a contribution with target groups´ representatives

In partnership projects with aforementioned types of non-financial partners with such potentials, all respondents subsequently answered the question of withdrawal of this type of a partner to be very problematic. The importance of non-financial partners in the light of target groups is fundamental.

3.15.2 Summary of conclusions

The questionnaire survey has implied that the share in the spending of financial resources by individual partners and adherence to partners´ involvement in project activities correspond in a vast majority of respondents to the original assumptions set forth in project applications (about 80 % of respondents). Partners´ results and activities exceed the originally assumed level of their involvement in about 8 % of respondents. A vast majority of partnerships (almost 90 %) have cooperated with their partners on a long-term basis and even have experience from the previous programming period. Problems with the level of partners´ involvement in project activities occur in isolated cases. The main reasons of problems with partners´ involvement generally include “force majeure” effects (especially with respect to the negative impacts of the economic crisis in 2008 to 2010).

FB´s representatives identified their non-financial partners in the questionnaire survey to be very important. Reasons for this state have been examined in structured interviews with FB´s representatives. In principle, FB´s representatives classified the importance of non-financial partners in the light of the partners´ potentials to access target groups. The following categories have been identified accordingly as important: (1) potential of a non-financial partner in terms of the partner´s accessibility to target groups, (2) in terms of the partner´s ability to apply results in practice, (3) in terms of the partner´s excellent image and prestige with target groups´ representatives.

3.16 Consistency in experts´ pays in partnership projects (1.E)

Applicants experience balanced pays for beneficiary´s employees and partners in many programmes in which partnership projects are carried out. This was a typical problem in CIP EQUAL when public sector employees were paid according to table-related salaries while other partners had more freedom. This led to demotivation of public sector employees in projects.

The main evaluation question to be solved is: To what extent do the pays of experts or other members of implementation teams of the partners correspond to the pays of experts or other members of implementation teams of the beneficiaries?

3.16.1 Data processing method and commented results of an evaluation sub-question

The questionnaire survey results imply that most of the questioned respondents apply the same approach to project promoters´ and project partners´ experts. Partners´ experts are paid differently in isolated cases.

In this part of the evaluation we deal with all entities in individual partnerships because project promoters and project partners are not distinguished in labour cost accounting in most cases. They were distinguished in 4 specific cases and we have therefore produced a case study of the distinction between these labour costs.

Table 30: Comparison of individual statistic indicators in the case of labour costs of an implementation team

Indicator	All types of employment relationships (n=783)	POJ (n=602)	ACJ (n=181)
Average (CZK/h)	231.5	162.4	461.2
Standard deviation (CZK/h)	222.6	79.9	352.9
Median (CZK/h)	162.0	140.0	350.0
Correlation coefficient**	-0.319	-0.145	-0.181

Source: MONIT7+, sample of 50 partnership projects

Explanatory note: POJ includes employment contract or agreement to perform work, ACJ means agreement to complete a job

*** Relationship between the hourly rate and the number of hours*

The table above compares types of employment relationships and relevant pays in them. The average hourly rate is about 231 CZK/h in partnership projects, whereas the standard deviation is relatively high – almost on the level of the actual average, i.e. 222.6 CZK/h. This fact is caused, in particular, by a high degree of standard deviation in experts´ labour costs paid within ACJs where the benevolence in the range of hourly rates used is traditionally higher. On the other hand, the standard deviation is much lower in the case of employment contracts or APWs, i.e. about 80 CZK/h, which is due to an overview of maximum possible hourly rates that is being used. The correlation coefficient of the relationship between the hourly rate and the number of hours is negative and suggest an approach used in practice, i.e. a lower number of hours worked implying a higher hourly rate.

The general polynomial trend suggests a decreasing trend in the number of hours worked in most of the projects with hourly rates of up to 1000 CZK/h. Further, there are clearly two pay groups, i.e. a category of up to 500 CZK/h with the maximum number of hours of 40 h on one hand, and a category of projects with the same pay range on the other hand, i.e. of up to 500 CZK/h, but with the number of hours worked ranging from 160 – 190 h. The regression coefficient is not too high, only 0.135, which is due to the inclusion of all types of employment relationships with various extremes.

In the case of employment contracts or agreements to perform work, the situation is divided into three main groups of experts with the same pay range, i.e. groups with the number of hours worked ranging between 0-40, 60-100 and 160-180 can be distinguished within the range of 50 – 300 CZK/h.

This distinction can be attributed to the financing of both administrative activities (higher numbers of hours) and qualified experts in continuous cooperation (paid within APWs, for example).

Five differently extensive groups of members of projects implementation teams can be distinguished in the case of pays for implementation team members within ACJs, whereas the identified sets of team members with hourly rates exceeding 750 CZK/h tend to include qualified experts and lecturers. The interval of 0 – 500 CZK/h mostly includes members of project coordination and administrative teams, who ensure the actual implementation of a project. In this case, too, there is a relatively low regression coefficient for the reasons specified above. To monitor these trends, it would be more appropriate to identify the name of the position in a project team more precisely on the basis of a breakdown of labour costs of a project implementation team.

The questionnaire survey asked a question focusing on the main reasons of application of different approaches to experts´ pays. The clear reasons of different pays of project promoter´s experts and promoter´s partners´ experts include, in particular, different levels of partners´ participation and involvement in project outputs as well as different levels of professional skills of partners´ experts and implementation team members. It can be assumed based on these results that final beneficiaries of financial resources from the OP HRE appreciate the real work of individual experts and their experience and skills (qualifications) that are closely reflected in the shape of project outputs. On the other hand, they consider relationships to target groups or different levels in experts´ achieved education to be less important when deciding on experts´ pays. A conclusion has been confirmed within structured interviews with final beneficiaries that the main reasons of application of different approaches to pays of implementation team members include different levels in a team member´s involvement in project activities and his/her professional skills.

On the other hand, it is not possible to apply hourly wages entirely arbitrarily in some types of final beneficiaries due to the internal regulations of these entities (most importantly tariff classes and table-related pays in public administration entities). Higher qualifications (but also experience and skills), e.g. in lecturers, have clearly higher costs of hourly rates in ACJs. Final beneficiaries document relevant qualifications with experts´ structured curriculum vitas (or publishing activities). Final beneficiaries did not confirm in structured interviews that differences in pays were affected by the setting of calls or the type of a partner. Final beneficiaries confirmed that the interval of up to 500 CZK/h generally consisted of pays of project team technicians (e.g. coordinator, manager, administrative assistant) and that the category exceeding 500 CZK/h included pays of experts, specialists etc.

3.16.2 Summary of conclusions

The analyses performed have confirmed that equivalent approaches to pays of implementation team members are applied in partnership projects. Individual disparities occur in pays of experts within ACJs, who are generally members of partnership organizations. However, in the case of employment contracts or APWs, the differences are much lower, which is caused by an overview of maximum possible hourly rates that is being used. Hourly rates in partnership organizations are lower in this case, though. As implied by structured interviews, this fact is caused by lower administrative burden on the part of partnership organizations.

Analyses and surveys have identified the main reasons of experts´ different pays to be different levels of experts´ involvement and participation in project outputs and different levels of professional skills of partners´ experts/implementation team members. Final beneficiaries appreciate the real work of individual experts, their experience and skills that are reflected in the shape of project outputs. On the other hand, they consider relationships to target groups or different levels in experts´ achieved education to be less important when deciding on experts´ pays.

3.17 Partnership substitutability (1.14)

The above mentioned economic crisis affects the ability of some partners to continue to operate in a partnership. In this case, a question arises for beneficiaries whether it is possible to replace a partner and with whom.

The main evaluation question to be solved is: What types of activities that were identified by two or more partners together in analysed cases would be possible to be implemented with the same outputs and results by a single organization (e.g. in case it would not be possible to finance projects based on the partnership principle from public resources any more)?

3.17.1 Data processing method and commented results

Regarding the key information given in the answer to the main evaluation question, the following part deals with specific aspects relating to the sustainability and satisfaction of the partnership principle. This evaluation has been made in the context of the main evaluation question.

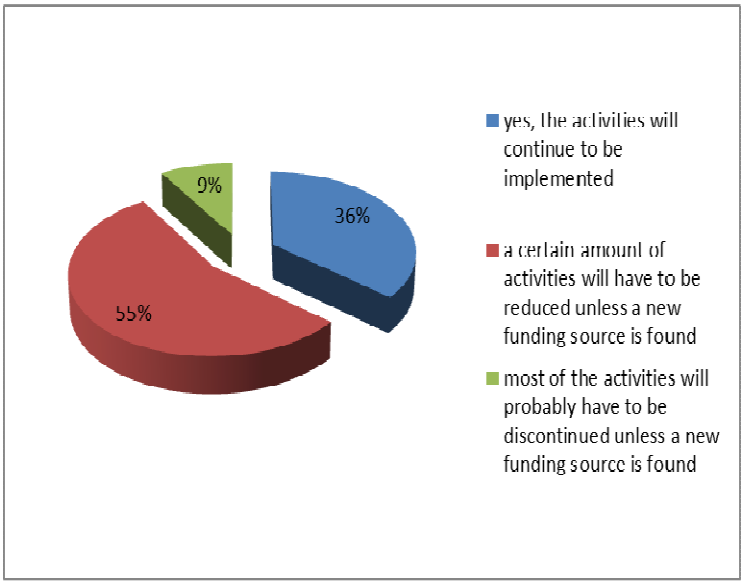
An interesting fact has been revealed with an open question examining which activities would be possible to be implemented with the same results by a smaller number of partners. The results differ diametrically. On one hand, a lot of respondents believe that no activities would be possible to be implemented by a smaller number of partners since the whole project is set to fully apply the partnership principle. On the other hand, many respondents openly state that all project activities would be possible to be performed by a reduced number of partners. This indicates that a lot of partnerships work on a formal basis only because the rules of the call required it.

Another aspect focused on within this evaluation task is the sustainability of financed activities after a project is formally terminated. The questionnaire survey results suggest the primary assumption based on experience with the evaluation of partnerships within CIP EQUAL when a lot of projects or partnerships discontinued their activities or significantly reduced their project activities after the funding had been terminated. The results in the graph show that there are a number of projects in the current programming period that are strongly dependent on external resources. Almost 55 % of partners believe that a certain number of activities will have to be reduced unless a new funding source is found, and almost 10 % is convinced that most of the activities will be discontinued.

Structured interviews suggest similar experience as most partners openly confessed that although they would try to maintain them, there was a high chance that the resulting products and activities would be reduced. The reason is funding or ensuring funds for further activities. Effort has been found among partners in some cases to cooperate at least informally, though without new and

follow-on funding. In particular, this is an example of small partnerships with 2 members (beneficiary + partner).

Graph 9: Will it be possible to maintain your project after ESF funding is terminated?



Source: IREAS 2010 questionnaire survey

The main project sustainability risks resulting from the questionnaire survey can be categorized as follows:

- reduction of the number of employees of an organization (in connection with the economic crisis);
- monitoring and reporting of sustainability after project termination;
- financial sustainability (financial requirements of activities and lack of financial resources);
- small political support (changes in the political scene);
- loss of interest of a target group.

Lack of funds to maintain existing activities is clearly the most frequent answer. This is a long-term problem which is not unrelated to the actual project concept and vision when a lot of projects with very uncertain sustainability are prepared and approved.

3.17.2 Summary of conclusions

First it is necessary to objectively state that OP HRE partnerships are relatively small in size (median of the number of partners 1.00 and average 2.4). The results imply that it would be possible to reduce the number of partners in partnerships with higher numbers of partners while maintaining the quality of results. However, in the OP HRE a majority of small partnerships can be identified, consisting only of a beneficiary and one partner, for example, who complement each other in individual activities as well as in contributions to project outputs. Reduction is not possible in such a case and transfer of activities to a single partner cannot be considered either. Sustainability of projects after the end of implementation is a potential problem. The results show that there is a lot of projects even in the current programming period that are strongly dependent on external financial

resources. Almost 55 % of partners believe that a certain amount of activities will have to be reduced unless a new funding source is obtained, and almost 10 % is convinced that most of the activities will be discontinued.

Recommendation:

- One of the key aspects pointed out in relation to solving this evaluation question is the overall benefit of partnership (connected with possible reduction of the number of partners and compliance with the partnership principle) and sustainability of activities. Based on the results, it is recommended to consider the possibility of introducing con-financing in the next programming period, or a bonus for applications not requesting for 100% support. Positive impacts on the efficiency and effects of individual projects with a partnership regime can be expected.

3.18 Necessity of partnerships in projects (1.15)

When implementing partnership projects, organizations must have asked themselves while preparing a project which of the solution options was the best. Whether to implement activities by themselves, or together with other partners. Or, which activities would it be? This evaluation question is very closely related to analyses of previous evaluation questions.

The main evaluation question to be solved is: What types of activities ensured by two or more partners together would not be possible to be ensured by a single organization?

3.18.1 Data processing method and commented results

This evaluation question follows, or complements previous evaluation question 1.14 focusing on the type of activities possible to be implemented without a partnership. As for methodology, use may be made in the case of question 1.15 of structured interviews made with grant beneficiaries´ representatives.

First it is necessary to emphasise sizes of existing partnerships in the OP HRE for which a lower number of partners is more typical and the involvement and participation of partners are based on that. It can be said, with a certain level of generalization, that human capital partnerships have been successfully optimized and the number of partners is lower than in the previous programming period.

The primary purpose of this evaluation question was to provide an overview of activities ensured within a partnership, where it was not possible to demonstrate that the activities might have been ensured by a single organization. It is not possible to say, though, based on the structured interviews, that a single institution is not able to ensure an activity, but the same institution would have problems while implementing and ensuring follow-up activities. The power of partnership as viewed by existing OP HRE partnerships is in the specialization of relevant entities and institutions. The question is not whether there are activities that need to be implemented within a partnership, but what the effects would be of activities ensured by a single entity?

Activities in individual projects can be divided into two basic groups – content (material) and organizational-administrative. Material activities differ significantly one from another especially between individual priority axes (often very similar on the level of projects in areas of support). Administrative and organizational activities, on the other hand, are logically very similar one to another between individual priority axes.

Organizational-administrative activities include preparation to select and actual selection of a supplier, addressing and selection of participants, schedule and coordination of education (or another crucial project activity), organizational and technical preparation of project implementation, ensuring creation, printout and distribution of information materials etc. This group of activities is a must to successfully implement the whole project and is often taken care of by a grant beneficiary. They are activities implemented by a single institution.

Material activities include a broad scale of possible supported activities that often are very specifically targeted. More generally, this means education of employees, or creation of an internal educational system, field work, support of employment and employers, monitoring, requalification, studies and methodologies developed within a project etc. These activities are supported by a single or more partners together depending on the project nature. Regarding the average size of a partnership, this usually means cooperation.

Generally, we can identify several hierarchical levels of participation and involvement in individual project activities[18]:

Inter-organizational regular-basis communication, work meetings –a necessary precondition for successful implementation of projects and project outcomes ("exchange of information is essential")

Conferences – enhancement of outcomes and results, involvement of other entities, increase in information, strengthening the image of a project and project promoters (beneficiary and partners)

Joint planning – making activities more effective, distribution of tasks according to potentials and abilities of individual partners (may lead to increased administration and demands on partners, therefore, there is a requirement for good preparedness of the partners)

Joint analyses – widening the scope of information by new elements, taking into account the international aspect, broadening views and extending positions according to the types of partners

Joint advising groups – raising a partnership to a higher level, even better coordination of various views and standpoints, being more operational in solving a specific problem, mutual enrichment

The structured interviews have implied that only project communication in fact takes place in Priority Axis 1, for example, out of the list above. Educational services are usually concentrated with an external supplier and remaining partnership entities send their employees to training. Therefore, there are time, organizational and, as result, financial savings as not all of the companies have to provide training on their own; nevertheless, there is no deeper cooperation based on the identified projects. The situation is similar in some PA 5 projects, where there are higher numbers of partners. Within PA 2 and PA 3, cases of partnerships have been identified during structured interviews, whose

[18] see IREAS (2008) and Polverari and Michie (2009)

members are fully involved in project solving. A partnership uses different specializations of individual institutions when each of them is able to implement necessary activities.

3.18.2 Summary of conclusions

It is not possible to say, on the basis of the structured interviews, that a single institution is not able to ensure an activity, but the same institutions would have problems while implementing and ensuring follow-up activities (this would have to be dealt with in the form of sub-deliveries within open tenders). The power of partnership as viewed by existing OP HCE partnerships is in the specialization of relevant entities and institutions. Procedurally, project activities could be solved by a single institution; nevertheless, the benefit of partnership is, in particular, in joint planning, sharing of information and experience and better targeting on target groups. Viewed from this perspective, significant differentiations among individual OP HCE Priority Axes can be pointed out.

3.19 Level of partners´ involvement in projects (1.16)

The main evaluation question to be solved is: To what extent was the number of actually involved partners necessary to ensure all implemented activities and to achieve all defined project objectives? How the necessity of involvement of any of the partners can be demonstrated on the level of DP?

3.19.1 Data processing method and commented results

Similarly to the two previous evaluation questions, it is necessary to emphasize higher rationalization in partnership creation in the current programming period. This has been evident in the generally lower number of partners in human capital partnerships. Compared to the previous evaluation questions, a table is provided here, showing size differences among partnerships. A median value is more appropriate and pregnant as extreme values have been "suppressed" (as opposed to the arithmetic mean). On average, the largest partnerships are in Priority Axis 5 and, further, in areas of support 2.1 and 3.2. The median value in these three areas is 2, while all remaining areas show the median value of 1.

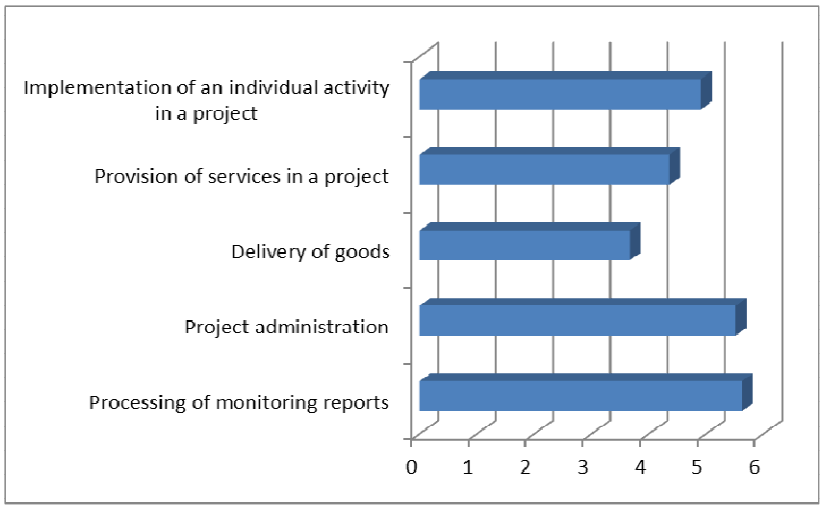
Table 31: Average and median sizes of partnerships

area of support	average size of a partnership	median value of a partnership
1.1	2.34	1
2.1	2.66	2
3.1	2.32	1
3.2	2.63	2
3.3	1.72	1
3.4	2.06	1
4.1	1	1
5.1	3.09	2

Source: IREAS 2010 questionnaire survey

Although the values above suggest relatively small partnerships in the current programming period, the level and intensity of involvement of individual partners are not identical. Substantial disparities among projects and areas of support have been identified within a questionnaire survey and structured interviews. The graph below shows the types of project activities and the intensity of involvement of the partners (respondents in the questionnaire survey).

Graph 10: Participation of partners in individual activities in a project



Source: IREAS 2010 questionnaire survey

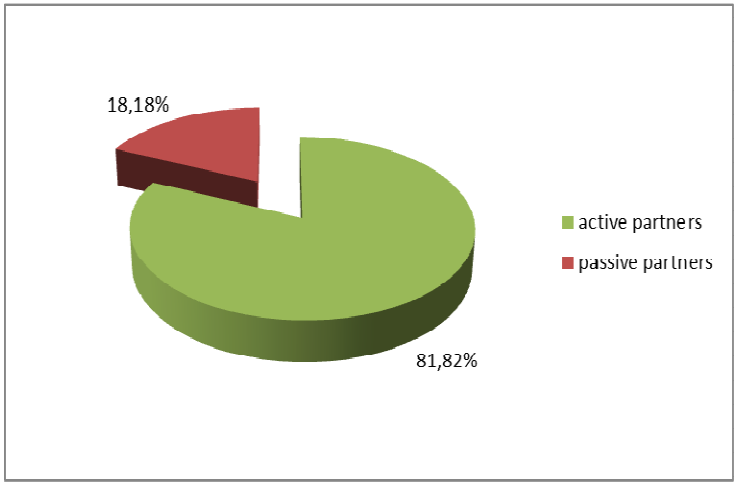
Note: respondents could assess the intensity of their involvement in a relevant activity on a scale of 1 – 6, where 1= low involvement, 6=maximum involvement

The results clearly imply relatively very high participation in organizational-administrative activities but also much lower involvement in procedural and material aspects. Nevertheless, the structured interviews (as well as the questionnaire survey) suggest relatively high satisfaction with partnership structures and activities of involved partners.

Regardless of the type of the implemented activity, a percentage of "passive" partners has been calculated based on the questionnaire survey results, i.e. entities whose average level of involvement was lower than 3[19]. It was about 18 % out of the total number of respondents (partners). Almost one fifth of partners are rather passive in their partnerships. From the point of view of the evaluator, this percentage can be generalized not only in respect of the questionnaire survey respondents but also in respect of the whole set of partners involved in some of the human capital partnerships.

[19] Respondents could assess the intensity of their involvement in a relevant activity on a scale of 1 – 6, where 1= low involvement, 6 = maximum involvement.

Graph 11: Percentage of active/passive partners in project partnerships



Source: IREAS 2010 questionnaire survey

It would be possible to reduce the number of partners to ensure all implemented activities in a project. This statement is not true of all partnerships but concerns partnerships that are larger in numbers. It has been found during the structured interviews that a lower number of partners might threaten compliance with defined indicators (especially in cases of wrongly set, ambitious values), but not the implementation of a project as a whole. Nevertheless, the necessity of involvement of each of the partners on the level of each of the partnerships is very hard to determine.

Individual structured interviews have implied, in some of the projects, certain over-dimensioning of the sizes of selected partnerships. A key element for the involvement of some of the partners is their access to the target group. In terms of activity, such a partner can seem to be less active but its role is very specific. A lot of partners are involved in a partnership because of their contacts to persons from among the target groups. These partners are closer to the target groups and are able to get to them much better and discuss their problems.

As mentioned by Dahan (2006, p. 73, quoted in IREAS 2008), a partnership alone is not a guarantee that there will really be impacts on target groups that need it the most; nevertheless, he also points out that partnerships helped involve organizations working with these target groups, thus increasing their chances to get involved. This is particularly obvious in small organizations that do not have ambitions or staff and technical capacities to affect the system framework more significantly.

3.19.2 Summary of conclusions

Most of the current partnerships are satisfied with their structure and activities of their partners. Generally, there is an evident tendency to create small partnerships. Almost one fifth of partners is rather passive in their partnerships. The results imply relatively high participation in organizational-administrative activities but also much lower involvement in material aspects. It would be possible to reduce the number of partners to ensure all implemented activities in a project. This statement is not true of all partnerships but concerns partnerships larger in numbers. It has been found during the structured interviews that a lower number of partners might threaten compliance with defined indicators (especially in cases of wrongly set, ambitious values), but not the implementation of a

project as a whole. Nevertheless, the necessity of involvement of each of the partners on the level of each of the partnerships is very hard to determine.

Substantial reduction of the number of partners would be undesirable and would threaten compliance with indicators´ target values. On the other hand, it is obvious that not all partnerships work on the basis of a partnership and certain over-dimensioning can be found there. From the point of view of the research team, it is possible to determine, based on the generalized results of the questionnaire survey, that the engagement of about one fifth of partners in projects is closer to below average.

3.20 Impacts of hypothetical reduction of the number of partners on the material and financial implementation of a project (1.17)

This evaluation question follows the previous analyses and deals with what would happen if the number of partners in OP HRE partnership projects was reduced.

The main evaluation question is: How analyzed projects could be solved to the same extent if the number of involved partners was reduced? By what proportion of funds could the overall project budget be reduced in case the number of involved partners would be reduced in accordance with the question above?

3.20.1 Data processing method and commented results of evaluation question 1.17

The research team based the analysis of this question mainly on data collection within a questionnaire survey with final beneficiaries in partnerships. There is just 1 partner in 54 % of the total number of projects; thus, the number of partners cannot be reduced in these cases as it would not be partnership projects in such situations. Approximately 1/3 of all partnership projects have 2, 3 or 4 partners. Projects have 5 or more partners in approximately 15 % of cases.

Distinguishing the number of partners according to OP HRE Priority Axes is also very important. In essence, the highest numbers of projects with partners, in which it would be possible to make certain more substantial adjustments, can be identified especially in PA 3, partially in PA 5 and PA 1. Activities that cannot be reduced more significantly can be found in PA 4 and PA 2.

Another important aspect of this evaluation question is the number of projects with partners who are without financial contributions, i.e. situations when the partners do dispose of any financial budgets. This information is not possible to be obtained from partners´ budgets from MONIT7+. MONIT7+ does not record these data. The research team has identified this fact within a questionnaire survey in 2010. Approximately 45 % of cases are projects without financial contributions and it is therefore not possible to reduce any budget items in these cases.

In the questionnaire survey the research team has also examined a possibility to reduce financial participation including a question whether a project could be implemented by a single organization or whether the total number of partners could be reduced. A majority part of all respondents (75 %) clearly declared that there was no space for reducing the number of partners in their projects implemented in partnerships as the partners were needed to implement the projects.

The number of partners could only be reduced in every tenth partnership project, whereas the costs could be lower and the project would probably be implemented to the required extent in accordance with the originally planned objectives. Approximately 16 % of partnership projects could be implemented by a single organization, whereas, based on the verbal answers, this concerns the beneficiary, in particular.

According to the connections mentioned above, it is further appropriate to deal in greater detail with in what categories of percentage shares of partners in project budgets it would be possible to generate savings. If we look at the group of partnership projects in greater detail, where certain reduction could be made (i.e. approximately 26 % of projects), in the case of this group of projects, about 1/4 of the respondents would be able to implement their projects without partners who do not have any financial contributions, and the projects could be implemented by the promoters themselves. The possibility to reduce the number of partners and project budgets is in the category of 1-10 percentage share of partners in project budgets. In other size categories of percentage shares of partners in project budgets the possibilities to reduce the number of partners and their budgets are very modest.

3.20.2 Summary of conclusions

It has been found within a questionnaire survey that the main applicant would be able to take over all activities in a partnership project only in about 6 % of projects. This is a very insignificant percentage of partnership projects. The main reasons of this situation consist in the roles of partners with and without financial contributions. In the survey, the respondents identified, to a very limited extent, a possibility to replace partners without financial contributions more often. However, this is a marginal proportion.

In the questionnaire survey, the research team has also examined a possibility to reduce financial participation of partners including a question whether a project could be implemented by a single organization or whether the total number of partners could be reduced. A majority part of all respondents (75 %) clearly declared that there was no space for reducing the number of partners in their projects implemented in partnerships as the partners were needed to implement the project. The number of partners could only be reduced in every tenth partnership project, whereas the costs could be lower and the project would probably be implemented to the required extent in accordance with the originally planned objectives. Approximately 16 % of partnership projects could be implemented by a single organization, whereas, based on the verbal answers, this concerns the main project promoter in a partnership, in particular.

3.21 Appropriateness of a partnership structure (1.18)

To achieve results and impacts of partnership projects, the essential question is how a partnership is structured and which partners are active in a project.

The main evaluation question is: To what extent is the partnership principle successfully implemented in terms of the appropriateness of a partnership structure in relation to the effective implementation of project activities and achievement of project objectives?

Which kinds of partners have been good? How effectively do they communicate with each other? Do all partners adequately participate in achieving objectives?

3.21.1 Data processing method and commented results

Three essential characteristics of a partnership present in the definition of the OP HRE are: targeting, joint decision making, functional non-substitutability – to which we have added the synergic effect of a partnership. These characteristics concern also other evaluation questions (especially 1.20 and 1.23) but, in the interest of clarity, we will briefly explain them in entirety in this place.

A lot of findings can be derived from statements of beneficiaries and their partners (up to 100 persons questioned in total):

a) **targeting**

   In most projects (79 %)**, at the time of the preparation, all partners already had their own objectives conforming to the objectives of a project.** In other cases, some partners (whether a majority or a minority) supplemented their own objectives after the project preparation started,

b) **joint decision making**

   Joint decision making is practiced in less than a half of projects. This does not mean that the others "disapprove" but that they do not practically make decisions and only join a decision made by someone else, generally the beneficiary.

   All proposals for major changes, further procedures and sub-objectives are raised by the beneficiary in about one third of projects. **Other partners raise at least some proposals in about two thirds of projects**.

c) **functional non-substitutability**

   There is no clear functional non-substitutability in almost one half of projects, i.e. that all partners have different, unique roles in a project. This is not detrimental to project quality and achieving objectives, it only highlights the potential redundancy of a part of the partners. This would have to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The most frequent situations are that two or more partners do the same thing – the same social service, the same training. It happens when these partners "find" a target group and someone else "services" it. An advantage for the beneficiary is that the value of the monitoring indicators can be achieved more easily and that a partner (if lost) can be replaced with another one[20].

[20] We can say, with a bit of exaggeration, that it is an analogy to the forbidden replacement of a partner with a supplier in the figurative sense that these partners are suppliers of target group people to the beneficiary. Of course, the end of this analogy is that a beneficiary has compliance with material output indicators of a project due to such a "supply of people" in

It is also necessary to point out that **some key activities are performed without the participation of partners in a high number of projects and are implemented by the beneficiary alone.** The partners just acknowledge these activities, no matter how important they are in a project, and they are probably not discussed at meetings of the implementation team.

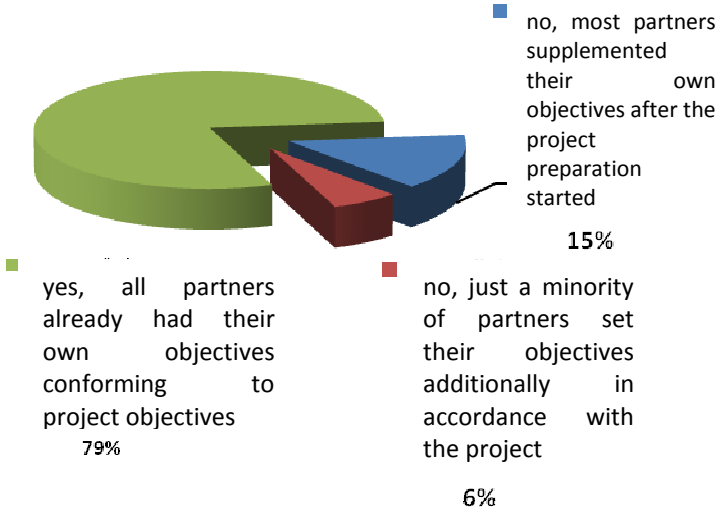
d) synergic effect

Implementation of a project in the OP HRE gives rise to outputs such as educational programmes, training, care of target groups etc. **If all partners worked independently, in most cases some of the outputs would be accomplished and some would not.** Those not accomplished independently can be generally called partnership added value – a synergic effect of a project. Questioned beneficiaries and partners confirmed in up to 80 % of cases that approved project objectives could only be fulfilled within current partnerships, not by partners independently.

Most partnership projects are adequately structured in relation to their project objectives due to the fact that the projects have been designed with regard to a specific structure of partners. On the other hand, many of them probably include partners increasing their capacities to achieve planned outputs and are not functionally necessary there.

Complete questioning results relating to partners´ objectives and their project functionalities are in the graph.

Graph 12: "What did was it like before you started to prepare a project: Did each of the partners have its own objectives pursued before and conforming to the project later?"



Source: Tima Liberec questionnaire survey 2

discussed cases, whereas explicit and contextual definitions of a forbidden supplier in partnership projects tend to describe services provided for profit. Although… In a nutshell, some projects look (and appear to have been developed) as follows: The future beneficiary is a common supplier of services, e.g. training. The beneficiary does have any contracts now. The beneficiary approaches its future partners and offers them "tailor-made" training for free (paid by the ESF) if they become its project partners. The beneficiary prepares everything; the partners gladly sign it and leave everything on the beneficiary. The beneficiary takes ready-to-use training materials out of a drawer and uses them after dusting them off. Training is certainly carried out and participants exist. Project partners have just supplied human "material". We think these cases are wholly legitimate in respect of OP HCE rules. Otherwise, they would have to be interpreted as impermissible favouritism on this service market.

The influence of the number of partners has been dealt with in other evaluation questions (e.g. 1.7).

3.21.2 Summary of conclusions and recommendations

Beneficiaries generally consider project partnerships to be useful for the fulfilment of project objectives. In most cases (79 %), at the time of the preparation, all partners already had their own objectives conforming to the objectives of a project. Joint decision making is practiced in less than a half of projects. Other partners raise at least some proposals in about two thirds of projects.

Most partnership projects are adequately structured in relation to their project objectives but a lot of them include partners increasing their capacities to achieve planned outputs but are not functionally non-substitutable. There is no clear functional non-substitutability in almost one half of projects, i.e. that all partners have different, unique roles in a project.

Some key activities are performed without the participation of partners in a high number of projects and are implemented by the beneficiary alone. However, if all partners worked independently, in most cases some of the outputs would be accomplished and some would not.

Most partnership projects are adequately structured in relation to their project objectives due to the fact that the projects have been designed with regard to a specific structure of partners. On the other hand, many of them probably include partners increasing their capacities to achieve planned outputs and are not functionally necessary there.

3.22 Necessary changes in a partnership structure (1.19)

The previous analyses are followed by an analysis focusing on the appropriateness of changes in a partnership during the project implementation and possible impacts of this step on project results and effects.

The main evaluation question is: To what extent are changes in a partnership structure appropriate and necessary (withdrawal, accession, replacement of partners)?

Did the necessity to change partners arise? In which phase? For what reasons? If a change was made a longer time ago (3 months), what effects did it have?

3.22.1 Data processing method and commented results

Generally, there is **a strong tendency not to make changes in partnership structures** in implementation teams. This is given by the change complexity in terms of the substance and staff, and an administrative burden. A proposal for such a change – although a justified one – would give rise to a lot of clarifications, evaluations, discussions etc., especially in large organizations such as universities, large enterprises or some authorities.

Actual problems in the possible exclusion of a partner (even if the partner wishes so) are so huge that the beneficiary is discouraged to take that step.

An opposite problem sometimes occurs – the beneficiary proves incompetent! As advised by a woman who used to lead a project in the OP PA: “In this project, the problem was not with the

partner but with the beneficiary who did not fulfil its obligations. The partner did not have almost any lever to get the beneficiary to terminate the project smoothly. The partner could discontinue its activities, of course, but as the partner had brought his reputation with the target group in the project, it wanted to keep what it had promised to the target group. The beneficiary was unwilling to provide the partner with information of the project financing.

We have asked 55 beneficiaries in the OP HRE about this type of changes and the results are as follows: 5 % would welcome the accession of another partner and another 15 % is not able to tell yet. Withdrawal of a partner would be necessary in isolated cases and 14 % is not able to tell yet. A majority out of these remaining ones will not need or require changes, though. Therefore, it can be assumed that **partnership structures prove to be good in most projects.**

In the interviews, **beneficiaries also require that the partner replacement approval procedure be accelerated**. It is recalled merely in passing that projects are implemented in the "real time". This means that activities must be performed, partners must take actions, suppliers and partners must get paid although the MA does not communicate its observations on the monitoring report, does not assess and approve substantial changes in a project, does not send another payment etc. even if several months have passed. This generates a huge pressure on the part of the beneficiary and its partners on the timely and quality implementation of individual steps as well as of whole key activities and increases the stress of all participants.

Therefore, we believe that a rule should be adopted that after a certain period of time has passed (e.g. 30 or 60 days) and the MA does not communicate its decision to the applicant requesting the change or does not comment on a part of the monitoring report, it must be interpreted as consent with the change, and as regards the payment application, payment has to be made for everything that has not been previously opposed by the MA when assessing the financial part of the monitoring report. This correction of both parties´ conditions is perceived by beneficiaries as establishment of "elementary justice" in beneficiary-provider relationships.

3.22.2 Summary of conclusions and recommendations

Partnership structures prove to be good in a large majority of projects. At the same time, there is a strong tendency not to make changes in partnership structures in implementation teams.

The necessity to change partners occurs exceptionally and is evaluated as rather complicated by beneficiaries. It happens that a beneficiary needs to replace a partner but the partner does not wish it (it has almost certain income and work), and the change is not made as result. If it is necessary to change a partner, beneficiaries require that the partner replacement approval procedure on the part of the provider be accelerated.

This evaluation question is without recommendations.

3.23 Decision making organization and mechanisms (1.20)

Joint decision making has been defined as one of the components of the definition of partnership. The analysis below deals with progress in compliance with the partnership principle by means of decision making mechanisms.

The main evaluation question is: To what extent has there been progress in compliance with the partnership principle in terms of the efficiency of organization and setting of decision making mechanisms?

3.23.1 Data processing method and commented results

3.23.1.1 Factors of decision making in an implementation team

Decision making in partnership projects – if taking into account the activity of an implementation team – is seemingly homogeneous: someone (generally the beneficiary) proposes something, the others express their opinions on that and then they jointly adopt it or reject it. The decision making process is different in reality and the decision making environment is varied.

The first factor affecting the decision making nature is the overall concept of a project in terms of the beneficiary´s and its partners´ positions. A proposal for a joint project was mostly made (min. in 87 % of cases) by a later applicant, now a beneficiary. It was the applicant to have "conceived what the project would be about", suggested objectives, suggested the main activities and their outputs, perhaps even the total budget and roles of individual partners. The applicant might have proposed a project in the form of a complete application before inviting suitable partners.

In all these cases, the applicant had become an informal, and after the completion of the application, a formal project leader already at the time of the project preparation and submission. This established its decision making dominance. However, this dominance must have a real basis: it can only work thanks to that a) the beneficiary is of sufficient professional standing and of sufficient experience in relation to substantive project issues and project team management, respectively, or b) the partners are 100 % dependent on the beneficiary, knowing well that they would never get to the "money" without the beneficiary – due to their lack of experience, low capacities etc.

The second factor is the "quality" of persons representing the partners. This means, in particular, their communication skills, overall maturity, combined with their age, their position in their own organization etc. When asking the 99 beneficiaries and partners, we have found that experience of up to two years was possessed by 43 % of beneficiaries´ representatives and 55 % of partners´ representatives.

The lower experience of the partners (or entities representing partner organizations!) gives way to a centralized communication mechanism and "star"-type decision making than to a network of persons communicating together until they reach a consensus (possibly with voting).

The third factor is the subject of decision making – its complexity and amount of information available to individual participants. We have not dealt with this factor for the too large variety of "subjects of decision making".

The fourth factor is time needed to make a decision, and time actually available to make a decision. A lot of problems "ripen" and a decision how to solve them may ripen concurrently, with a little delay.

It showed, in a project in the 3rd Axis of the OP HRE, that the partner was not gradually able to ensure the required number of service users. First "internal" options were considered to strengthen offers and promotion, then external solutions with the invitation of another organization that might have provided better for the participants. This organization was not included in the project team and remained in the position of a "supplier".

Unfortunately, the two last factors could not have been dealt with empirically, by participating in implementation teams´ meetings or by studying meeting minutes, for practical reasons. It would be time consuming and organizationally challenging and the beneficiaries would not be much helpful.

According to our findings – **the number of partners is not an influential factor**: the questionnaire survey has showed that **a higher total number of partners does not lead to an increase in the number of projects in which all proposals are raised by a beneficiary or in which decisions are not made by all partners**. The influence of the number of negotiating organizations, or IT members, can be overlapped by other influences having contradictory effects – e.g. a higher need to monitor preferably "disciplined" decision making of the beneficiary. We have registered projects with 10, 14, even 19 partners and it is hard to imagine that an effective joint decision making mechanism would be set there without the dominant influence of the beneficiary or several key IT members.

3.23.1.2 Occurrence of joint decision making and change initiation

Having regard to these possible factors of a decision making situation, **how the decision making process works?**

In a slight majority of projects, some partners do not in fact make decisions, they only accept them. In 42 % of cases, the questioned beneficiaries and partners talk about joint decision making by all partners meaning that partners´ explicit consent is required.

All **proposals for major changes, further procedures and sub-objectives** are raised **relatively often – although in "just" 39 % of cases –** by the beneficiary. Other partners raise some proposals in the remaining 61 %. This means that **the beneficiary is the only change initiator in 4 out of 10 partnership projects!**

However, (as it usually goes), the issue is viewed differently by beneficiaries and differently by their partners… but contrary to expectations. 35 % of beneficiaries, but 72 % of partners, declare they make decisions together. 42 % of beneficiaries, but only 25 % of partners, declare all change proposals are raised by beneficiaries. In other words: **partners tend to assess decision making in projects as more participative than beneficiaries do.**

As far as the main legal types of beneficiaries and partners are concerned, the proportion of joint decision making is roughly the same according to the questioned entities. Joint decision making by all partners was more often mentioned in enterprises and NGNPO than in public administration

organizations and others. NGNPO are more often active in respect of proposals, while in the case of enterprises, in particular, the proportion of projects in which change proposals are raised by beneficiaries, is relatively higher (but still minor one – about 45 %).

In connection with the legal type as applied in individual areas of support, **joint decision making is most frequent in area of support 3.3** (approximately two thirds of projects). As much as 100 % of the questioned entities from this area of support declare that proposals for changes, further procedures and sub-objectives are raised by other partners, too, not just by beneficiaries. It is 50-75 % in other areas of support. It is true, though, that these statements are based on a small number of observations (8-28 projects).

The proportion of projects in which decisions are made together, decreases with the increasing length of project implementation. This is at least true in the case of the questioned entities and in the following, elementary sense:

Table 32: Relationship between project length and joint decision making

	project implementation length			in total
	project has not started yet	less than half a year	more than half a year	
decision making always by all partners (partners´ explicit consent is required)	75.0%	50.0%	34.5%	**42.4%**
some partners do not in fact make decisions but accept them	25.0%	50.0%	65.5%	**57.6%**
in total	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Source: Tima Liberec questionnaire survey 2

Hypothetical conclusion: once a project gets to the implementation phase, it is more frequently controlled autocratically either by the beneficiary, or by a more narrow group of influential partners.

Decision making styles in relation the types of partnerships defined in evaluation question 1.7 are also interesting. They are only slight tendencies, though, that do not appear to be statistically significant.

As regards proposals, a beneficiary is the most frequently active in local partnerships and the least frequently active in international partnerships:

Table 33: Relationship between major change proposals and types of partnerships by partner´s place of operation

		type of partnership			in total
		local	within CR	within EU, EEA	
major change proposals	all proposals raised by a beneficiary	42.6%	31.6%	29.4%	**38.1%**
	some proposals raised by other partners	57.4%	68.4%	70.6%	**61.9%**
in total		**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Source: Tima Liberec questionnaire survey 2

Similarly, a beneficiary is the most frequently active in intra-specialization partnerships and the least frequently active in inter-sectoral partnerships. This also means that **as regards proposals, other partners are more frequently active in inter-sectoral partnerships than the beneficiary itself.**

Table 34: Relationship between major change proposals and types of partnerships by sector

		type of partnership			in total
		intra-specialization	intra-sectoral	inter-sectoral	
major change proposals	all proposals raised by a beneficiary	45.0%	35.7%	31.0%	**38.1%**
	some proposal raised by other partners	55.0%	64.3%	69.0%	**61.9%**
in total		**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Source: Tima Liberec questionnaire survey 2

"All in all": **as regards partners´ activity (excluding the beneficiary), the best situation is in international inter-sectoral partnerships.** This corresponds to area of support 5.1. This fact has been confirmed in the comparison of beneficiaries´ and partners´ activities in individual areas of support. While, for example, in areas of support 1.1 and 3.2 proposals are raised by partners in 50 % of cases, it is 73 % of cases in area of support 5.1.

At the same time, we have to say that such a state can be well expected in area 5.1 as in 5.1 the initiator is usually a domestic (future) applicant who necessarily needs active views and proposals of a foreign partner for its project. The situation is easier in domestic partnerships in that a more experienced applicant can in fact prepare a project by itself.

It has showed in the case of joint decision making that **joint decisions are reportedly most frequent in domestic partnerships** and the least frequent (in less than 1/3 of cases) in international projects:

Table 35: Relationship between decision making processes and types of partnerships by partner´s place of operation

		type of partnership			in total
		local	within CR	within EU, EEA	
decision making process	always jointly by all partners	43.9%	52.9%	29.4%	**42.9%**
	some partners do not in fact make decisions but accept them	56.1%	47.1%	70.6%	**57.1%**
in total		**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Source: Tima Liberec questionnaire survey 2

As regards partners´ belonging to fields or sectors, the situation is roughly identical in all types:

Table 36: Relationship between decision making processes and types of partners by sector

		type of partnership			in total
		intra-specialization	intra-sectoral	inter-sectoral	
decision making process	always jointly by all partners	44.7%	38.5%	44.4%	**42.9%**
	some partners do not in fact make decisions but accept them	55.3%	61.5%	55.6%	**57.1%**
in total		**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Source: Tima Liberec questionnaire survey 2

Answers relating to proposal readiness and joint decision making have been processed for nine types as defined in evaluation question 1.7 but the frequencies are too low for us to be able to formulate a general conclusion with due certainty[21].

3.23.2 Summary of conclusions and recommendations

The decision making nature is affected by the overall concept of a project in terms of the beneficiary´s and its partners´ positions. The second factor is professional and communication skills of persons representing partners. The third factor is the subject of decision making. The fourth factor is time needed to make a decision, and time actually available to make a decision. The number of partners is not an influential factor, though. A higher total number of partners does not lead to an increase in the number of projects in which all proposals would be raised by a beneficiary or in which decisions are not made jointly by all partners.

Some partners do not in fact make decisions in more than a half of projects, they only accept them. In 42 % of cases, the questioned beneficiaries and partners talk about joint decision making by all partners meaning that partners´ explicit consent is required to make a decision. All proposals for major changes, further procedures and sub-objectives are raised relatively often – although in "just" 39 % of cases – by the beneficiary. Partners tend to assess decision making in projects as more participative than beneficiaries do.

As far as the main legal types of beneficiaries and partners are concerned, the proportion of joint decision making is roughly the same according to the questioned entities. In connection with the legal type as applied in individual areas of support, joint decision making is most frequent in area of support 3.3 Integration of Socially Excluded Groups in the Labour Market (approximately two thirds of projects). The proportion of projects in which decisions are made together, decreases with the increasing length of project implementation.

As far as proposal readiness is concerned, all proposals for major changes, further procedures and sub-objectives are raised by a beneficiary in a minority of cases (40 %). As regards proposals, a beneficiary is the most frequently active in local partnerships and the least frequently active in international partnerships. In the same respect, other partners are more frequently active in inter-sectoral partnerships than the beneficiary itself. Generally, viewed in terms of partners´ activity (excluding the beneficiary), the best situation is in international inter-sectoral partnerships. Joint decisions are reportedly most frequent in domestic partnerships and the least frequent in international projects.

[21] There is less than 5 cases in 12 out of 18 "combinations" (9 types of partnerships and always 2 decision making situations) and relationships turn out to be statistically insignificant (measured by chi-square goodness of fit test), anyway.

3.24 Communication mechanisms in a partnership (1.21)

A need for a more intensive communication in decision making is mentioned as one of the cost factors in partnership projects; in non-partnership projects there is no such need at all. In the following analyses we will deal with communication processes within a partnership and their effects on a partnership.

The main evaluation question is: To what extent has there been progress in compliance with the partnership principle in terms of communication mechanisms in a partnership?

3.24.1 Data processing method and commented results

When solving this question, **reconstruction of communication mechanisms within a project and directly inside an implementation team** turned out to be **difficult.** To obtain a satisfactory answer, it is not enough to use a direct question, which we did, of course; it is better to analyse minutes from IT meetings in a number of projects, to participate in these IT meetings (preferably in several ones in every project), to ask involved partners in all projects etc. High time and financial demands on these procedures would be finally overlapped by a small willingness of ongoing partnerships to enable these forms of participating observation.

Therefore, when answering this evaluation question, we again build on a questionnaire survey among beneficiaries or partners (despite having used this method, we have obtained only 53 assessable answers) and on examples obtained during the creation of case studies.

3.24.1.1 Communication elements in partnership projects

We have used a set of five elements of the level of communication:

- continuousness of distant communication;
- frequency of personal meetings of ITs;
- frequency of continuous assessments;
- communication form of the preparation of minor changes in a project;
- existence of inter-partnership work groups.

The main questioning results are in the table (in % from the number of answers). They have been ranked according to the % of occurrence and the list of elements above.

Table 37: How do you communicate inside your partnership?

	yes	no
Do you continuously communicate with your partners (e.g. 2-4 times a month) by phone and e-mail?	96	4
Do you meet your partners in person at implementation team meetings at least once every three months?	87	13
Do you regularly (at least once every three months) assess compliance with monitoring indicators, involvement of individual partners and achievement of planned outputs?	85	15
Do you prepare minor changes in your project, do you arrange further procedures and approve proposals by phone or e-mail?	79	21
Have you established work groups in addition to your implementation team (with the participation of other partners)?	47	53

Source: Tima Liberec questionnaire survey 2

A large majority of beneficiaries and partners confirm phone and e-mail (also when arranging further procedures and minor changes in a project, for example), quarterly meetings of implementation team members and assessments of compliance with monitoring indicators, involvement of individual partners and achievement of outputs to be common means of communication.

It is possible that the answers are slightly overestimated – as is the case in similar questions – but anyway, we consider it to be established that partners communicate intensively also about issues where – in the case of a convenient constellation of circumstances and negotiating persons – one-way communication from a beneficiary to its partners would be sufficient.

For purposes of a summary analysis of specific projects we have considered common types (models) of communication networks such as communication star, fork or web. However, this approach would lead to a static interpretation of communication practices in projects.

In our opinion, **communication dynamics** is important in partnership projects.

In practice, especially **after project implementation is started**, there are some changes compared to the basic situation (star, for): **a need arises for partners to communicate with each other and to make a number of operative decisions** that were or seemed to be irrelevant at the time of the project preparation.

However, this does not mean that communication and decision making are simply decentralized in part but that communication between a beneficiary and its partners is becoming more intensive. It seems, based on our observations, that the following circumstances (factors) **are of decisive importance for communication styles, frequency and mechanisms**:

a) **initial situation determined by the overall concept of a project and initial positions of a beneficiary and its partners** (beneficiary as an exclusive producer of a project application etc.),
b) **experience, initial activity and ambitions of some partnership members** (the small, new and starting ones are in the position of "subordinates commenting on issues", while a beneficiary with communication and professional skills, as well as some other partners experienced in negotiating with a grant provider, become leaders in a partnership also on an informal basis),
c) **project complexity** (leads to more robust and versatile communication),

d) **project phase** (phases: preparatory, starting, culminating, final, post-implementation – sustainability).

3.24.1.2 Assessment of communication differences among project groups

All five chosen communication elements have been analyzed for individual groups by successively assessing the "level of dependency" of each of the communication elements on a) whether the questioned entity was a beneficiary or a partner, b) area of support, c) project duration (not started yet, less than half a year of implementation, more than half a year), d) basic legal types of entities, e) number of partners (1, 2, 3, 4 or more) and f) type of partnership viewed both in terms of specialization and geography (see evaluation question 1.7).

Since there are a lot of individual results (about 370) and most of them are unreliable due to their low frequency, we have always calculated single statistics. It is an asymmetric coefficient of uncertainty. The coefficient characterizes quite well to what extent the differences in the answers to "communication questions" can be explained using the six aforementioned characteristics having positions of independent variables there[22].

We have selected values higher than 0.1 from among the achieved results and "translated" them in a connected text. We make references here to communication characteristics presented in the table above, while taking into account not only the coefficient value, but also absolute frequencies.

Beneficiaries versus partners: While all beneficiaries declare to communicate with their partners continuously by phone and e-mail, it is only 80 % of partners. (A nice example of the influence of the position on a seemingly factual answer.)

From among areas of support, it is more frequently beneficiaries and partners in areas 1.1 and 5.1 (94 and 86 %, respectively) where project changes and further procedures are arranged by phone and e-mail, while it is only in 56 % of cases in 3.4. As expected, personal meetings with partners at implementation team meetings at least once every quarter are the least frequent in area 5.1 (only 29 %), while it is reportedly 100 % and 89 % in 1.1 and 3.4, respectively. The situation is similar when evaluating regular compliance with monitoring indicators, involvement of individual partners and achievement of planned outputs. On the other hand, all projects in area of support 5.1 have reportedly established work groups, while it is only in 20 % and 30 % of cases in areas 1.1 and 3.4, respectively. This is linked to the complexity of a project and the content of key activities.

Business entities reportedly meet their partners more frequently at meetings at least once every quarter (in 100 % of cases) than NGNPO (73 %). Work groups are more frequently created by NGNPO (55 %) than business entities (32 %). Again this is clearly affected by the area of support, or the content of key activities.

[22] It is a level of association (i.e. possible causal connection) showing the relative reduction of the error of estimation in case the values of a variable predicate the values of another variable. For example, when we found that the coefficient had a value of 0.41 for the relationship between whether the questioned entity was a beneficiary or partner (independent variable) and whether communication by phone and e-mail took place in a project on a regular basis, it means that the independent variable helps explain the observed difference in 41 % (to be specific, we have noticed that this communication is confirmed by 100 % of beneficiaries, but by 80 % of partners). Thus, a "relatively substantial part" of the difference in the assessment by beneficiaries and partners can be explained by their positions in a project.

All projects with four or more partners reportedly communicate by phone and e-mail on a continuous basis, prepare minor changes in a project, arrange further procedures by phone and e-mail and meet their partners in person at implementation team meetings at least once every quarter. The number of projects with established work groups rises with the number of partners:

Table 38: Relationship between the number of partners and the creation of work groups

number of partners	are there work groups?		in total
	yes	no	
1	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
2	52.6%	47.4%	100.0%
3	57.1%	42.9%	100.0%
4 and more	71.4%	28.6%	100.0%
in total	**49.0%**	**51.0%**	**100.0%**

Source: Tima Liberec questionnaire survey 2

Only differences within local partnerships can be statistically assessed from among the types of partnerships. Preparation of minor changes in a project and arrangement of further procedures by phone and e-mail occur more frequently in local intra-specialization and intrasectoral partnerships than in intersectoral ones. Regular assessment of monitoring indicators etc. is the most frequently made in intra-specialization partnerships (100 %); work groups, on the other hand, occur the least frequently in local intra-specialization partnerships: it is in 21 % here, while it is 44 – 50 % in other types of local partnerships.

3.24.2 Summary of conclusions and recommendations

Partners intensively communicate with each other. A large majority of beneficiaries and partners use a) phone and email (also when arranging further procedures and minor changes in a project), b) quarterly meetings of implementation team members and evaluation of compliance with monitoring indicators, involvement of individual partners and achievement of outputs, as common means of communication.

Communication dynamics is important in partnership projects. After project implementation is started, a need for mutual communication between partners as well as a need to make a lot of operational decisions arise. The following factors are probably decisive for the communication style, frequency and mechanisms: a) the initial situation given by the overall concept of a project and the initial positions of the beneficiary and its partners, b) experience, initial activities and ambitions of some of the partnership members, c) project complexity, d) ongoing phase of a project.

According to their opinions, all beneficiaries communicate with their partners on a continuous basis, but only 80 % of partners think the same.

In the comparison of areas of support 1.1, 3.4 and 5.1, beneficiaries and partners communicate the most frequently by phone and e-mail in 1.1 and 5.1 where project changes are prepared and further procedures are arranged in this way. In contrast, it is approximately a half of cases in area 3.4. All projects in area of support 5.1 have reportedly established work groups, while it is only 1/5 and 1/3 of cases in areas 1.1 and 3.4, respectively.

According to their own assessments, business entities meet their partners in person at meetings at least once every quarter (100 % of cases), NGNPO do so less frequently (73 %). Work groups inside a project are more frequently created by NGNPO (55 %) than business entities (32 %). The number of projects with established work groups rises with the number of partners.

All projects with four or more partners reportedly communicate by phone and e-mail on a continuous basis, prepare minor changes in a project, arrange further procedures by phone and e-mail and meet their partners in person at implementation team meetings at least once every quarter. The number of projects with established work groups rises with the number of partners.

3.25 Partnership effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability (1.22)

A method of 3E is often used in the evaluation of public interventions. Sustainability has been added within the following analysis. It is expected in the case of sustainability that if it is higher, efficiency and effectiveness are higher as well.

The main evaluation question is: How and to what extent have individual partnership quality factors affected partnership effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability?

3.25.1 Data processing method and commented results

In this case, too, the biggest problem is to obtain a sufficient amount of complete and reliable data.

Efficiency can only be empirically measured a) in the case of a sufficient number of observations, b) on sufficiently homogenous objects, c) preferably with a single or a few conditioning factors (independent variables). What "sufficiently" means, is however a matter of agreement, or a deeper analysis that is not a subject of this evaluation.

3.25.1.1 Partnership quality

The notion of "partnership quality" in the sense of the evaluation question starts with a definition of partnership as already indicated in the introduction to evaluation question 1.18 (partnership targeting, joint decision making, functional non-substitutability of partners and synergic effect of a partnership).

One of the attempts is contained in the "Evaluation of the Concept of Support for Non-Profit Sector Development" adopted by the Resolution of the Government of the CR on 5 January 2009 [23.] It offers a partnership concept linked to a partnership concept in the OP HRE. However, the partnership characteristics do no fully describe the features of the partnership´s **quality. Quality is understood as certain maturity, advancedness, value by which it differs from other similar forms** (such as cooperation, client-supplier relationship etc).

Partnership in the "value" sense in which the notion of quality can be applied is distinguished by several definition features by which it differs from other forms of cooperation as a whole. **The characteristic features are as follows:**

[23] See http://www.vlada.cz/assets/ppov/rnno/koncepce-neziskoveho-sektoru/zhodnoceni_koncepce_pro_ web.pdf, p. 40-41.

- **public convenience of a partnership** (towards the society or recognized target groups of the assistance),
- **mutual benefits of cooperation** (profit for each partnership member),
- **joint objectives of partners** (expressed by a joint project and sometimes even other mutual obligations and agreements),
- **long-term duration of a relationship,**
- full **acceptation of cooperation contents and forms** by all partners,
- **equal positions** within a partnership **and joint decision making**,
- **need for balanced relationships inside a partnership** (each partner contributes with something that would otherwise be missing, without which the result would not be achieved),
- **synergic effect** or value added by cooperation: overall positive impacts on a given locality or target group are higher than the sum of effects that can be exerted by activities of individual participants.

Since a comprehensive "partnership theory" has not been created yet, it is necessary to emphasise that it is one of more possible concepts. Anyway, the quality cannot be described only by the aforementioned features. For example, we could also speak about the level of satisfaction with a partner relationship, feeling of partnership meaningfulness, side (unexpected but positive) impacts of a partner relationship etc., and all of that would contribute to the completion of the notion of "partnership quality". **We have chosen features that are empirically available to a sufficient extent in the form of pure questions** (self-assessments by beneficiaries and partners) using an intuitive scale of "more and less".

We have operationalised the aforementioned characteristics into a series of simple questions with a four-level ordinal scale[24]. We have chosen challenging formulations with respect to positive answers: we have reversed the scale from the negative to the positive end and used words such as "fully accept", "everyone contributes" to compensate the anticipated tendency of the questioned entities to make favourable self-assessments.

Our assumption is that the more characteristics are assessed positively, or with a higher level, the more valuable a partnership is as a whole. Of course, for benchmarking purposes, we would have to obtain information from all partners and would probably complete it with other partnership quality features.

The questioned entities (99 beneficiaries and partners) expressed their opinions on individual characteristics of their specific partnerships by means of a four-level scale. An option of "I don´t know, I cannot judge" was also available to filter out those of the questioned entities who did not feel competent to assess their partnership in a particular respect.

The overall conclusion from these results is clear when evaluating partnership characteristics – beneficiaries, or their partners, are convinced that all or most partners act adequately to value partnerships: **their partnership works on a useful thing, cooperation is favourable for everyone,**

[24] Similar inquiries were repeatedly carried out in local action groups in 2007-10 but the then results are not relevant for this evaluation.

partnership members have joint objectives, cooperate on a long-term basis, accept cooperation contents and forms, have equal positions in a project and make decisions together, contribute to the results of the whole and achieve synergic effects in their partnerships.

To proceed further, we have excluded "I don´t know"-type answers and calculated results from the sum of meritorious answers. If we assume that every characteristic is of the same weight in the overall partnership evaluation and that differences between the neighbouring levels of the four-level scale are the same as well, we can replace the % distribution in individual questions with a single value, e.g. arithmetic mean, and to conclude on its basis that:

a) three characteristics are assessed the best: social necessity of a project, synergic effect of a partnership and existence of other, joint out-of-project objectives of partners,
b) long-term duration of a relationship, benefits of cooperation for partners and acceptation of cooperation contents and forms are assessed mediumly (but generally still absolutely positively),
c) two characteristics are positively assessed the least frequently: necessary contributions of members to the work of the whole and equal positions related to joint decision making.

We repeat once more that all the characteristics are evaluated by a vast majority of the questioned entities as mostly or fully complied with – i.e. positive!

3.25.1.2 Equal positions in a partnership

To make a deeper analysis, we think **it is the most useful to examine the equality of members, or the existence or absence of joint decision making.** We have already pointed out in evaluation questions 1.18 and 1.20 that decision making mechanisms have to be considered one of the important features or even conditions of a value partnership.

The analysis of joint decision making has implied especially the following findings:

1. **joint decisions are more frequently made in partnerships among business entities, or at least everyone has necessary information more often** (58 % of projects), **than in the case of organizations co-financed by the State budget** (12 %), or NGO (33 %) – see the table below,
2. a related finding is that **joint decisions are the most frequently made in area of support 1.1** (57 %), mediumly in 3.4 **and the least frequently in 5.1** (29 %) – only those areas of support have been chosen for the lower table in which there was a sufficient number of questioned entities,
3. **an influence of the number of partners on the equality in a project and joint decision making has not been found**[25],
4. **the difference between the opinions of beneficiaries and other partners is not statistically significant** (although the partners have participated in inquiries for other projects than the beneficiaries).

[25] This influence can exist in reality but can be overlapped by other influences such as the project focus, area of support etc. We have tested this presumption based on a division into areas of support and legal types of beneficiaries but the results are not statistically convincing and we do not show them here for this reason.

Table 39: Decision making and equality in a partnership by area of support in the OP HRE

area of support in the OP HRE	equality and joint decision making		in total
	always	not always	
1.1	57.1%	42.9%	100.0%
3.4	45.5%	54.5%	100.0%
5.1	28.6%	71.4%	100.0%
in total	**42.0%**	**58.0%**	**100.0%**

Source: Tima Liberec 2011 questionnaire survey 2

Table 40: Decision making and equality in a partnership by legal type of organization

legal type of organization	equality and joint decision making		in total
	always	not always	
business entity	58.1%	41.9%	100.0%
organization co-financed by the State budget or benevolent association established by a region or town	12.5%	87.5%	100.0%
non-government non-profit organization of a citizen type	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
region, town, community or inter-communal cooperative	42.9%	57.1%	100.0%
another entity	42.9%	57.1%	100.0%
in total	**41.3%**	**58.7%**	**100.0%**

Source: Tima Liberec 2011 questionnaire survey 2

3.25.1.3 Analysis of overall characteristics of a partnership quality

To calculate the "score of a partnership quality", we have used a simple Likert-type method of summed estimates. We have excluded entities that did not answer a question (26 in total) and added up individual assessments into an overall raw score (on condition of an equidistant scale).

The resulting 74 self-assessments fall within the interval from 11 (an enterprise from the Olomouc Region) to 32 (three entities) points. The arithmetic mean is 27.6 and the median is 28. The above mentioned enterprise with 11 points was the only extreme, so called distant observation, the raw scores range from 22-32 points without it. This in itself points out the low variance and, therefore, the high consistence of the set of assessed partnerships. This is also supported by the achieved values of the lower and upper quartiles of 27 a 30. Nevertheless, 42 % of assessments are in the interval of 27-28 points.

The low variance of values is surprising. It might have been caused, to a certain extent, by the tendency of the approached organizations to appraise their own project partnerships. We have not registered the percentage of both "negative" levels (i.e. that a characteristic was complied with only partially or not at all) to be higher than 20 % in most individual scales (this happened only in the case of equality of positions and joint decision making, to which we will return later). "Negative assessments" do not exceed 10 % in 3 out of 8 characteristics and another 4 do not exceed 15 %.

The main reason for this asymmetry does not have to be that the questioned entities think "the best" of themselves but that the situations are really "mostly good" in most partnerships – at least from the perspectives we have applied [26].

To facilitate the work with the data, we have further excluded an enterprise with an extremely low score and categorized all remaining scores to obtain (with respect to the total number of cases) a sufficiently low number of groups of project partnerships. In the table below there is a categorization of 73 cases of completely assessed partnerships. The categorization respects the asymmetry (bevelling) of the achieved scores.

Table 41: Categorization of scores

raw score values	% of cases
group D: 22-25 points	11.0
group P: 26-29 points	61.6
group H: 30-32 points	27.4
in total	**100.0**

Source: Tima Liberec 2011 questionnaire survey 2

For the benefit of general conclusions and at the expense of a loss of more detailed information on individual assessments, we have condensed all data into information whether the assessed partnership belong to the bottom group D with below-average self-assessments, to the group P (broad average), or to the top group H with above-average values.

Which groups of projects appear the most frequently in individual categories? It is not an absolute majority but a significantly higher percentage that the other groups have[27]. Those not mentioned are either distributed among D, P, H in similar proportions as in the whole sample (11:62:27), or the numbers of questioned entities were so low that we had to exclude them from the analyses due to the unreliability of findings.

Table 42: Categorization of projects according to various aspects

aspect	in the bottom group	in the middle group	in the top group
legal type of beneficiary	-	-	enterprises
area of support	-	5.1	1.1
number of partners	3	-	1 and 4 or more
types of local partnerships	-	-	-

Source: Tima Liberec 2011 questionnaire survey 2

How is it possible that projects with 3 partners are relatively more often in the bottom group in partnership quality assessments, while projects with 1 and 4 or more projects are in the top group? A single partner is typical for area of support 1.1 (41 % of all projects) but is not almost present in 5.1 (just 13 %). Three partners are typical for 5.1 and for NGNPO projects (two thirds of all projects with

[26] It is perhaps not necessary to point out that conclusions based on beneficiaries´ and partners´ self-assessments depend on a) the operational definition of partnership quality, i.e. on the selection of specific characteristics and their formulations used, b) on the evaluation method, i.e. the use of a particular scale, a c) on the number of assessments that is not high here. Nevertheless, we consider the selected method to be pioneering and technically sufficient for this purpose.

[27] For example, there is 36 % of enterprises but only 23 % of NGNPO in H, and 27 % of them in total. We can say, based on the evaluation of deviations from expected frequencies by means of adjusted standardized residuals, that the percentage of enterprises in the top group (compared to other legal types of beneficiaries and other groups of partnership quality indexes) is unexpectedly higher and enterprises are thus recorded in the top group column.

this number of partners are there). By contrast, four or more partners can be found, to the approximately same extent, in 1.1 and 5.1 projects (but there is not so many partners in 3.4, for example) and they are also relatively more frequent in entrepreneurial projects than in NGNPOs or organizations co-financed by the State budget.

If we speak of a group of projects with 3 or more partners (plus the beneficiary!), we must remember that this group is not proportionally distributed over all areas of support or all legal types of beneficiaries.

We believe that **partnerships are mostly positively affected by effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of projects.** However, there are no data available to support that: there is still a low number of projects that have not gone through the sustainability period yet; to determine effectiveness, it is not possible to separate impacts induced by subsidies within the OP HRE (beneficiaries and partners mostly implement similar activities they have included in projects, anyway), and efficiency measurement is largely complicated by the fact that there are no "accounts for individual types of outputs"; therefore, we do not know the real full costs of achievement of individual outputs.

Required data to answer the question reliably enough are not available at present.

3.25.2 Summary of conclusions and recommendations

It was not possible to obtain a sufficient amount of complete and reliable data (not only on the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of implemented projects, but, in particular, on the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of partnerships) to answer the question in the original wording, mainly because only a few (17) partnership projects were finished by 31 December 2010 and submitted their monitoring reports.

Eight characteristics have been identified to evaluate partnership quality and subject to project beneficiaries´ self-assessments. **Partnership quality is understood as certain maturity, advancedness, value by which it differs from other similar forms** (such as unspecified cooperation, client-supplier relationship etc.). Partnership in the "value" sense is distinguished by several definition features by which it differs from other forms of cooperation as a whole. **The characteristic features are as follows:**

a) **public convenience of a partnership** (towards the society or recognized target groups of the assistance),
b) **public convenience of a partnership** (profit for each partnership member),
c) **joint objectives of partners** (expressed by a joint project and sometimes even other mutual obligations and agreements),
d) **long-term duration of a relationship**
e) full **acceptation of cooperation contents and forms** by all partners,
f) **equal positions** within a partnership **and joint decision making**,
g) **need for balanced relationships inside a partnership** each partner contributes with something that would otherwise be missing, without which the result would not be achieved)

h) **synergic effect** or value added by cooperation: overall positive impacts on a given locality or target group are higher than the sum of effects that can be exerted by activities of individual participants.

These characteristics have been subjects of questions asked to 99 beneficiaries or partners in implemented or finished projects.

The overall conclusion is that **beneficiaries, or their partners, are convinced that** all or most partners act according to the above specified characteristics, or that the characteristics apply fully or at least predominantly to satisfy value partnerships: **their partnership works on a useful thing, cooperation is favourable for everyone, partnership members have joint objectives, cooperate on a long-term basis, accept cooperation contents and forms, have equal positions in a project and make decisions together, contribute to the results of the whole and achieve synergic effects in their partnerships.**

There are the following differences inside all, mostly positive assessments:

- three characteristics are assessed the best: social necessity of a project, synergic effect of a partnership and existence of other, joint out-of-project objectives of partners,
- long-term duration of a relationship, benefits of cooperation for partners and acceptation of cooperation contents and forms are assessed mediumly (but generally still absolutely positively),
- two characteristics are positively assessed the least frequently: necessary contributions of members to the work of the whole and equal positions related to joint decision making.

The equality of members and/or the presence of absence of joint decision making have been evaluated separately. The analysis has implied especially the following findings:

- joint decisions are more frequently made in partnerships among business entities, or at least everyone has necessary information more often (58 % of projects), than in the case of organizations co-financed by the State budget (12 %), or NGO (33 %),
- a related finding is that joint decisions are the most frequently made in area of support 1.1 (57 %), mediumly in 3.4 and the least frequently in 5.1 (29 %),
- an influence of the number of partners on the equality in a project and joint decision making has not been found,
- the difference between the opinions of beneficiaries and other partners is not statistically significant (although the partners have participated in inquiries for other projects than the beneficiaries).

If we evaluate all projects according to the legal types of beneficiaries, areas of support, numbers of partners and types of local partnerships, we can deduce that enterprises, entities in area of support 1.1 and projects with 1 and 4 or more partners (plus the beneficiary) tend to rank in the top group. Projects in area of support 5.1 tend to rank in the middle group. Projects with 3 partners tend to rank in the bottom group. Positions of other groups of projects are not characteristic from these perspectives. Generally, we can say that the attempt to quantify partnership quality has provided only partial results and that attention might be paid to this issue in further evaluations.

As results from a more detailed evaluation of evaluation question 1.23, partnership is affected by effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of projects in that no planned outputs would reportedly have been implemented without partnerships in 17 % of projects and some of the planned outputs

would have been implemented in 71 % (by individual partners independently). In terms of compliance with project objectives, existing partnerships are reportedly irreplaceable in 81 % of projects. As far as effects of these characteristics on the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of partnerships are concerned, only hypothetical data are available.

3.26 Partnership effectiveness and other forms of implementation (1.23)

A question relating to the implementation of projects in a partnership and without it has been evaluated following the preceding analyses and in connection with effectiveness to achieve project objectives.

The main evaluation question is: To what extent can implemented partnerships be assessed as more effective to achieve defined project objectives than other forms of implementation?

3.26.1 Data processing method and commented results

3.26.1.1 On the possibilities of exact comparison of partnership project effectiveness

Effectiveness is a question of the relationship between planned project objectives and actually achieved results. On the level of individual projects, effectiveness can be interpreted as a proportion between planned and achieved values of monitoring indicators. The main problems are that there is only a few of finished projects with final monitoring reports in the OP HRE and that the monitoring indicators do not cover the whole contents of project objectives.

In the context of the evaluation question, the concern is to **compare the effectiveness of partnership projects with non-partnership ones**. We endeavoured to search couples of well comparable projects. First, this required to clarify all influences that might affect compliance with objectives. It is, for example, the length of a project, experience of a beneficiary (not only with projects subsidised by the ESF, but, in particular, with the subject of the activity) etc.

In IS Monit7+ we searched for projects similar in their objectives but differing in whether they had partners. The evaluators worked with 40 selected projects that have been already finished.

There are only a few finished projects with final monitoring reports and we were not successful to find suitable partnership or non-partnership projects in some areas of support. **We even did not succeed in finding couples of projects that would have had the same focuses (comparable outputs), would have been finished and one of them would have been implemented with and the other one without partners.**

The lack of suitable projects is documented by the overall statistics:

Table 43: Finished projects in the OP HRE

	number	note on the project phase
projects in total	8 458	in all phases
partnership projects in total	1 581	in all phases
finished projects in total	140	partnership and non-partnership in phases 5 – "Project Financing Terminated" 135 – „Project Implementation Finished"
number of finished ones out of partnership projects	17	"Project Implementation Finished"

Source: IS Monit7+, situation on 26 January 2011

Seventeen partnership projects have been finished so far and can be compared with some of the 123 ones. This is the current state. We were not successful to find couples of similar, comparable projects, though. The finished partnership projects are not from all areas of support, but only from 1.1 (3 times), 3.1 (2 times), 3.4 (5 times) and 5.1 (7 times) (there is no non-partnership project).

The result of this phase was that **we could not be sure enough in any of the couples of projects that they were comparable**. Moreover, there is of course the fundamental question of the content variability of projects. They should at least match with each other in areas of support and in individual types of activities, i.e. in outputs, inside areas of support (we can only compare projects´ effectiveness with identical types of outputs, e.g. when the only output of two projects is a certain number of children to which care is provided for the whole time their parents are at work).

This work phase was concluded with recognition that we could not answer the question using direct data on projects.

3.26.1.2 Partner involvement benefits

The answer to this evaluation question thus has to be reduced to the results of direct questions to applicants, or beneficiaries, deriving from the answers whether partnership projects have potentials of higher effectiveness. Requisite questions have been used in both questionnaire surveys (2010 and 2011) on different samples.

What are the benefits of partner involvement in projects? Beneficiaries were to express their opinions on the effects of partner cooperation. The questioned entities had a chance to answer that they could not say yet, to distinguish those who were at the start of the implementation and whose answers would have been of significantly lower weight than the answers of those who had been implementing their projects for a longer period of time or who had finished them. The overall results are in the table below:

Table 44: What did partner involvement in your project mean? Which important effects did it have?

Of what importance was partner involvement …	high importance	low importance	no importance	cannot be defined yet
a) for contacts with project target groups (e.g. with clients)?	79.0	11.3	3.2	6.5
b) to obtain other skills and knowledge that can be used to implement other project activities, i.e. to achieve project objectives?	64.4	21.0	8.1	6.5
c) to obtain other skills and knowledge that can be used to manage a project, in the work of the implementation team?	36.7	33.3	23.3	6.7
d) for financing (for co-financing or for the sustainability period)?	17.2	29.3	32.8	20.7
e) to decide on further cooperation beyond a project?	35.2	27.8	14.8	22.2

Source: Tima Liberec 2010 questionnaire survey 1

The main benefits of partner involvement consist in ensuring contacts with target groups and obtaining other skills and knowledge useful to implement project activities.

About 7 % of survey participants gave up the assessment in first three sub-questions and 21-22 % followed in questions relating to financing, sustainability and further (post-project) cooperation. This is logical – the representatives of these organizations do not have enough experience needed for the assessment. We have excluded these answers from the further processing.

Table 45: To what extent were the effects obtained by partner involvement important to achieve project objectives?

		great importance	small importance	no importance	in total
OP HRE beneficiaries	yes	75.0%	13.9%	11.1%	100.0%
	no	59.1%	36.4%	4.5%	100.0%
in total		**69.0%**	**22.4%**	**8.6%**	**100.0%**

Source: Tima Liberec 2010 questionnaire survey 1

There are twice as many beneficiaries in the OP HRE who cannot see any sense in deciding to continue cooperation with partners:

Table 46: To what extent were the effects obtained by partner cooperation important to decide to continue cooperation outside a project?

		great importance	small importance	no importance	in total
OP HRE beneficiaries	yes	46.2%	30.8%	23.1%	100.0%
	no	43.8%	43.8%	12.5%	100.0%
in total		**45.2%**	**35.7%**	**19.0%**	**100.0%**

Source: Tima Liberec 2010 questionnaire survey 1

In the second questionnaire survey, we have examined, on a sample of 55 beneficiaries, shifts in selected effects occurring in the last half of the year. The effects were characteristics of mutual benefits of cooperation, joint out-of-project objectives and equality of positions.

The inquiry has implied that **these "impacts" have not mostly changed, they have remained the same.** This was the case of 58 % of projects in respect of mutual benefits (they have worsened in 6 %), in 78 % of out-of-project objectives and in 87 % of equality of positions and joint decision making. The table shows in how many % of cases the situation has improved in the last six months.

Table 47: **Improvement in the last six month in selected areas** (in % from the number of questioned entities)

b) cooperation of all partners is mutually beneficial, everyone can enjoy benefits that would be obtained individually (money, experience etc.)	36
c) partners have joint objectives also outside this implemented project	22
f) everyone has an equal position in the sense that they have all information including that on the use of budget funds, and they always make decisions together	13

Source: Tima Liberec 2011 questionnaire survey 2

The low number of questioned entities does not allow making accurate conclusions (the selection error exceeds ±7 percentage points) and, moreover, it could not have been verified that the respondents understood the question well. It is probable, though, that **it turns out only during the project implementation that a partnership is a self-learning machine (synergy) and that it brings new experience etc. to individual participants in addition to that.**

3.26.1.3 Hypothetical consequences of a transfer to a non-partnership project

Since a direct comparison of identical (or very similar) partnership and non-partnership projects was impossible, we have focused on a direct question to beneficiaries. However, beneficiaries of non-partnership-projects could not have been asked about possible effects of the situation if they had invited partners, because we would have obtained insufficient and unreliable data: not only due to the fact that the situation was strongly hypothetical and required experience of beneficiaries of non-partnership projects, but also due to the expected very low return of answers to this question.

Thus, the option **to ask questions about possible effects of non-partnership projects** to beneficiaries implementing partnership projects turned out to be more acceptable. (This inquiry was carried out only at the turn of 2010/11 when the above mentioned attempt of direct comparison had been exploited).

In case that all partners worked individually (without being associated in a project), probably no outputs planned in projects would be carried out according to 17 % from 97 questioned entities and all planned outputs would be carried out according to 12 %. A majority (71 %) thinks that some outputs would be effected and some of them would not.

Since we asked about a single specific project (not about "OP HRE projects in general"), we can estimate on this basis that **approximately one fifth of approved partnership projects does not have a non-partnership alternative – partner participation is essential there and planned outputs would not have been carried out without it,** or a project would not have achieved its objectives.

They are often projects prepared with respect to necessary participation of partners and all these projects are relevant for the OP HRE (because they have been approved to receive funds), so the number should not be considered to be too high. We would rather expect that a project would not have been implemented without partners at all, or only partially. Therefore, those identified 12 % of

projects that might have been implemented without partnerships, seem too much to us (we should have expected 0 %)

However, the evaluators of project applications are not supposed to assess projects in respect of non-substitutability. According to the description of criterion C3 in the current Manual for Evaluators of OP HRE Projects (May 2009), the criterion "assesses to what extent a partnership is beneficial in a project for the implementation of project activities", but **does not examine whether individual partners would be able to effect project outputs or objectives individually, without being associated in a single project.** Besides, "the aim is to recommend to the selection committee to exclude projects in which there are artificial partnerships connected with a risk of possible financial enrichment of partners". By this the emphasis of this part of the substantive assessment tends to concentrate on the exclusion of unacceptable relationships between a beneficiary and its partners.

According to beneficiaries, or partners, in implemented projects (92 of questioned entities), a project could not have been implemented in a large majority of cases (81 %) by anyone else but by an existing partnership:

Table 48: Who would be able to achieve project objectives to the best?

only existing partnership	81
each partner individually (without working together in a project)	12
other entities than those associated in a project	3
independent entity that would be an association itself (e.g. cooperative, benevolent association.), so it could implement a project without partners	4

Source: Tima Liberec 2011 questionnaire survey 2

We should note the marginal option of a beneficiary who would be an association of partners itself. Such a solution occurs in isolated cases. More specifically, it may consist in that previous beneficiaries or partners establish a new organization that becomes an applicant. This was the case of Koalice nevládek Pardubicka (KONEP). The coalition originated during the implementation of 3.3 JROP measures and describes itself as follows:

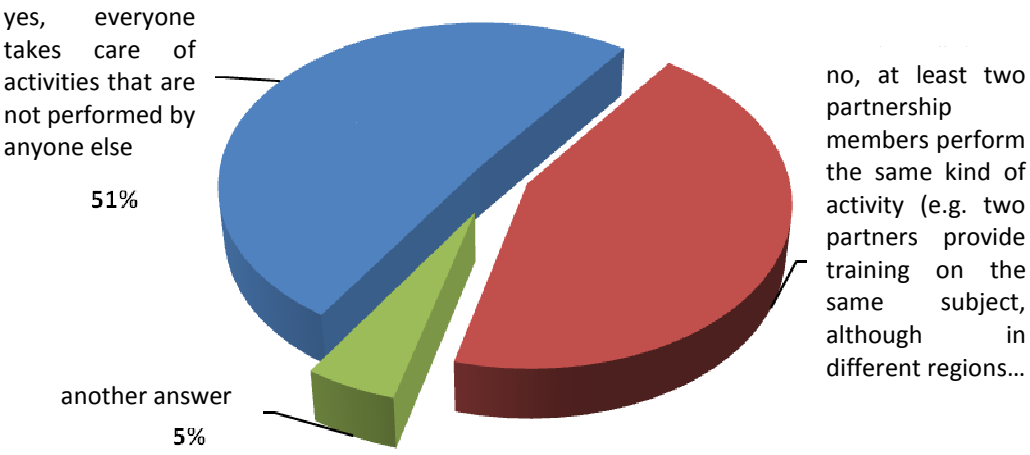
"One of the outputs of a project to support absorption capacity was the first meeting with NGNPO from London which introduced to KONEP the concept of "joint partnership projects". KONEP representatives were literally captivated by the functioning London partnership allowing for small organizations to enjoy subsidies from administratively challenging EU programmes. They had initiated project "Together!" thanks to which the principle of partnership projects was presented in the Pardubice Region. KONEP´s budget thus achieved CZK 2.5 mil. in 2007." Three large partnership projects have been established thanks to the project "Together!", succeeding in the OP HRE in 2008-9.

3.26.1.4 To the question of non-substitutability

In various places of the evaluation (but especially in question 1.18), we touch the question of non-substitutability that is relevant also in the context of the evaluation of partnership effectiveness in projects.

During the inquiry, we examined the uniqueness of a position or function each partner has:

Graph 13: „Does each of the partners in a project have its own function (role, tasks) that is not performed by any other partner?“



Source: Tima Liberec 2011 questionnaire survey 2

In this connection, it is first necessary to point out the **ambiguous definitions of this characteristic of partnership in the OP HRE Project Document** (p. 12) and in the Manual for Beneficiaries (p. 42). The participation of all partners is to be “essential and non-substitutable”. If a partner in a joint project is a school in A, and a school in B, none of them is apparently non-substitutable in the project as both of them do the same.

As can be seen from project applications and their substantive assessments, this non-substitutability is nod understood as **functional non-substitutability** in practice, i.e. as a requirement that not even two partners have the same kind of task in a partnership. Projects are commonly admitted in which two or more partners implement the same activity, doing it in different organizations or towns.

If we adhere to the requirement of functional non-substitutability, we should exclude applications with functionally redundant partners in the future. For example, a project in which the beneficiary checks the same service in two parish charities, in two towns, in two prisons, or one of the partners (most often the beneficiary) provides several training sessions of the same kind for several organizations[28]. Duplicate partners do not add anything new to the rest of the partnership in these cases except that they enhance the quality of project outputs. If we do not count volumes of output indicators, these redundant partners do not have to be present in the project implementation because they are functionally substitutable.

Non-substitutability – as long as this expression stays in OP HRE documents – would have to be understood literally as **non-substitutability in respect of outputs**. That two partners (employers) allow their employees to take part in the same training or that two partners (towns) allow another partner to provide its counselling services there. Then it is non-substitutability in the additive sense

[28] These examples have been generalized but derived from real projects that are or were implemented.

that each of the partners admits participation by other entities from among target groups. According to this less rigid interpretation, several companies (schools, towns) doing the same in relation to the project (e.g. people there are trained in identical courses), but generating different (though generically identical) outputs: different participants, different leavers, might be viewed as legitimate partners as well.

However, this condition is so easy that it seems to be unnecessary.

If we adhere to a less rigid concept of non-substitutability, "essentiality" is of greater importance; however, being a very vague concept, it would have to be specified (e.g. by means of typical examples).

3.26.1.5 The role of quasi-partners

A number of cases arose in the course of works when a project had another partner, sometimes even several partners, who, however, were not included as partners in project applications or monitoring reports, although they performed functions and activities commonly corresponding to the work of a partner. Beneficiaries continuously consulted further procedures with them, took advantage of their accesses to target groups, reimbursed them for material costs they charged to the name of the beneficiary and its employees who directly participated in the project implementation, paid them wages on the basis of agreements to complete jobs etc.

According to beneficiaries, this happened for two reasons: a) a government department cannot be included as a partner, b) a "shadow" partner was able to fulfil formal requirements (provided for by the OP HRE Implementing Document), but a beneficiary did not want to include it in its project because it was not clear at the time of the preparation of an application whether the partner would have been able to comply with all requirements imposed on a partner, especially in the light of project administration and monitoring.

We believe that it would be confusing to designate these cases as fictitious partnerships[29]. The opposite is true in reality, they are real partnerships or "sub-partnerships" that, in the form of a formal partnership, do not conform to OP HRE rules or beneficiaries´ needs. Participation of these other entities is beneficial for a project as it helps to comply with monitoring indicators, or the beneficiary can offer extensive outputs only with their assistance.

Generally, it can be assumed that project security by project participants can be fairly beneficial for both the project participant and the project itself, especially in areas in which the participant, by being informally involved in the project, learns to deal with tasks which it can take over as a partner or beneficiary later and in a different project.

However, these types of projects expose a question of the supplier. The vagueness of the definition of a supplier in the OP HRE is a source of desirable and undesirable mistakes by applicants (and

[29] These may occur when an organization is included as a partner but does not really participate in key activities at all and had only lent its name… This sometimes happens in selection procedures in awarding public contracts when one of the partners fulfils a bizarre condition stipulated by the contractor. For instance, the contractor calls for tender of CZK 1 mil., requires applicants to provide good references from previous contracts but stipulates the condition of a yearly turnover of CZK 100 mil. on top of that. The contractor disqualifies undesirable competitors in this way. Therefore, applicants sometimes search for an organization that fulfils the turnover condition and is willing to figure (for a "commission") in the supplier consortium as an applicant.

perhaps by evaluators, too). The problem of suppliers is not subject to this evaluation, though. It has just turned out that project participants (similar to numerous partners) in fact perform works, or provide services within projects, which might be considered typical deliveries – they supply client databases (used by beneficiaries), provide courses as lecturers (globally organized by beneficiaries), ensure project publicity (although they have another brief appearance in a project) etc.

3.26.1.6 Perceived effects of a partnership

An effective partnership is not just a partnership thanks to which project objectives have been fulfilled better, but also a partnership in which all participants have obtained something that they would not have otherwise and that helps them to better accomplish their other, out-of-project tasks.

What have been the benefits or effects of a formed partnership? For beneficiaries and partners, it has become, in particular, an opportunity to fulfil long-term objectives and to enhance skills, knowledge, organizational and other capacities:

Table 49: What have been the benefits of a formed partnership? (in %, N=55, ordered)

	yes, fully	partially yes	no
a beneficiary and its partners can better fulfil their own long-term objectives thanks to a project	58	42	0
involvement of partners meant enhancement of skills, knowledge, organizational capacity or financial resources (after a project ended)	58	36	6
participation of certain partners in a project increases the project´s credibility	30	55	15
partnership has been formed because the grant provider expected it or required	6	30	64

Source: Tima Liberec 2011 questionnaire survey 2

We should note that **invitation of a partner by which the credibility of a project increases is not a marginal phenomenon.**

And vice versa, what have been the drawbacks or problems of a partnership or some of the partners? There were mostly partial or none problems. According to the findings, the greatest difficulties are caused by the amount of work and time needed for implementation, communication and decisions:

Table 50: What have been the drawbacks or problems of a partnership or some of the partners? (in %, N=55, ordered)

	yes, fully	partially yes	no
partnership requires management and this makes it challenging for communication (communication skills)	15	65	20
more partners cost us more time and effort needed for implementation or adoption of a decision	13	45	42
beneficiary is responsible for a project as a whole and partners sometimes cause problems that might threaten the whole project	7	16	77
one of the partners discontinued cooperation, which causes problems to all the others	2	9	89

Source: Tima Liberec 2011 questionnaire survey 2

As we know from other connections (compare evaluation questions 1.18, 1.1 and 1.7), there are cases when

a) the partners are in the positions of service customers and the beneficiary is a supplier (partner organization means in fact representatives of beneficiaries´ target groups, such as mothers´ centres or associations representing handicapped persons), without breaking the public procurement law,
b) all activities relating to preparation and implementation are on the beneficiary and the partners are passive beneficiaries of project outcomes (e.g. the applicant invites them to participate in its training sessions within programme Training Is a Chance, although the beneficiary does not need these partners in the project for nothing else but guaranteed compliance with the number of participants).

The effects of these forms of cooperation do not have to consist in the growth of experience of partner organizations (just of their employees or clients who are the beneficiaries) and do not mean higher requirements for communication or decision making (these partners are passive addressees of all decisions and services of a project beneficiary, anyway).

3.26.2 Summary of conclusions and recommendations

Comparison of the effectiveness of partnership projects with non-partnership ones is possible when enough relevant and reliable data is available. For a more exact evaluation of this evaluation question, **there is a lack of suitable projects,** which makes it impossible to folly assess the question asked. According to IS Monit7+, there are only 17 finished partnership projects out of 140 ones and in none of the compared couples of project was there sufficient certainty of their direct comparability due to content differences. Therefore, the questioning method continued to be the only one usable in practice.

Although most partnership characteristics (see eval. question 1.22) remain unchanged within six months, mutual benefits of cooperation and identification of joint objectives outside projects have improved in a significant minority of partnerships (36%, or 22%). The need for a current partner to withdraw or a new partner to accede occurs exceptionally (see eval. question 1.19). Thus, we can conclude that **a partnership brings new experience, contacts, information etc. to its participants and is itself a developing organism** (it can both develop and collapse).

It has showed, after asking the group of 100 beneficiaries, or partners, a direct question, that the main benefits of partner involvement for projects consisted in ensuring contacts with target groups and in obtaining other skills and knowledge useful to implement project activities. The third most frequent effect of an ongoing partnership is in the decision on possible further cooperation.

Approximately one fifth of approved partnership projects do not have a non-partnership alternative – partner participation is reportedly essential, non-substitutable and panned outputs would not have been carried out and/or projects would not have achieved their objectives.

A formed partnership has become, above all, an opportunity to fulfil long-term (out-of-project) objectives of a beneficiary and its partners and to enhance skills, knowledge, organizational and other capacities. There are no or only partial problems in most examined partnerships. The greatest difficulties result from the amount of work and time needed to implement a project in a partner environment, to communicate and make decisions.

There may be **a significant number of projects in which the beneficiaries do not have direct accesses to the target groups and in which they in fact offered to the contact "providers", by means of their projects, to produce certain services for the benefit of the target groups.** This situation should be regulated in OP HRE rules. If partners were exclusively or largely in positions of "suppliers" of target groups, then beneficiaries themselves might get to positions of suppliers of services for which they ensured disposal by contacting "partners". It is necessary to clarify whether a supply of meritorious services within the OP HRE complies with the concept of a supplier or not.

A number of cases occurred in the course of work when a project had another partner, sometimes even several of them, who were not included as partners in a project application and monitoring reports although they performed functions and activities normally corresponding to the work of a partner. They are partnerships that would not satisfy OP HRE rules or beneficiaries´ needs if they were formal. They are **small, little experienced or developing organizations that, however, have good perspectives to operate individually in the future.** This type of project approved in the OP HRE in fact has the role of an incubator of new providers of services to target groups (or of new employers) and helps to develop the potentials of all involved sectors).

Recommendations:

- To consider the benefit of the change in criterion C3 (Partnership) of the Manual for Evaluators of OP HRE Projects in the sense that an evaluator would also have to **assess the functional non-substitutability of partners in respect of outputs** and/or whether individual partners would be able to carry out these outputs or project objectives separately, without being associated in a joint project.

To elaborate partner and supplier concepts in the OP HRE Project Document (p. 12) and in the Manual for Beneficiaries (p. 42), so that it is clear a) whether an acceptable partner is an entity that exclusively or largely provides access to a target group to a beneficiary or other partners, without completing other important and non-substitutable assignments within a key activity, b) whether an acceptable partner or beneficiary is an entity that only (in addition to project management) supplies services to partners who work with target groups, thus having the role of a service supplier.

3.27 Regional partnerships in the JROP 3.3 (1.G)

Experience with partnerships is not exclusive to ESF funded projects. The following analysis deals with the experience from other programmes and the possible transferability of this experience to the OP HRE.

Terms of reference: 1.G What experience has been obtained by regional partnerships implemented within the JROP 3.3? Have they turned out to be sustainable?

Questions:

G.1 Which results of the then partnerships can be considered the most important?
G.2 Which of them have been maintained, continued or multiplied?
G.3 What does the current state of a then partnership look like? If it does not exist in the same form, what are the reasons?
G.4 What would have to be done to restore such a partnership?

G.5 What might be the contribution of a regional intersectoral partnership in the use of EU funds and in the further development of a region?

3.27.1 Methodology for answering questions in 1.G

The basic source of information to answer evaluation questions in 1.G was document "JROP 3.3 Measure Evaluation. Final Report, Volumes 1 – 3, November 2008". Tima Liberec was a part of the evaluation team in 2008 and was thus able to use the information obtained.

To update the Evaluation Report conclusions, we carried out an additional survey in seven regions in August 2010 (South Bohemian, South Moravian, Hradec Králové, Liberec, Olomouc, Ústí nad Labem and Vysočina). First we contacted the main participants who had contributed to the management of JROP 3.3 projects in regions, by phone; they were mostly project managers or regional authority employees who had the most information about follow-up activities in relation to JROP 3.3 projects. We sent questions to these persons by e-mail. The obtained information filled in data sheets have been completed based on telephone interviews with the representatives of these regions. Proposals for recommendations have been consulted with representatives of three regions.

3.27.2 G.0 Overview of results of evaluation 2008[30]

Regional projects within JROP 3.3 measure "Enhancement of the Capacity of Local and Regional Authorities in the Planning and Implementation of Programmes" were focused on the increase of absorptive and administrative capacities for 2007-13. Pivotal activities in projects were:

- Formation of partnerships,
- Training and education of potential project submitters and programme administrators at home and abroad,
- Creation of analyses,
- Preparation of strategic documents,
- Creation of a pool of projects,
- Preparation for the setting of implementation structures in regions for programming period 2007 – 2013.

In total, 21 projects were implemented within measure 3.3 in 2004-2007, with the total costs of € 15 139 352 – from which € 11 354 514 from the ESF (75 %)[31]. The allocation for this measure has been fully exploited.

The effects of regional projects and the whole JROP 3.3 measure were entirely positive in the light of intersectoral regional partnerships. A key circumstance was that partnerships have been introduced literally and purposefully by the JROP 3.3 measure itself and its MA. Although a lot of regional employees and politicians did not master the partnership principle or ignored a regional project to a certain extent, a partnership was an important formal result of the whole measure.

Representation of all sectors in a regional partnership was common and became a pioneering tool of intersectoral cooperation on the regional level. This partnership made it possible for all sectors to

[30] JROP 3.3 Measure Evaluation. Final Report, Volumes 1 – 3, November 2008, update of individual conclusions: August 2010

[31] Source: 2007 JROP Annual Report, drawn up on 31 December 2007, approved by the JROP Monitoring Committee on 5 June 2008.

"enrich" themselves with something and to achieve objectives together as one or two of them would have never done individually.

To transform joint interests and differences of sectoral partners into a strategic advantage was an opportunity used to different extents by the regions.

Although partner organizations were established in the regions, they were sometimes assessed as formal and often ceased to exist after financing was discontinued (after the project ended). Low activities of individual partners were a frequent problem of regions with large numbers of partners.

As regards joint decision making, representatives of partner organizations did not directly participate on decision making in any of the regions. A formed partnership never took over the responsibility for complete documents to make a general (political) decision on the regional development or the planned use of resources from EU structural funds, and not even for the preparation of such a decision, in spite of the fact that the projects were implemented at the time of preparation of a ROP for a new period and this task was clearly related to the overall purpose of measure 3.3.

Contractual regional partnerships were specific in one important aspect: instead of concluding one multilateral agreement with all partners, individual partners were offered and concluded bilateral agreements between a region and a partner. This affected relationships in a collective regional authority right from the beginning, strengthened the dominant role of a region and weakened the independence and self-confidence of a partner. The overall initiative, proposals for major actions, project organization and management were fully in the hands of regional representatives.

Regions most frequently did not consider themselves to be partners. Regions mostly had the role of a dominant entity in a partnership. This circumstance often devaluated partnerships and the concept of a partner (according to the OP HRE) conflicted with the concept of a supplier.

Involvement of partners in a project did not usually cause problems because potential partners engaged in the subject of a regional project, anyway. In this sense, JROP 3.3 measure was a perfect match with the demand of partners in regions after cooperation with regional institutions. The most active partners, interested entities, potential applicants etc. were communities and NGNPO.

While the proportion of partners in education and analyses, and sometimes also in filling the pool of projects and regional development strategies, was high, involvement of partners in the preparation of the ROP was poor and more indirect or degraded to comments on proposals that were the most frequently submitted by an expert supplier.

A lack of financial and human resources to fully involve in a regional project was a typical problem for the representatives of both business and non-profit sectors. It frequently happened that partners from individual sectors participated in the work of a managing team, carried out a lot of actions and commented on analyses, strategic documents and other regional activities, but were not able to go into the deep in their sectors – and to provide themselves with connections and permanent contacts, to "activate" their sectors and to use the JROP 3.3 measure to strengthen its role in the regional development.

Partnership continuation and sustainability

Partnerships within the meaning of the JROP 3.3 measure continue only in some regions and in limited forms. A frequent result is that an original project team did not meet after project completion and that no social events and activities were taking place. The only thing that remained was contacts and cooperation of individual partners. The regions are trying to obtain financial resources, almost succeeding many times (e.g. South Moravian and South Bohemian Regions, partially Olomouc).

The situation in regions in 2008 shows that wherever counselling and other such centres were established on the regional level (e.g. Karlovy Vary and Hradec Králové Regions, on the territorial level (South Bohemian Region) or in another decentralized way (Ústí nad Labem Region), survival of activities and, therefore, of benefits for the absorptive capacity in following years could have been counted on. As usual, the most critical was the sufficiency of the right people and money.

Almost all regional representatives agreed when interviewed (2008) that if financial resources had been available, some activities could have been fully restored.

3.27.3 G.1 Which results of then partnerships can be considered the most important?

Generally, the preparedness of various participants in regions, especially of members of regional partnerships, to cooperate and to exploit EU SFs, including the ability of potential applicants to submit individual projects for financing, has increased.

In particular, the following results were usable for the further development of the regions:

- employees of regional and of some municipal authorities as well as community representatives realized the importance partner cooperation, the overall experience of the then participants increased and useful contacts were established, leading to the provision of mutual support (e.g. a partnership with 25 key members was established in the Olomouc Region - 13 CEPs, 6 Chamber of Commerce organizations, 2 rural organizations and 4 NGNPO);
- skills, knowledge and experience obtained (and mutually exchanged) in the preparation of analyses and strategic documents, in training sessions, internships, joint meetings etc. were reflected in the higher qualifications of employees of regions and of partner organizations; meeting partners from various sectors also important for further cooperation as well;
- participation in training sessions and consultations helped a lot of potential applicants to finish and submit their project applications which may have gradually succeeded; thus, the level of knowledge in the area of grant management was increased and unified and the skills of partners´ representatives and whole partner organizations of how to apply for and enjoy subsidies from EU funds were enhanced;
- half-formal networks of persons communicating together and exchanging experience were created;
- formation of (more or less functioning) teams of euromanagers, formed the most frequently from representatives of partner organizations – provided consulting services directly in a specific locality for a specific sector, but worked, in a number of cases, only for the benefit of organizations that sent them to these courses;

- created strategic development documents fulfil their roles in regional development and on local levels; methodologies for creating local development documents were often developed,
- pools of projects are useful for further uses and are sometimes updated (Hradec Králové Region); it is also possible to use purpose-specific publications produced during projects,
- establishment of development centres (in the Ústí nad Labem Region and others)
- created databases of partners and promoters (in all sectors) are available to the public,
- establishment of new umbrella organizations (e.g. foundation of KOUS – Koordinační uskupení – Coordination Group – of NGNPOs in the Vysočina Region),
- meetings in individual IIIrd-degree CEPs in the Vysočina Region in which all applicants from this region were present (mostly competent CEPs) – business persons, local government, NGNPO, citizens etc.;
- partner development document were created in some cases – 15 local integrated (intersectoral) operational plans were developed namely in the Vysočina Region. Each of the plans was based on the intentions of local participants. The plans were linked to official strategic documents and formed together an operational plan that was used in discussions on ROP NUTS II South-East. Unfortunately, these local operational programmes could not have been implemented themselves as the system of operational programmes in the CR does not allow to carry out an integrated project in which various types of applicants would use resources for purposes differing in substance but with joint positive impacts on a region.
- introduction of modern management methods in public administration (e.g. in the South Moravian Region),
- mutual communication – regular meetings were held during which information was exchanged between a region and individual IIIrd-degree communities and these people further communicated this information to lower-degree communities. Thus, communication networks were set appropriately in most cases (e.g. Vysočina),
- a lot of then outputs were not, wholly or partially, products of partner cooperation, but products of activities of Regional Authorities and their suppliers within JROP 3.3.

3.27.4 G.2 Which of them have been maintained or multiplied?

"After the end of programming period 2004–6, regional development partnerships should have been established in all regions based on partner networks and structures. These partnerships should have been sustainable after project completion and should have operated as initiators of changes and development in regions[32]." This objective has clearly been achieved in some regions (e.g. Vysočina, Olomouc and South Moravian Regions) and less clearly in others. In spite of a number of positive cases (formation of regional innovation strategies, individual experience by Central Bohemian, Zlín, Karlovy Vary Regions and others), partnerships established in these regions have not been maintained in an operational condition after project completion. These partnerships have only been "revived" after a certain time, following up on implemented projects.

It was confirmed in 2008 in the evaluation of JROP 3.3 that although partner organizations had been created in regions, they were sometimes assessed as formal and mostly ceased to exist after funding was discontinued.

The methodological recommendation of the MRD also required regions to support "formation of partnerships, for reasons of efficiency, at least on the level of IIIrd-degree communities". This was

[32] Methodological recommendation no. 2 of the MRD relating to project preparation in measure 3.3 of 8 July 2004.

fulfilled only partially in most regions: partner structures were established on the occasion of preparation of local development plans, but were not led to more permanent cooperation and broke up after finishing tasks, exceptions apart.

However, "uncontrolled" partner cooperation has been maintained in many places and perhaps in all regions. Managing team members confirmed in most regions that although the activity of a partner organization did not continue on a regional level, **a lot of links between individual members, their occasional and permanent cooperation, and often connections between relevant organizations, have survived** (joint projects and actions).

It is possible in a number of cases that **certain experience from JROP 3.3 projects has been transferred to other activities.** For instance, this experience might have been used in the creation of Regional Innovation Strategies (RIS), in the activities of local action groups working on the basis of the Leader method or in the preparation of global grants. The situation was similar in the preparation of a human resources development strategy in the Ústí nad Labem Region. Public administration has been getting used to inviting partners in the preparation of various documents and decisions last years.

The ordinary procedure of public administration is that a relevant authority prepares a full text and provides it to the interested public for comments. However, the concept already exists and comments only change individual things, formulations, order of questions in agenda etc. On the other hand, there was a "clean table" at the beginning in the case of the RIS and participants created the concept step by step and filled it with content by means of joint meetings and decisions.

It seems that **JROP 3.3 stimulated regions to conclude other bilateral contracts,** agreements and arrangements on cooperation with entities such as regional associations of NGNPOs, regional chambers of commerce, employment agencies, statistic offices and others.

Further cooperation is non-contractual. It shows in the Liberec Region and in other places that cooperation with partners continues partially in the creation of Regional Innovation Strategies (universities and enterprises), in the preparation of global grants (non-profit sector), in cross-border cooperation projects (Nisa Euroregion). They are non-contractual, informal partnerships based on cooperation and information transfer.

It also seems that NGNPOs tend to cooperate and communicate more than enterprises and associations, which is given by the usual position of a NGNPO as a small entity without own resources, often in the position of an applicant towards public administration.

Partner cooperation develops in a number of cases but we cannot confirm that it is a direct or indirect result of JROP 3.3.

3.27.5 G.3 What is the current state of a then partnership? If it does not exist in the same for, what are the reasons?

To sum it up, we can say that partnerships in the sense of JROP 3.3 measure do not continue in the original extent. What remained is contacts and individual cooperation. Projects are implemented in selected regions, which directly build on JROP 3.3. In order to be able to continue, some regions are

trying to obtain financial resources and some of them finance follow-up and new activities to a limited extent.

Regional partnership bodies (managing teams etc.) have almost discontinued their activities. Partnerships continue to a limited extent or partially, e.g. in areas such as tourism development, human resources innovation and development (Zlín, Liberec, South Moravian Regions and others). As regards sustainable effects of projects, continuation of activities, follow-up outputs etc., positive impacts occur only in certain areas.

One of the key expected benefits – broad application of the partnership principle – is not happening to the planned extent after project implementation has been finished. Yet large-scale partnership projects are created and consultations with representatives of user segments (prospective beneficiaries) and euromanagers continue in a number of regions.

Experience from JROP 3.3 was not sufficient to create and maintain partner implementation structures. The partnership principle is applied wherever it is “obligatory” taken into account (e.g. in the composition of monitoring committees). This is not necessary everywhere because preparation of programmes and decision making financial allocations, order of calls, selection of projects etc. are mostly carried out by public administration bodies with the dominance of politicians and clerks. This is the case of independent regional programmes, global grants of operational programmes and regional OPs.

This time, too, there was a lack of substantial and tangible results to confirm the importance and usefulness of partnership, which would not only have motivated participants to continue cooperation, but, most importantly, which would have been sufficient evidence and stimulus to continue financing of regional partnerships and their activities, whether from the OP TA, or from regional budgets.

A lot of benefits and individual impacts have survived, though: employees of regional and municipal authorities and community representatives have realized the importance of partner cooperation. Created strategic development documents fulfil their roles in systematic regional development. Further use can be made of a pool of projects and some purpose-specific publications produced during projects.

3.27.6 G.4 What would be necessary to restore previously formed partnerships?

At the time of termination of then projects, regions tried to ensure financing for the next, current period. The OP TS seemed to be the most promising; however, they have not been awarded any subsidies.

According to the evaluator, several times lower financial sums are enough to sustain selected outputs and results than the sums spent to start up partnership cooperation and obtain outcomes from JROP 3.3 projects, and selected activities might have been funded exclusively from regional budgets. However, that did not happen either, above specified exceptions apart.

In order to restore intersectoral partnerships on a regional level, activities and events[33] initiated by individual regions and of rather inexpensive nature should take place:

- **Summon former and new partners of region-wide significance** and discuss with them the potential to renew cooperation – in which areas, in which tasks to cooperate, etc.
- **Select 1 to 3 tasks** where partner cooperation has a greater effect than the work of a solitary sector and supplier and it is a relatively easy and short-term matter to achieve this effect. Annual joint preparation of rules for utilization of regional grants, discussions with representatives of potential applicants in the preparation of global grants, possible cooperation of regional areas affected by a natural disaster in the provision of mid-term and long-term help etc. can be an example.
- **To gradually extend partnership cooperation** to include other areas such as a formal discussion before every key decision which is to be made by a Regional Council and the consequences of which are of significant concern for a certain segment in which the partners operate, e.g. social services, sports, culture, education, etc.

The issues we are dealing with in this evaluation question are specific to a more general problem of application of the partnership principle in the ESF, i.e. in the utilization of funds from the CR and the EU. Regarding certain areas of public administration operations on regional and CEP levels, we suggest that local government bodies secured adequate representation of non-profit and business sectors (such as chambers of commerce and regional associations of NGNPOs) in public administration consultative bodies (commissions, etc.), managing teams and work groups for strategic and community planning.

To arrange or secure preparation of integrated development projects in rural and suburban areas in accordance with newly proposed territorial EU agenda and to allow multi-fund financing of integrated projects. The aim is to ensure complex implementation of projects integrated based on the substance and to support discussions on territorial agenda and on the current review of the EU cohesion policy.

To suggest, on the occasion of the review of OPs, to prefer projects in ROPs and other OPs, wherever applicable, in which applicants provide evidence to have credible partners for the phase of project preparation and/or implementation. It should generally be a partner competent in terms of substance and/or locality whose contribution to the project would not be insignificant, either as regards human, financial or material resources, or as a provider of know-how or important experience substance-related projects, i.e. a partner who will help the applicant to achieve significantly better results and outputs[34].

To actively support creation of intersectoral project partnerships and to introduce a rule, as an elaboration on the previous paragraph, that would bind every public administration applicant (e.g. region, association of communities, community) to officially invite its NGNPOs and/or business entities competent in terms of substance and locality to cooperate on project preparation and implementation prior to filing an application for financing from public resources. In case it can be

[33] We do not argue that certain regions do perform this or that activity in cooperation with their partners. Our point is to sum up the basic procedure. We can say that, generally, there is lively and varied cooperation of regional authorities with various private entities such as umbrella organizations associating other organizations of a certain type and focus.

[34] This measure is embraced by the risk that applicants will increasingly report partners to speculate on point bonuses. It is highly recommended that clear conditions for admissibility of these partnerships were determined along with propositions for efficient supervision over contributions of partners to project results.

evidenced that this offer has not been accepted, the public administration body shall proceed individually. In case this offer has been accepted, it shall negotiate about project cooperation. This rule shall increase the efficiency of utilization of EU funds and state budget and will radically open the space for intersectoral cooperation of public administration, business and nonprofit sectors including the full application of PPP, Local Agenda 21 and other tools for the efficient utilization of public funds.

To invite partners at the time of preparation of regional programmes and calls [35] and to purposefully use the knowledge, experience and reputation of partners from all sectors, who are competent for a specific programme in terms of substance and locality, especially representatives of future applicants. Use may be made of pools of projects when defining areas of support provided that they have been updated and published.

In the OP EC but also in other OPs (IOP, HCE), to search for and use financing resources for education projects, creation of manuals, transfer of experience, etc. in local public administration with focus on modernization public administration, its openness and increase in the quality of services provided to citizens using partnership methods, public interaction, communication with the public and various target groups. Public administration performance quality should be ensured not only technically and by enhancing qualifications but also by implementing tools for participative preparation of decisions.

To elaborate and/or specify the concept of partnership on legislative and methodological levels, especially in three basic aspects: partnership vs. award of public tenders; partnership vs. public administration and partnership vs. tax system, esp. VAT.

3.27.7 G.5 What might be the contribution of a regional intersectoral partnership in the utilization of EU funds and in further regional development?

Inquiries conducted in the regions have clearly showed that **an intersectoral partnership has a positive impact on the utilization of EU funds and further regional development**. More specifically, a partnership might contribute positively to the:

- setting of operational programme calls in areas where less financial resources are utilized (depending on the current uptake),
- specification of regional needs after 2013 in terms of cohesion policy,
- preparation of new programming period 2014-2020 (with similar roles as in the preparation of the ROP for the period of 2007-2013),
- preparation and updating of strategic projects in regions,
- search for a project partner (from databases created for project purposes, it is possible to obtain contacts on partners suitable for joint activities),
- transfer of experience and information between individual sectors (e.g. in mutual training, joint activities, etc.),
- to solve joint problems of partners.

[35] Regions annually launch dozens of calls for utilization of regional resources in specific regional programmes. They are divided into grand headings and basically have a character of global grants specialized both thematically and on certain categories of beneficiaries. It is a unique chance to apply the partnership principle in the preparation of programmes whose promoters or beneficiaries are to be entities from other sectors and segments.

3.28 Formation of intersectoral partnerships in rural areas (1.H)

This part is dedicated to further experience with the partnership principle, this time based on the Leader method in rural areas.

Evaluation question: What were and are the decisive motives to form intersectoral partnerships in rural areas (Leader method), conditions for their operations, factors of sustainability of these partnerships and their contributions (compared to the principles applied in the ESF)?

The bases for the microanalysis – using the method triangulation principle – a) results of inquires conducted by Tima Liberec in local action groups (LAGs) in 2007-2010, b) assessments of LAGs conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture and National Network of LAGs carried out via personal visits in July and August 2010, and c) telephone and personal interviews with LAG representatives. Information sources and abbreviations used are listed at the end of the study.

According to the OP HRE, local partnership is an efficient tool to increase the quality of life in communities, for troubleshooting and to strengthen local democracy via involving of citizens in the planning and implementation of local projects. In OP HRE call no. 54 (area of support 3.4), for example, it reads: "Local partnership aims at increasing the quality of life in a specific area via solving of specific problems in this area, improving coordination of policies and adjusting them to local conditions and/or by involving citizens and companies more strongly in planning and implementation of local projects".

This concept complies very well with that of local intersectoral partnerships applied in the EU **within LEADER** since 1991**.** Beginning with the current period**, Leader** has been incorporated into the Rural Development Programme of the Ministry of Agriculture, CR, as a **method of financing and development of rural regions**, and Leader principles have been the key factors in the activities of the so called local action groups.

Altogether, the Leader concept conforms to the so called new rural paradigm as formulated in a paper by the OECD[36]. It is a widely accepted **model of rural development based on partnership, programming and involvement of local entities**. Its objective consists in the implementation of integrated rural development to achieve better utilization of sources and to reduce regional and social inequalities.

3.28.1 H.1 Basic terms and current situation of partnerships in Czech rural areas

Local action groups in the CR

The Leader method is based on long-term cooperation of local entities that form local intersectoral partnerships (in the form of a local action group – LAG) and implement their own development strategies within their territories. These strategies are currently financed via the Rural Development Programme of the CR (RDP) under the title of Leader Strategic Plan (LSP). However, the LSP itself should be derived only from an integrated territorial strategy that should comprehensively describe

[36] The new rural paradigm: policies and governance. OECD Rural Policy Reviews, Paris, OECD Publications 2006. Part of the propositions for EU rural policy in 2014-2020 is formulated similarly.

problems and opportunities in such a region and to specify mid-term plans of target-oriented of local and/or regional events.

The LSP should be created “from the ground up” with active involvement of local entities. LAG activities should be open so that it is easy to become a member. In contrast to project partnership in the OP HRE, this is a long-term partnership with variable composition.

Nowadays, 160 local action groups (LAGs) in total are registered in the CR. However, 15 of them basically do not operate, probably stagnating and terminating their activities. The other 145 are functional and active. Out of the active LAGs, 112 have been awarded subsidies to implement their development strategies (LSPs).

145 functional LAGs are evenly dispersed over all regions of the CR. They cover areas with 40 % of all inhabitants and 68 % of the territory of the CR.

This shows a large potential of this form of partnership. Some believe they may operate on an even more extensive level than development partnerships in CIP EQUAL as they focus on whole regions and may systematically support defined target groups which are relevant in the OP HRE. An example is employment of women in their fifties who can be searched by a LAG and whose contacts can be conveyed to organizations providing education and social services in which these women may be employed, e.g. as field social workers.

In 2007-2008, Tima Liberec conducted a certain verification of this approach on a sample of 39 LAGs within the benchmarking of LAGs. This field survey included answers of LAG representatives to a series of questions.

Table 51: Self-assessment of LAG characteristics

„To what extent do the characteristics below apply to your LAG and its active members?“	**degree**				**average**	**rank**
	1	2	3	**4**		
relationships between active members are long term (1=less than half a year, 2 =at least half a year, 3 = at least 1 year, 4 = minimum of 2 years) – ***sign 4***	0	8	24	**68**	**3.59**	**1.**
members have joint objectives (there is a joint strategy for rural region development adopted by active members who have fully identified themselves with it) – ***sign 3***	3	5	33	**59**	**3.47**	**2.**
overall positive impacts on a region are even bigger than the sum of effects which would have been achieved by individual participants – *sign 8*	3	9	44	**44**	**3.26**	**3.-4.**
active members fully **accept cooperation contents and forms** (e.g. LAG activities, decision making process, etc.) – ***sign 5***	3	3	58	**36**	**3.26**	**3.-4.**
active members feel their **cooperation is mutually beneficial** – ***sign 2***	3	10	66	**21**	**3.03**	**5.**
every active member **contributes with something that would be otherwise missing**, without which the result would not have been achieved – ***sign 7***	3	26	61	**10**	**2.76**	**6.**

Source: Tima Liberec survey. The presence of signs 1 and 6 results from the mission of a LAG and have not been dealt with (however, it has turned out since then that sign 6 is not satisfactorily complied with in all LAGs). Data in columns 1-4 are in % of the number of inquired LAGs, the rank has been determined according to the “average mark“ on scale 1-4 and column numbers in the table mean: 1 = not at all, no one (or I am sure it is not so); 2 = partially, minority (or probably no); 3 = mostly, majority (or probably yes); 4 = totally, everyone (or I am sure it is so)

Since 2008, LAGs have developed internally, especially thanks to financing of operations of 112 LAGs with selected LSPs. Despite the tendency to overestimate respondents’ own activities, we still can assume, according to local action groups´ self-assessments, that **LAGs tend to fulfill the basic characteristics of a partnership**.

The results of inquires of OP HRE applicants relating to some of these signs are specified in evaluation question 1.1.

Partnership in a LAG

Partnership is among the leading principles in the Leader approach and potentials of partnerships, especially of local intersectoral ones, as represented by LAGs, are one of the most important,

although intangible capacities rural areas may utilize. Partnership is about long-term cooperation and synergic effects achieved through this cooperation.

Most LAGs apply several partnership elements – mainly joint decision making, coordinated processes and also joint Integrated Regional Strategy (IRS) and Leader Strategic Plan (LSP). On the programme level, partnership is integrated in the whole LAG and its LSP.

Although LAGs are founded and operated as associations of entities from various sectors, after approval of LSP for financing, they are no more supported to purposefully develop partnerships of local applicants. It depends on LAGs whether they do so and to what extent. It is up to LAGs whether they will prefer partnership projects. Applications of individual, separate entities that are normally linked only by being members of the same LAG, still prevail in numbers.

All in all, the idea of preferring partnership projects to projects of isolated applicants has not been sufficiently accepted in the preparation of the Rural Development Programme and in the selection of LSPs.

However, the Leader method as a whole is generally energized by joint partnership projects, willingness (and courage) to coordinate one´s own intentions with neighbors and competitors, prepare plan of further regional development and implement it together. It is LAG's responsibility to prefer partnership projects, thus ensuring synergic effects of supported projects in a specific region.

Ambiguous results of application of the partnership principle are suggested by a survey conducted in 89 LAGs by Tima Liberec Company in March and April 2010. Joint decision making in LAG is a relatively reliable feature (proxy indicator) of partnership; therefore, we examined whether or not LAG members participated in decision making processes less in March 2009 than in March 2010. The situation in LAGs seems to be very stable from this perspective: respondents could not tell in 5 % of LAGs, members participated used to participate much less than they do today in 3 % of LAGs and somewhat less in 17 % of LAGs, but the situation is roughly the same in 75 % of LAGs. It seems, though, that most LAGs have already found their way of operation (exemplary in some cases and condemnable in others – this one based on pre-negotiations and secret deals of a small group of LAG´s managers).

3.28.2 H.2 Motives for formation of local intersectoral partnerships in rural regions

General reasons and motives for formation and development of LAG in the CR

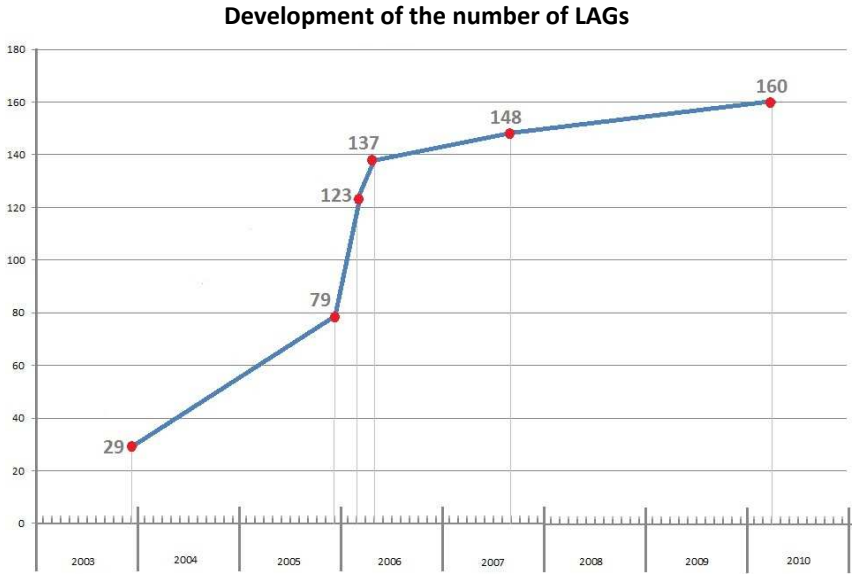
OP Rural Development and Multifunctional Agriculture in the preceding period and current OP Rural Development gave rise to dynamic development of local action groups. Subsidies themselves along with potential to obtain these subsidies initiated an increase in the interest of local entities in LAG activities and the Leader method. "Financial motive" – a chance to obtain subsidies of up to dozens of millions of CZK (for a seven year period) – was probably most often present at the formation (after 1992) and the early development of LAG in the CR.

In addition to these "institutional influences", this was also contributed, in our opinion, by the awareness of a need for joint actions of communities and business and non-business entities in many regions. The autonomous interest, emerging from the bottom, in a method based on association and partners´ cooperation was instigated by the experience that isolated actions were rarely successful

and efficient and that association allowed for stronger entities with higher potentials in a region. Therefore, communities previously organized in so called voluntary community alliances (VCA) were eager to involve in LAG activities.

The graph clearly shows a sharp increase in the number of newly formed LAGs at the end of 2005 and in 2006

Graph 14: Development of the number of local action groups



Source: Tima Liberec files

Two thirds of existing LAGs are unincorporated associations (the rest being benevolent associations and, rarely, associations of legal entities). According to the law providing for communities, although they cannot be members of unincorporated associations, they mostly delegated their mayors as deputies in Managing Authorities of LAGs, anyway. Thus, communities had quite naturally a significant influence on the development and work of LAGs right from the beginning[37]. This was mainly because of financing.

However, sometimes the formation of local intersectoral partnerships was motivated by the experience of local entities resulting from previous joint activities.

In the frame of the OP HRE, cooperation between individual LAGs, i.e. cooperation of partnerships, is not common. The financial motive prevails again: the RDP subsidizes cooperation projects with 100% domestic as well as cross-border participation. Another motive is the effort of people managing LAGs to share experience, carry out exchange programs of students and tourists and trade regional products.

In spite of the limited possibilities to share good practice (due to the investment nature of most RDP measures), LAGs are obviously open to cooperate and largely benefit from it.

In many cases, however, the applicants (local action groups) took advantage of the absence of the need to document the value added by cooperating with another LAG. These projects then seem to be

[37] By contrast, community partnerships are a rare occurrence in the OP HCE and appear in the Third Axis almost exclusively.

independent activities of individual partners side by side rather than mutual cooperation – they seem not to cooperate but to implement two or more isolated activities using money that is normally impossible or hard to obtain within the RDP.

This risk is not so serious in the case of the OP HRE since a project partnership is – using the words of the model Declaration of Partnership – "only a relationship between two or more entities and based on mutual liability for the preparation and implementation of an ESF-funded project". Therefore, it is not expected or explicitly required from a partnership in the OP to form something that would not be formed otherwise.

Latent motivation to establish and operate LAGs

Local action groups may be formed and may comply with formal aspects. However, this does not mean that they work in accordance with the Leader method: their Managing Authorities may be relatively closed to prospective applicants, LAGs do not communicate enough, their management is filled with pressure groups right from the beginning and/or created in the course of the existence of a LAG, tending to divide the finances among themselves (of course, in formal compliance with the approved LSP). There is a lack of unity of members, there is not much joint decision making (too much of the manager style instead of the participatory one), partnership projects or communication between members are not supported, there is no interest to expand the membership base and the members themselves are not sufficiently informed of activities and intentions. Even such a LAG may be successful since it is governed rationally to implement LSP. Nonetheless, it is invalid.

The long-term experience of the evaluator with the Leader movement and contacts with dozens of LAGs in the whole CR lead to a belief that there are at least three basic groups of LAGs:

I. Money pipeline for friends

This kind of LAG was often formed "over night" with the assistance of a consultant who offered his/her knowledge to mayors of communities in which the LAG was to operate. Such a LAG gradually fulfills all formal criteria.

These LAGs are a financial "canal" to slice a certain amount of public financial resources to projects of partially pre-arranged beneficiaries. These groups are often formed for the purposes of particular communities and/or entrepreneurs and organization of income from the RDP only gives them another chance to obtain personal/business benefits. Their partnerships are pseudo-partnerships. Their LSPs could have been approved for financing because they were successful in a selection procedure for applicants.

It is hard for an external evaluator to uncover these cases since LAG has no reporting obligation towards this evaluator[38]. After last year's experience, the evaluator tends to rely more on cooperation with RDP MA regarding self-governing LAG National Network. However, it cannot be expected that frauds and so on will be disclosed and it can only be found that certain LAG are not based on the essential characteristics of the Leader method.

[38] One of the many tell signs may be the fact that LAG representatives are repeatedly out of reach for the interviewing period of three weeks or deny to provide any information about the LAG´s development. Properly formed and administered LAGs have no problem to communicate since communication openness and easy access from the outside is the very sense of the mission of LAGs in a given region.

II. Normally functioning LAGs

This kind of LAGs was formed a) following common "financial motivation", i.e. in pursuance of the potential to obtain large sums of money for the whole programming period, b) with the (additional) idea of becoming active support of development in a region, in solving its problems etc. In both cases, the reasons have been outweighed by "healthy forces", openness in communication, willingness to work together etc.

A weak point is that if a LAG is only in the role of an applicant, beneficiary and re-distributor, denial of the application may cause stagnation and/or total cessation the LAG.

These LAGs administer the help from the RDP to their best and comply with preset tasks; however, anything in addition to that is beyond their capacity, willingness or courage. It is quite likely that most LAGs are like this.

III. LAGs as development agencies

These LAGs and/or their managements are today motivated by the effort to permanently develop and enrich all activities of LAGs, create more tasks, find other sources of financing, attract more active citizens and organizations in a region, etc. At the same time, the true mission of a local action group is fulfilled – that is to be not only a consultant, educator and distributor of public resources in a region but also a challenger. LAG is in the role of an "animator" here, which includes transmission of information, consultancy, education and coordination of LAG members' and other entities´ activities as well as active search for and support of joint projects, search for new opportunities, etc.

The development potential and mission of a LAG are thus much more extensive than the implementation authorities in the RDP may assume. It is not a mere beneficiary and a branch of a payment agency. It is not about assisting in the distribution of funds. This may be illustrated using "two A´s": a LAG is a tool both for administration and activation of a rural region. It is likely that without incorporating both these functions, LAG does not work fully in agreement with the Leader method. We estimate that there are currently 10 to 20 LAGs of this kind.

So far, no method has been used that would identify these LAGs explicitly enough and enforce them as the leaders of the whole segment of local action groups.

We can imagine that developed LAGs would be awarded global grants in new a programming period and these grants would not be closely linked to the agricultural resort (as it has been so far), but would be used for various objectives currently fulfilled by the OP HRE, RDP and other national programmes.

3.28.3 H.3 Conditions for activities of local intersectoral partnerships

In contrast to CIP EQUAL, LAGs are substantially multi-sectoral and the connection of communities with non-profit organizations and local enterprises, of private capital with contributions from local budgets and partner cooperation of local entities in dealing with specific problems of a rural region, all of that helps to create a development potential which is naturally exploitable outside rural areas.

Conditions on the programme level

The basic conditions are stipulated by the main source of financing – **the Rural Development Programme of the CR**. **The complexity and extensiveness of its rules is well known**. For example, the RDP uses no instrument of indirect costs, there is no advance financing and expenditures have to comply with an exhaustive list of eligible expenditures which is constantly changing and expanding as projects keep producing new needs and new expenditure items. There is no connection between the eligibility of costs and project objectives.[39].

The RDP has unreasonably high penalties (partial errors may discontinue financing), there is no mediator, every RDP measure has separate rules and new versions of rules are not issued in an amendment mode, i.e. the introduction does not list all changes (beneficiaries may easily omit partial changes the compliance with which is subject to audits by a payment agency). In some cases, beneficiaries have to conform to new rules other than those with which they agreed at the time of project approval which only caused them more complications.

In addition to these obvious complications, there are other, more hidden ones. In the concept of Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 on support for rural development (hereinafter the Regulation 1698), the term of local development strategy is defined only vaguely, as "a coherent set of operations to meet local objectives and requirements implemented in a partnership at the appropriate level". In this document as well as in other EU instruments, strategy is contextually understood as a substantive complex tool for regional development management. In the RDP, however, only a thematically non-complex Leader Strategic Plan (LSP) might have been the subject of an application, i.e. a reduced derivative of the original, thematically more complex "Integrated Regional Strategy" (IRS).

Therefore, the potential and ambition of the LSP to influence the management of rural areas is logically much lower than the potential of the IRS should they be implemented via the RDP. Other EU Member States support LAGs directly based on local strategies corresponding to IRSs in the CR.

At the same time, we have to say that LAGs as non-profit organizations may submit applications in all operational programmes in which NGNPO are eligible applicants. However, these options have not been used by LAGs very often so far, reportedly due to being too busy with administratively challenging activities within the RDP.

Conditions on LAG and LSP levels

As mentioned before, the positions and tasks of LAGs in the frame of the ESF are the closest to the concept of a global grant: LAG prepares its strategy (LSP), is given a promise to be provided funds and publicizes appeals to local applicants who within the approved LSP apply for financial contributions for their own purposes. These re-distribution activities of LAGs are substantially limited by a financial agency (SAIF) in comparison with global grant beneficiaries; nevertheless, many of their activities have a role similar to that of a mediating subject.

[39] If there is hops and wine press in the list of eligible expenditures and fruit press is missing, it cannot be covered, so that dozens of people interested in running their own cider house feel discriminated. Eligible expenditures include pedestrian paths, ski trails, horse trails, wine trails…but not beer trails (which would be of at least the same importance for tourism in Bohemia as wine trails in Moravia). Also, the RDP covered fuel costs, but only to the borderline of a LAG region (threat of audits - ?) and not from the LAG to a town in which a meeting or seminar were taking place…

In terms of the Leader method, LAG operation is cooperation based on a (partnership) network of three groups of local entities: public administration, entrepreneurial sector and an organized part of the civil society (local NGNPOs). Management on the LAG level is potentially focused on the harmonization of interests, solutions to conflicts and problems, coordination of efforts to preserve and strengthen local values (improvements) as sources of socioeconomic development. Typical features include participation, local initiatives and innovations, voluntary participation of people and horizontal communication between partners.

The existence and operation of LAGs significantly amplify the potential of multi-sectoral and intersectoral approach to solving local issues as well as the potential of partnership cooperation – formation and support of LAGs is undoubtedly a strong stimulus for the creation of joint projects by local applicants.

Conditions inside a LAG

There are no strict requirements on internal operations of a LAG: private entities have to have excess in power over public administration in LAG´s decision making bodies.

Other requirements are informal and result more from cultural education, experience and the nature of things – such as that internal decision making processes should be transparent, and acquisition and termination of membership and/or active participation of an applicant in LAG operations should be possible.

LAGs are self-learning bodies that on the other hand need certain guiding “parameters” into which they would be forced by the finance provider. These parameters might be set by certification.[40].

3.28.4 H.4 Factors of the sustainability of a local intersectoral partnership in a rural region

Negative factors

A/ Underestimation of LAG potentials of and misunderstanding of LAG specifics lead to the misconduct by the public administration (MAg, SAIF and/or Regions).

LAGs are not like other RDP beneficiaries. RDP rules and SAIF employees treat LAGs like any other type of applicant, like with individual natural persons, cooperatives and/or business enterprises. However, a LAG is a collective body in the first place; an organization in which fast and definitive decisions are not made by a single person (in contrast to a sole member in a limited liability company). Their decisions are much more stable (persistent) than decisions of most other legal types of beneficiaries.

LAGs are also more resistant to the risk of cessation: while natural persons and/or LLCs may discontinue their activities on a day-to-day basis, cease to conduct business, instigating the recovery

[40] See a paper by O. Čepelka on LAG certification in: Svobodová, P., Čepelka, O. PORVLK 2007+ or professionalization of rural recovery and development in the Liberec Region. Project Implementation Report. Národní observatoř venkova, o.p.s., June 2008.

procedure for subsidies, LAGs cannot just terminate their activities suddenly as it requires a collective decision that has to be prepared for a certain time and has to be approved by a qualified majority of members. Local action groups may be considered as highly immune to a total financial collapse of their own and/or to a legal collapse.

B/ Application of the partnership principle is weakened by the generally passive attitude of public administration which is itself based on the hierarchy of isolated entities and cascade-like, strictly hierarchical responsibility, not shared one. Regions (according to our survey from September 2010) have not so far implemented LSPs and IRSs into their systems of regional development tools.

Failure to understand and utilize partnership principles may be observed on the communal level, too.

Our findings imply that effective communication of LAGs towards communities and public administration is extremely important. They have to take active part in LAGs´ decision making processes, invite them to LAGs´ bodies´ meetings, provide them with information, search together for what the community really needs, etc.

C/ A lack of funds is another limiting factor for LAGs. The initial motive of formation of LAGs was the outlook for subsidies (from the RDP) to implement local projects. After the selection of LSPs for financing was finished in April 2010, we found out that 15 LAGs (out of 160 registered) were no longer active. We assume that 10 to 12 might have terminated their activities due to non-award of subsidies from the RDP.

If the outlook for award of subsidies was the most common motive for to form LAGs, then non-award logically resulted in the termination of LAGs since they did not have enough time to establish themselves properly, to implement their own projects and to obtain subsidies from other sources (Region, foundation, ROP, etc.).

We think that similar mechanism was involved in why so many originally successful development partnerships within EQUAL ceased to work as partnerships. A lack of funds and joint activities is a solid test of the partnership strength.

Positive factors

D/ Outlook for secured financing for a seven year period. Support of implementation of LSPs within the RDP is a significant stabilizing factor, the core of the work of a LAG that may add more activities and projects and search for other sources for their financing.

E/ Strength and “loading capacity” of a properly set and properly developing partnership – long-term cooperation of active entities, mostly representatives of communities, local businesses and NGNPOs. Interpersonal relationships and networks that are created and maintained thanks to common objectives, problems and activities then cannot be easily turned down or dissolved.

F/ Identification of local entities whose self-sufficient operations LAGs support. The fund provides small grants to cultural ensembles in various communities and participates in their activities. Thus, LAGs get more integrated into the region. Integrated projects have similar effects as they represent interconnectedness of various entities within the same section and even beyond that.

3.28.5 H.5 Benefits of local intersectoral partnerships in rural areas

LAGs´ benefits as assessed by community representatives

LAGs are not assessed by communities as the main intermediary of funds and information. In September and October 2010, Tima Liberec carried out inquiries in 91 communities in the CR in which voluntary community alliances (VCA) and LAGs operated about their views of the fact that they had become communities with extended powers (CEP), of their participation in VCAs and of operations of local action groups. According to the community representatives:

- voluntary community alliances are the best valued in obtaining funds for communities, total tangible and intangible support as well as in the amount of partnership projects,
- all three entities (CEP, VCA and LGA) are similarly valued – often as the most important – in respect of the most frequent cooperation and communication, incorporation of communities´ intentions into development documents, and popularity.

Table 52: Help to community from CEP, VCA and LGA (%)

	CEP	VCA	LAG	in total
a) community itself obtained highest subsidies from …	34.2	42.1	23.7	**100.0**
b) we most frequently cooperate and communicate with …	37.3	33.0	29.7	**100.0**
c) in general, we obtain most tangible and intangible support from …	25.7	41.9	32.4	**100.0**
d) intentions of our community are best integrated into the plans of…	33.4	33.3	33.3	**100.0**
e) community management (representatives) favour …	29.6	35.8	34.6	**100.0**
f) partnership projects (with more than one participant) are carried out within …	26.3	56.6	17.1	**100.0**

Source: Inquiry of Tima Liberec in September and October 2010.

The assumption that for communities in which LAGs operate, these LAGs are the best intermediary for planning, the most popular with community representatives, most frequent project promoters etc. and even the main sources of financing for communities´ intentions has not been confirmed.

Nevertheless, the impacts of a properly operating LAG upon a region are positive and important.

Participation of LAGs in the OP HRE

Participation of LAGs in the OP HRE has been very low so far. According to the situation on 21 December 2010, only 10 applications submitted by local action groups in four areas of support were registered. Three applications did not meet the formal requirements, five of them did not meet the requirements of substantive assessment (!) and two of them complied with the requirements (so far, the applications have not been decided on yet). No LAG project is in the implementation phase. The 10 applications were filed by 6 LAGs.

Yet, as already mentioned, the principle of local intersectoral partnerships may be applied even outside rural regions, e.g. a) in cities and city districts (like CIP URBAN), b) in synergy with private capital and public funds from communities and regions when a LAG or another entity intermediates a share of private companies in public utility investments in communities and small towns, c) in community planning of public (not only social) services, in Local Agenda 21, etc.

Local action groups – either those operating in rural areas, or those formed (perhaps under different names) in cities and mixed types of settlement – may operate wherever synergic effects are produced by various local entities. This mainly concerns the Third and Fifth Axis of the OP HRE.

4 Contribution of the Partnership Principle to the Successfull Implementation of the OP HRE

4.1 Contribution of partnership to the implementation of relevance of the OP HRE (2.1)

Relevance is one of the most important aspects of the partnership principle on the programme level. It is applied both on EU and national levels. It supports political consent when framing of policy and programme focuses.

The main evaluation question is: To what extent does the partnership principle contribute to the successful implementation of the OP HRE in respect of relevance?

As regards relevance, i.e. harmonization of the needs of target groups and OP HRE, we have to distinguish between programme partners and project partners.

It has not been proved that a project partnership significantly contributes to the fulfillment of objectives of individual priorities of OP HRE. A majority of projects is implemented without partners. Costs, in the context of monitoring indicators, are on average lower in projects implemented with a partner, but there is no statistically significant relation.

The role of programme partners is totally different. The OP HRE concept stems from several partial analyses of social partners. Some of them contributed more, e.g. the Romany issue. Integration of other partners is acknowledged abroad, too. Programme partners are often invited for ex-post evaluation. In general, the amount of participation is appropriate, but as regards relevance, programme partners should participate more in the OP HRE implementation in several areas. PA1: business associations, chambers of commerce, business guilds; PA2: employment agencies, PA3: NGOs´ associations; PA4: municipalities, Union of Towns and Municipalities, regions, Association of Regions and other associations in the public sector; PA5: partners as mentioned above.

4.1.1 Data processing method and commented results

An analysis of the data provided from Monit7+ examined the dependency of planned monitoring indicators on the level of partnership according to individual Axes.

Two indicators were considered: the amount of newly created jobs, which was relevant only in Priority Axis 2 (active labour market policies) in already implemented projects; and the amount of supported persons in total. Other Priority Axes did not comply with this indicator.

Dependency of the monitoring indicator on project costs and on the fact whether or not the project is implemented in cooperation with a partner may be found only in indicator “number of newly created jobs”. Dependency of the monitoring indicator on project costs without partnership impact can be demonstrated in both monitoring indicators.

Ninety two projects have been analyzed in Priority Axis 2. A regression model respecting partnership impact may be drawn up for these projects; it equals -0.262 + 0.00001229 x costs incurred – 324 for

partnerships. Both regressors (project and partnership costs incurred) are significant in the model. R^2 is 0.986. Logically, the model gives sense only for projects of over 25 mil. CZK, which is not achieved by many of them.

Dependency and a suitable regression model were found provided that dependency of indicator "number of supported persons" on costs incurred was examined, excluding partnership impact.

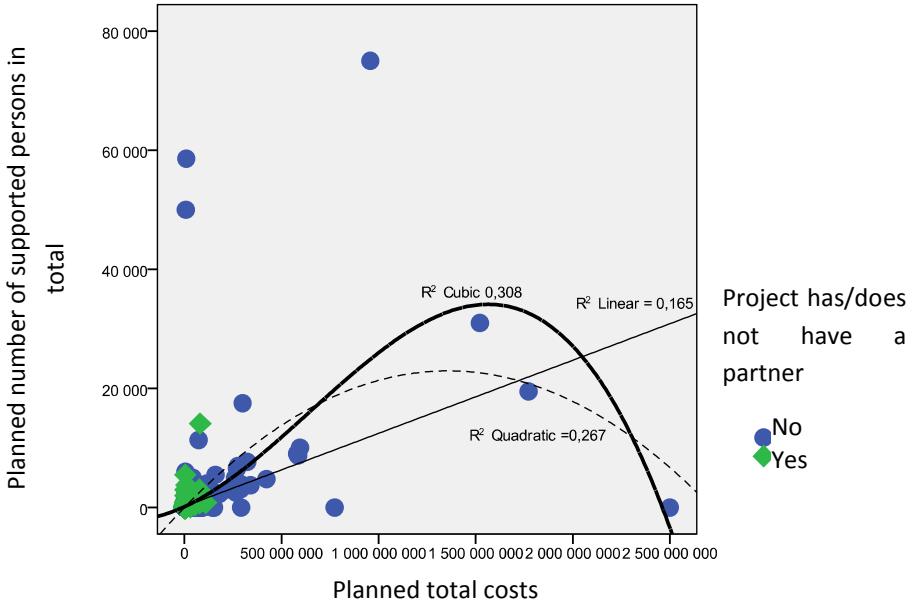
A linear regression model may be drawn to estimate the amount of supported persons depending on the costs of a project : -962 + 0.909 x costs incurred. The regression coefficient R^2 of this model equals 0.826 (see the graph), the regressor "costs incurred" and the initial constant are significant.

Should another regressor "project with/without partner" be included, R^2 slightly rises to 0.827, but such a newly included regressor is not significant (the significance level of this regressor is 0.247). Thus, we cannot conclude that partnership matters. The statistical test concerned also non-partner projects and the conclusions thus apply to both types of projects.

Due to the small amount of completed projects, it was not statistically appropriate to examine dependencies according to individual Priority Axes.

Analogically, dependency of the amount of supported persons on overall project costs was estimated for running projects. The graph below shows that none of the regression models is able to express the dependency; R^2 values for individual types of regression functions range deep below 0.5 (see the graph). A suitable regression model has not been obtained after the inclusion of partnership impact, either.

Graph 15: Comparison of financial inputs and number of supported persons in running projects[41]



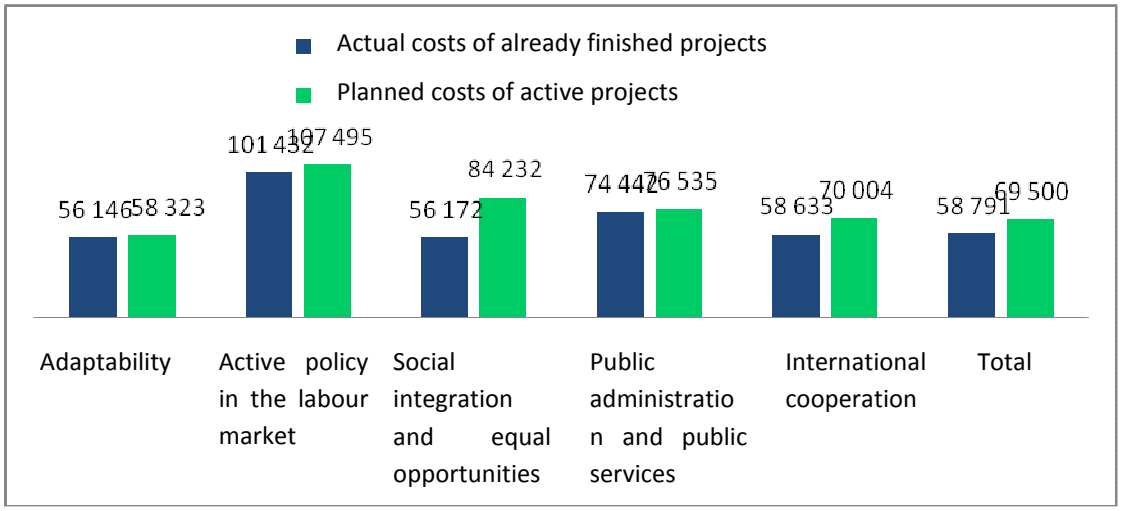
Source: Monit7+, own calculations

Dependency of the planned amount of supported persons on the planned total costs may be observed only in Priority Axis 2; this dependency cannot be expressed via a suitable model in other

[41] Extreme values are excluded from the graph for transparency reasons but have been considered.

Priority Axes. All in all, we may conclude that projects carried out within partnerships do not differ from projects carried out without partnerships.

Graph 16: Costs of one supported person



Source: Monit7+, own calculations

Regarding the fact that the planned amount of newly created jobs was a part of indicator "number of supported persons", the subsequent analysis was carried out only for this indicator.

We cannot say (and this conclusion is statistically significant) that the costs of one supported person are independent of the type the implemented activity and the needs of target groups (Priority Axis).

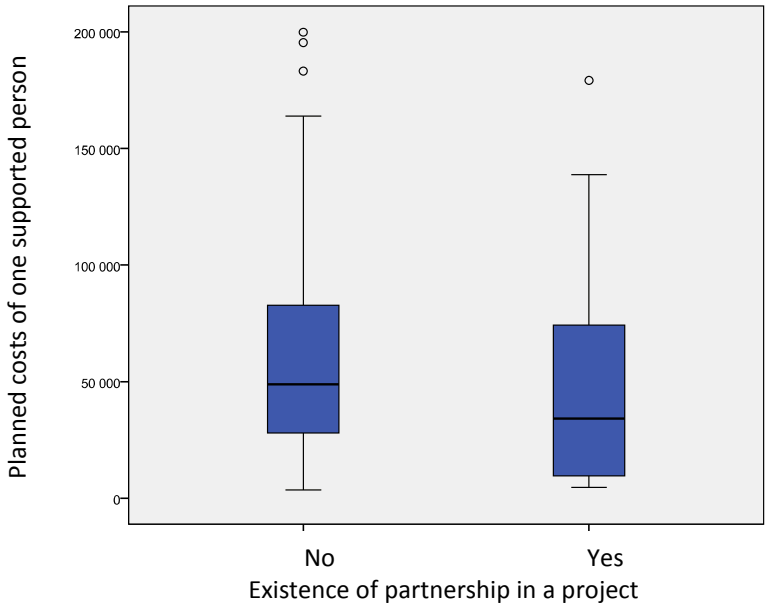
There are more significant differences in average costs of one supported person in PA1 and PA2. Logically, PA2, by its nature, may require more costs, whereas projects with partners were on average by 8 % cheaper than projects without partners. Although there is a large number of projects in PA1, the variability of this Axis (in the meaning of the variation range) is second lowest and average costs are the lowest from among all Priority Axes.

Variability in currently active projects is obvious in the graph below (finished projects show much lower variability). Sums range the most in PA3, with costs of one supported person exceeding several times the average in dozens of projects– from about CZK 400 thousand to CZK 1.800 thousands. This mostly concerns large individual projects.

Average costs of one supported person in already finished projects with and without partners are CZK 52.888 and CZK 59.797, respectively, which is statistically significant. Similar results may be obtained in active projects, too. Increase in the number of partners leads to decrease in average costs in finished projects with the exception of inclusion of a single partner, which increases average costs compared to projects without partners. Partnership effects on the existence of partnership and/or the number of partners has not been verified statistically. Values of regression coefficients are very low (lower than 0.1) and are not significant. The statistical test concerned also for non-partnership projects and the conclusions thus apply to both types of projects.

Variability of costs of one supported person is obvious in the graph below and is much higher in projects without a partner, which is logical with respect to the high number of projects, and it is not possible to make any conclusions on this basis.

Graph 17: Comparison of costs of one supported person in finished projects



Source: Monit7+, own calculations

One of the recommendations in the *Final Report of Organization of Evaluation Focus Groups in OP HRE and Evaluation Workshop* suggested isa formulation of specific criteria allowing appraisial of partnership quality. Further, it recommended engaging informal groups of specialists in ad hoc consulting in administration processes when specific calls are published, limits for beneficiaries are determined or scopes of authorized activities are outlined. The Report further recommended engaging various programme partners to arrange focus groups, workshops and to share good practice examples. The same recommendations have been presented in a report by Polverari and Michie (2009) concerning, in particular, participation in various workshops and seminars, and drawing up calls.

Involvement of institutionalized and non-institutionalized partners in various work and expert groups is of key importance, too. According to the annual evaluation of the OP HRE for 2009, activities mentioned in programme documentation which are to be supported but only rarely occur in approved projects were only sporadically identified in projects; these activities include formation of local partnerships, cooperation between institutions, etc. The practice is that the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA) respects the relevance principle, which is reflected mainly in the execution of various orders focusing on evaluation, e.g. in *Organization of Evaluation Focus Groups in Operational Programme Human Capital and Employment and Evaluation Workshop* in 2009 or in *Organization of Evaluation Focus Groups in OP HRE and Evaluation Workshop* in 2010. The same has been implied by structured interviews proving that programme partners are largely used for ex-post evaluations and incorporation of results in future calls.

4.1.2 Summary of conclusions

The analysis of the current state before the commencement of the OP HRE was based on partial analyses of various partners, leading to a detailed description of the situation in the CR. They identified the key needs of target groups and, based on that, individual areas of support. However,

not all problem areas are reflected in the calls. The extent of involvement of programme partners might have been higher. Involvement of these partners during the OP HRE implementation is below average in respect of relevance; we recommend stronger involvement of these partners in drawing up and targeting new calls during subsequent evaluations, not within them.

Generally, projects that are cheaper in respect of one supported person (monitoring indicator in general) contribute to OP HRE objectives better. Although costs of individual projects differ when related to indicator "number of supported persons", and this is statistically significant, we cannot make any conclusions from it because of the very nature of Priority Axes and existence of extreme projects.

Estimates of contributions to OP HRE objectives and its Priority Axes of individual implemented projects are not statistically different in projects implemented with and without partners. Contributions of both types of projects are analogous, there are no significant differences.

Recommendations:

- we recommend more intensive involvement of programme partners in drawing up new calls, so that the relevance principle of the OP HRE is complied with, i.e. harmonization of the needs of target groups with programme objectives, Priority Axes and individual calls, not to use just conclusions of ex-post evaluations although they are very useful.
- we recommend focusing on activities (e.g. in the form of their inclusion in selective criteria) that are to be supported according to programme documentation but that barely occur in approved projects – local partnerships, cooperation with institutions, etc.

4.2 Partnership contribution to the achievement of OP HRE objectives (2.2)

Achieving planned objectives is one of the main scopes of MA activities. As result, alternatives allowing for the most effective achievement of planned results are searched for. This evaluation question tests whether a partnership has an effect on the achievement of OP HRE objectives:

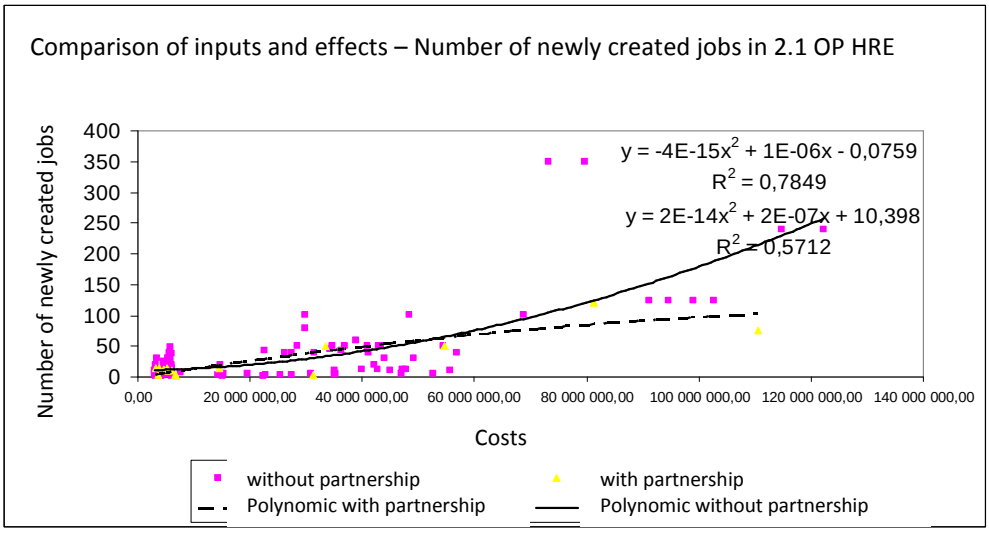
The main evaluation question is: To what extent does the partnership principle contribute to the successful implementation of the OP HRE in respect of the achievement of objectives?

4.2.1 Data processing method and commented results

The evaluation of the highest extent of utility with respect to costs incurred has been made on the basis of data from Monit7+. A sample of 141 projects has been analyzed. One of the projects was more of a system nature and its scope and budget significantly differed from the others. Therefore, it has been excluded from the data set. This evaluation question has been analyzed in two stages. The first analysis examined the relationship of indicator "planned indicator values" (number of supported persons, number of newly created jobs). The second part of the analysis only dealt with finished projects.

In both cases, the analysis was carried out in relation to the budget of a project in all relevant areas of support (i.e. where the project was implemented with and without partners and a relevant indicator had a non-zero value).

Graph 18:Comparison of financial inputs and number of newly created jobs.



Source: Monit7+, own calculations

No statistically significant dependency has been found between the achieved values of monitoring indicators and the fact whether or not a project was implemented with a partnership.

The evaluation also dealt with differences of final values among areas of support OP HRE. With respect to the results, no statistically significant conclusions can be made in this case, either.

The results do not allow us to conclude that projects implemented with partnerships differ from projects implemented without partnerships.

4.2.2 Summary of conclusions

It was meaningful to analyze only two monitoring indicators and their actually achieved values in implemented projects. These indicators are “number of supported persons” where the average achieved value was 180 (after round up), and “the number of successful participants of training” where the average achieved value was 53 (after round up).

Statistical testing has not proved that projects implemented with partnerships differed from projects implemented without partnerships as far as monitoring indicators concerned, in spite of the fact that average values of achieved indicators differ substantially. In this respect, there is no difference between projects with and without partners.

The analysis of achieved and planned values of monitoring indicators has not statistically proved that there was difference between partnership and non-partnership projects. Therefore, we may conclude that partnership and non-partnership projects have similar effects on compliance with monitoring indicators.

4.3 Partnership contribution to efficiency (2.3)

The main evaluation question is: To what extent does the partnership principle contribute to the successful implementation of the OP HRE in respect of efficiency?

4.3.1 Data and information collection specifics

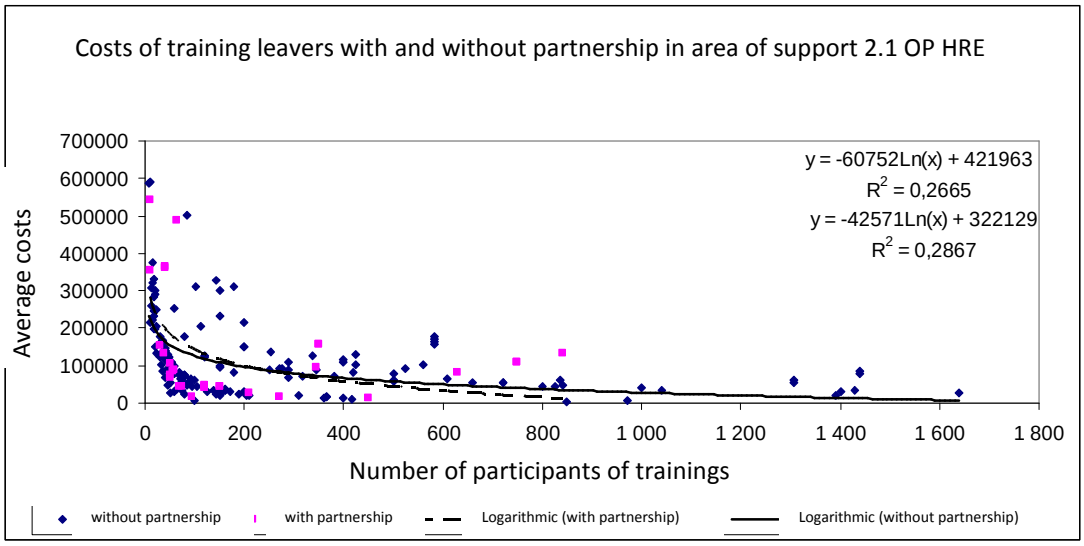
Monit7+ data were utilized in two waves (August 2010, January 2011). The reason was our attempt to analyze as many samples of finished projects as possible.

The number of finished projects was a certain difficulty in the analysis. Therefore, we analyzed planned target values of monitoring indicators. In the second phase of the evaluation, results were processed on the basis of actually achieved values of monitoring indicators in 141 finished projects.

4.3.2 Data processing method and commented results

The highest efficiency as achieved when average costs per unit of output are the lowest. The relation between average costs of achievement of a unit of output / result and the target value an indicator has been derived from analyses of individual output indicators and results.[42] The processing method is illustrated on the graph below. It is based on planned target values of monitoring indicators.

Graph 19: Average costs by size of planned target group – successful training leavers.



Source: Monit7+, August 2010, own calculations

These differences were not visible or statistically proven (i.e. statistical tests has not proved dependency) in any of the areas of support (all relevant ones were tested) and monitoring indicators.

Distribution of finished projects over individual PAs provided very few occurrences to make any conclusions according to individual OP HRE priorities. A problem was that a number of finished

[42] Various monitoring indicators were applied depending on various areas of support. More or less, it concerns the following: 07.41.00 –Number of Supported Persons – In Total; 07.57.00 – Number of Newly Created/Innovated Products; 07.46.13 – Number of Successful Training Leavers – In Total; 07.01.00 –Number of Created Jobs – In Total.

projects showed zero values of indicators, which caused problems (e.g. 90 out of 141 already finished projects showed zero value for monitoring indicator "number of supported persons").

There was no problem with target values of indicators in respect of size of data sample (monitored cases). Nevertheless, no statistically significant difference between projects with and without partners has been proven.

A general phenomenon is that lower average costs related to decreasing marginal costs can be expected along with the increasing value of a planned indicator. Thus, large scale projects focused on larger target groups seem to be more efficient in this respect.

4.3.3 Summary of conclusions

Only a few finished projects were available to compare differences between projects with and without partnerships. Therefore, it is advisable to make this analysis again after elapse of certain time (e.g. at the end of 2011 when the number of finished projects will be higher).

Although we examined differences in the costs of several different types of monitoring indicators, no statistically significant differences have been proven. In the case of real values of monitoring indicators after project completion, this was also caused by the availability of a relatively small sample of cases, which can be attributed to the OP HRE implementation process. It can be expected that the number of finished projects will grow in time. This will make it possible to make a similar analysis on a bigger sample of data.

4.4 Partnership contribution to sustainability (2.4)

ESF support should help as a "start-up capital" and to launch activities that are then pursued by a beneficiary of the support. However, this is not always the case. Therefore, the following analyses focus on whether or not projects implemented with partners affect the ability to sustain activities after the ESF support is terminated.

The main evaluation question is: To what extent does the partnership principle contribute to the successful implementation of the OP HRE in respect of sustainability?

As regards sustainability, implementation of a project in a partnership seems to be a positive factor. Applicants are afraid to implement a partnership projects without the ESF support. It is the ESF support that may help to initiate long-term activities focused on target groups (provided that target groups take part in partnerships).

4.4.1 Data processing method and commented results

Research on websites of partnerships from the previous programming period.

When solving this evaluation question, a research of information of current activities of organizations and partnerships from the previous programming period was carried out (as opposed to other evaluation questions). Primarily, it was an information search on the websites of beneficiaries of the ESF support in programming period 2004-2006 and questions to project members from the previous

programming period. In addition to that, information from a questionnaire survey has been used as well.

The end of ESF funds within CIP EQUAL was followed by a certain weakening of the partnership principle in individual development partnerships (projects). The analysis of information on the websites of individual organizations (whether being CIP EQUAL beneficiaries or their partners) implies that non-government non-profit organizations are primarily active in the areas of partnership and cooperation. It often happened that a lot of partners discontinued cooperation. Cooperation was frequently continued by individual organizations close to each other in their thematic focuses.

This analysis shows that cooperation was continued by about one third of partners, although in a different composition. Continuation of activities in a very similar composition of partners as in CIP EQUAL has been identified in two cases. In one case, there was joint legal identity allowing all partners to fully participate in decision making. An analogous situation has been detected in an OP HRE project, with the "new" organization established back in 2008, though.

The main drive to compile partnership projects is, in particular, similar thematic focus towards a specific target group or issue. Identical or similar themes as in CIP EQUAL have been dealt with by two thirds of organizations supported in CIP EQUAL. These organizations are more willing to continue cooperation in such a case. Nonetheless, partnerships have not been established to the same extent as was the case of CIP EQUAL projects. This is caused also by that partnership was one of the very requirements of CIP EQUAL and many times there were too many partners in projects.

From this perspective, sustainability of activities and sustainability of results of a financing programme are mainly given by thematic focus of applicants and their partners and also by the history of these organizations. It seems to be important for sustainability that support should not be provided to organizations that do focus on a thematically specific area and view the OP HRE more as a source of financing of their activities or securing their operations.

Evaluation of sustainability conditions

The table below provides assessments of conditions of sustainability of activities and results of OP HRE projects by applicants themselves. Differences between projects with or without partnerships are not too big. From this perspective, it is not possible to make a statistically significant conclusion.

Table 53: Comparison of assessments of sustainability conditions

Project has / does not have a partner		Frequencies	%	Valid %
no	1-Conditions are without problems	120	1.7	24.0
	2	273	4.0	54.5
	3	98	1.4	19.6
	4-Conditions are inadequate	10	.1	2.0
	In total	501	7.3	100.0
	Respondent did not answer	342	5.0	
yes	1-Conditions are without problems	22	1.4	28.6
	2	40	2.5	51.9
	3	12	.8	15.6

	4-Conditions are inadequate	3	.2	3.9
	In total	77	4.9	100.0
	Respondent did not answer	66	4.2	

Source: IREAS 2010 questionnaire survey

Project implementability without ESF subsidies

Opinions of OP HRE applicants on the possibility of implementation of a project without ESF subsidies have been compared in the analysis. It can be expected that if a solved problem is really important for the applicant, they will try to deal with it even without subsidies. We assume that if project activities are supposed to solve a problem, the applicant will continue these activities even after ESF assistance terminates. Thus, we may expect a "correlation" between answers on project implementation without ESF subsidies and ensuring sustainability after ESF assistance termination.

The comparison of individual OP HRE priorities shows that it is only possible to compare the programme as a whole, priorities 1 and 3. Partnership is sometimes a formal requirement but partnership projects do not occur in some other cases at all. In three comparable cases, projects implemented in partnerships are more problem-oriented and it is appropriate or necessary to implement them even without ESF subsidies.

Table 54: Comparison of opinions on sustainability and implementation without subsidies

Project has / does not have a partner		Project would not have been launched without subsidies	
		N	%
no	1-Sustainability conditions are without problems	43	24.0%
	2	90	50.3%
	3	39	21.8%
	4-Sustainability conditions are inadequate	7	3.9%
	In total	**179**	**100.0%**
yes	1- Sustainability conditions are without problems	14	34.1%
	2	19	46.3%
	3	6	14.6%
	4- Sustainability conditions are inadequate	2	4.9%
	In total	**41**	**100.0%**

Source: IREAS 2010 questionnaire survey

Table 55: Percentage representation of willingness to implement projects without ESF subsidies

Priority Axis			We would not have implemented the project	The project would have been implemented to a limited extent	The project would have been implemented to the full extent, but the quality would have been reduced	The project would have been implemented to the full extent, but would have been delayed	The project would have been implemented to the full extent	I am not able to answer	In total
1 - Adaptability	Project has / does not have a partner	no	21.9%	67.3%	2.0%	0.7%	1.7%	6.4%	100.0%
		yes	42.9%	57.1%					100.0%
	In total		23.7%	66.5%	1.8%	0.6%	1.5%	5.8%	100.0%
2 – Active labour market policies	Project has / does not have a partner	ne	80.0%	10.0%				10.0%	100.0%
	In total		80.0%	10.0%				10.0%	100.0%
3 – Social integration and equal opportunities	Project has / does not have a partner	no	52.1%	35.4%	1.0%	5.2%	1.0%	5.2%	100.0%
		yes	54.1%	37.8%				8.1%	100.0%
	In total			36.1%	.8%	3.8%	.8%	6.0%	100.0%
4 – Public administration and public services	Project has / does not have a partner	no	50.6%	35.8%	3.7%	2.5%	2.5%	4.9%	100.0%
	In total		50.6%	35.8%	3.7%	2.5%	2.5%	4.9%	100.0%
5 – International cooperation	Project has / does not have a partner	yes	69.2%	23.1%				7.7%	100.0%
	In total		69.2%	23.1%				7.7%	100.0%
6 Technical assistance	Project has / does not have a partner	no		100.0%					100.0%
	In total			100.0%					100.0%
In total	Project has / does not have a partner	no	35.6%	52.9%	2.0%	1.8%	1.6%	6.1%	100.0%
		yes	52.6%	42.3%				5.1%	100.0%
	In total		37.9%	51.5%	1.7%	1.5%	1.4%	6.0%	100.0%

Source: IREAS 2010 questionnaire survey

The tables above clearly show that different results between partnership and non-partnership projects are primarily given by the answers of respondents from Priority Axis 1, although they are generally more willing to implement projects without ESF subsidies.

4.4.2 Summary of conclusions

About one third of ESF partnership projects really continue their joint activities after the end of ESF assistance. We have also noticed that about one third of partners of a project discontinued their involvement in theme of the project. Sustainability of project´s results is mostly affected by specializations of individual partners. If partners engage in similar areas, it is more likely they will continue their cooperation on joint activities.

If projects are implemented within a partnership, they are likely to be more sustainable in the long term. This mostly concerns projects in which partners are representatives of target groups. From this perspective, the partnership principle is one of the structures supporting sustainability.

Foundation of an organization with its legal status is another supporting factor, which is not frequently applied, though. Less use of this tool is at the same time a stimulus for sustainability as it takes effort, time and money to establish such an organization.

Recommendation:

- With respect to sustainability of activities, we recommend introducing at least relatively small point bonuses for applications prepared for implementation within partnership.

4.5 Contribution of Partnership to Impacts of OP HRE (2.5)

Within the chain of Inputs – Outputs – Results – Impacts, the impacts should be closest to the needs of target groups. Thus it is the main indicator of the program success rate. Following analyses try to find out, whether partnership principle in OP HRE at project level affects the unemployment decrease as the main indicator of the ESF programs success rate.

Main solved evaluation question is as follows: To what extent does the partnership principle contribute to successful implementation of OP HRE in term of expected impacts?

In OP HRE, the impact of projects realised in the partnership to employment has not yet been statistically confirmed. One of the main reasons is that many of the projects is only in early stage of their implementation and the situation will change with progress of the OP HRE implementation. Then more detailed analysis may be performed. Additionally, the data should be supplemented with findings, whether the target groups were employed, though this indicator has not been monitored within the project.

Significant impacts may be expected in projects, which are clearly oriented to solving of particular problem of target groups and applicants try to solve the problem also in case, when their project does not get any financial aid from ESF.

The contribution rate of partnership projects to OP HRE impacts have not been statistically verified. The results showed that both partnership and non-partnership projects feature similar effect to the

OP HRE impacts. More detailed results of the analysis can be provided after some time, when other projects within the OP HRE will be completed.

4.5.1 Data Processing Method and Commented Results

Statistical model of partnership effect to total employment in districts of CR

Methods used in the analysis are statistical analyses of data from Monit 7+ supplemented with data from Czech Statistical Office (CSO) and MLSA. More detailed description of data and their processing method is specified below.

Similar model as in case of evaluation question 2.6 was tested also for total employment. The models are similar, however they cover only such variables, which will relate to assessed group of population.

Calculation of contribution of the partnership principle to unemployment in regions was tested by regression analysis on basis of following module covering the data from the district level (NUTS IV):

$$\Delta ZAMo = \alpha_0 + \alpha_{1*}PARo + \alpha_{2*}EA_{2007o} + \alpha_{3*}PORo + u \text{ , where}$$

Individual input data are defined as follows.

$$\Delta ZAMo = \frac{ZAMo(2007)}{No(2007)} - \frac{ZAMo(2010)}{No\ (2010)},$$

which means change of total unemployment rate in particular district during realisation of OP HRE. It is difference between 2007, when the situation without the projects is expected, even if the projects were prepared, and 2010, resp. 2009, as some data for 2010 have not been yet available. If the analysis is to be as precise as possible, the data classified for shorter time period should be used. This will enable more exact determination, when the OP HRE interventions started to influence the situation of target groups. However there is a problem with availability of such data. The calculation is performed by means of absolute values, i.e. $ZAM_{o(2007)}$ is entered as integers, the same applies for ZAM_{o2010}. The data are divided to number of inhabitants in productive age, who lived in particular district in examined period (2007, 2010). This however reveals another methodology problem with the data. CSO processes the data acc. to SLDB 2001. Other data are not available yet. This recalculation serves to adjusting the data regarding the changes in the population size (migration, natural change).

$$PARo = \frac{\sum_{i,T=1}(Budget\ of\ a\ project\ wit\ partner)_i}{\sum_{T=0,1}(Budget\ of\ a\ project)},$$

explains contribution rate of the partnership principle to change of total unemployment. The calculation is sum of budgets of all realised OP HRE projects in particular district with at least one partner. The sum is then divided by total sum of budgets of realised OP HRE projects in particular district.

The analysis was realised with all realised projects. Non-finished projects were included in the analysis through parts of already paid financial means from OP HRE.

Just this ratio should determine the „intensiveness“ of project support in partnership. This ratio is selected to eliminate the problem with amount and/or size of the projects. Thus we make relation to

support scope (small, less populated districts have maybe fewer projects and lower sums of budgets in realised OP HRE projects). In relation to smaller districts with fewer projects, the project marginal effects may be higher than in districts with more projects, where they mutually compete.

The model is supplemented with integration of similar independent variable, which is calculated from number of realised projects with partnership within OP HRE and total number of OP HRE projects in particular districts. However this indicator does not express intensity of the aid.

$$EA_{2001o} = ((EAO_o - NEZ_o - VYJ_o - DOJ_o) * PRUMZDA)/N_O$$

This explanatory variable is chosen according to Hampl (2005). It is so-called economic aggregate serving to adjust the model with the situation of economy also at the district level, where the data on GDP is not available. It is chosen for year of OP HRE project realisation start to implement the „start" economy level of particular districts into the model.

The economic aggregate is an indicator of achieved social and economic level, which represents certain degree of economic development level of particular region. This synthetic indicator expresses multiplication of number of jobs in the districts and average wages of employees recalculated to population level.

EAO Number of economically active inhabitants in the district

Data on number of econnomically active inhabitants (15-64 years of age) are available on web pages of CSO to 1st March 2001.

NEZ Number of unemployed inhabitants in the district. Data on number of unemployed women and men (15-64 years of age) during 2007-2010 are available on web pages of MLSA and are calculated by arithmetic mean from individual quarters.

VYJ Number of inhabitants leaving for work outside the district

DOJ Number of persons heading to the district for work. Data on number of leaving and heading persons for work to/outside the district are available on web pages of CSO in publication „Census of population, houses and flats to 1st March 2001 – Basic data on districts and counties". It covers all persons with permanent or long-term domicile in the Czech Republic to the census decisive date regardless whether they were present / absent in the place of their permanent or long-term domicile to the census decisive date.

PRUMZDA Average wage in particular district. Data on average monthly wages acc. to districts for 2001 are available in web pages of CSO and relate to subjects based on particular territory, without business subject up to 20 employees, and are calculated as persons recalculated to full time employed persons.

POR_o covers number of born children in particular district during 2007 – 2009. When we define the employment rate as number of employed persons from 15 to 64 years of age related to population in this age category, then the birth rate development affects the employment factor, too (applicable to women). Data on number of children born in particular district for 2007, 2008 and 2009 are available on web pages of CSO and relate to all mothers with permanent domicile in the district regardless nationality. From 2001 (based on census of population, houses and flats in 2001) the data covers also foreigners with visa over 90 days (in compliance with act no. 326/1999 Coll. on stay of foreigners), as

well as foreigners with granted asylum (in compliance with act no. 325/1999 Coll. on asylum). From 1st May 2004 based on so-called Euro-amendment of act no. 326/1999 Coll. on stay of foreigners, the data related to citizens from EU countries with temporary domicile on the CR territory and citizens of the third countries with long-term domicile. The data cover also inhabitants with permanent domicile on the CR territory born abroad.

$$PORo = \frac{\sum_{i=2007}^{2009}(Number\ of\ born\ children)i}{\sum_{i=04}(Number\ of\ Economically\ active\ women\ in\ 2009)}$$

u means non-explicable variables and also measuring error.

By means of the model, the effect of realisation of the projects in partnership to total employment in the CR districts was not statistically significant.

Situation in projects

The questionnaire survey and structured interviews with the beneficiaries show obvious relation. When the partnership solves explicit task (target group´s problem). In such cases the partners were ready to accept also the co-financing at level 20 %. Usually they co-finance the project, though unofficially, either in form of non-eligible expenditures, or opportunity costs[43].

In this regard the partnership may play very important role. Number of non-state non-profit organisation would secure the financing either from private companies, or from municipalities by means of joint realisation of projects - in partnership.

We are aware of the fact that capacities of NGOs are limited from long-term point of view (e.g. Rose-Ackerman, 2007, or Vajdová 2005, p. 35). Sections on financial viability of NGOs in USAID reports (2008, 2009) show worsening of NGOs situation in the Czech Republic from 2004. It is predetermined particularly by the fact that NGO's rely on ESF and its 100% financing (see also RVNNO 2008, RVNNO 2009a). It is convenient, but dangerous approach for the NGO's themselves. They get to long-term financial dependence on the state, or public sector, and mostly it is dependence not only financial, but also dependence of ideas (e.g. see also Frič, Kuchař, Krbec 2007, p. 13).

In the Czech Republic many effort activities we realised to teach the non-profit organisations to search the sources not only from the state. In spite of this the decreased capability of the Czech non-profit organisations to search sources outside the public sector it is obvious upon accession of CR to EU (acc. to USAID 2009, more than 80 % of the Czech non-profit organisations depend only on one or two financial sources). Acc. to Edward (2008), the Czech non-profit organisations get 55 % of their income from governmental grants (however the author did not include the structural funds themselves).

Eventual co-financing must be seen mainly as positive and incentive (not restrictive) tool. The project application assessment project could consider also the co-financing level. E.g. Programme for Rural

[43] E.g. by payment of interests from loans taken for advance payments of project realisation; project is realised in areas, which could be othervise commercially hired for higher rent etc.

Development assigns points for the co-financing level. This criterion would be classified by certain number of points, while it would not be liquidating for financially weaker applicants.

The non-profit organisations should have possibility to fully pay the co-financing by in-kind contribution and by means of non-eligible expenditures directly arisen from the project realisation.

In this regard the RVNNO (2008b) states that: „Main goal from the CR government point of view is supporting of multi-source financing of the non-profit sector and development also other financing forms and thus decreasing of dependence of the non-profit sector on the state. Simultaneously it is necessary to revise all used tools of direct support of the non-profit sector on basis of elaborated analysis of the sector policies.“[44] (RVNNO, 2008b, p. 16).

4.5.2 Summary of Conclusions

Impacts of projects realised in partnership and their sustainability may be increased by such method that the beneficiaries of the assistance will ensure part of the project means from other sources outside the OP HRE. This will increase their engagement and effort to actually achieve the planned impacts. At the project level the steps will lead to increase of potential impacts. On the other hand, it is necessary to notify the risk related with this step in relation to the partnership at the programme level. It is highly probable that representatives of NGOs and other actors will stand against this step.

The results showed that both partnership and non-partnership projects feature similar effect to the OP HRE impacts. More detailed results of the analysis can be provided after some time, when other projects within the OP HRE will be completed.

Recommendations:

- We recommend implementation of co-financing for all beneficiaries of the assistance. This recommendation does not apply to activities of the PO5 type, where the foreign partners already provide certain type of co-financing by the fact that they have no share on the project budget.
- We recommend addition of a criterion into the project application assessment system, which would advantage projects non-applying for 100% financing. We propose 5 points per cent for 5% co-financing, and 15 point bonus for 10% co-financing level.

4.6 Contribution of partnership to effectiveness of horizontal themes (2.6)

Cross-sectional themes occur in all programmes. In OP HRE the applicants also comments on the themes, but they are not penalized nor awarded with points for the themes.

Main solved evaluation question is as follows: To what extent does the partnership principle strengthen and supplement the effectiveness of horizontal themes (equal opportunities, incl. gender equality and sustainable development)?

Survey between applicants for aid from ESF documented that equal opportunities are perceived more intensively as important in projects realised in partnership. The survey was realised cross the

[44] Assessment of Concept for Non-Profit Sector Development Support was approved by Government of the Czech Republic as its resolution no. 5/2009 from 5th January 2009.

priority axes to clear away the differences determined by diction of the calls for proposals. Additionally, the model of effect of partnership to unemployment of women in the CR districts was tested. However this effect did not prove to be statistically significant. The results showed that both partnership and non-partnership OP HRE projects feature similar effect to employment of women. More detailed results of the analysis can be provided after some time, when other projects within the OP HRE will be completed and more exact data from SLBD 2011 will be available.

4.6.1 Data Processing Method and Commented Results

Perception of equal opportunities by applicants

Clear majority of respondents from the questionnaire survey considers equal opportunities of men and women as important (84 % respondents from projects without partnership and 94.9 % respondents from project with partnership).[45] However, strong bias may be expected at this answer. The respondents know that it is one of the areas focused by the OP HRE and they entered the information into the project application. Therefore we have focused to comparison of answers of applicants with partnership and without partnership. Information stated above shows that the projects with partnership consider the equal opportunities as more important (this comparison should not be affected by bias of the answers in relation to concept with importance of the equal opportunities).

„Inverse“ question to the above stated one was question, whether the equal opportunities are only formal requisite of OP HRE. Conversely, here rather low consent level with the question could be expected. It was confirmed, nevertheless again there were differences between respondents from project with partnership (7.5 % respondents did not agree) and respondents without partnership (13.5 %).

Similar procedure was taken in question, whether the respondents consider the discrimination of women for theme, which too much attention is paid to. Again, the answers show different perception in projects with partnership (21.8 % respondents consider the theme for over-emphasised) and without partnership (34 %)

When the project was not primary focused to equal opportunities, respondents from projects with partnership more often responded that this matter is by certain manner solved in their projects. Particularly, it is answer of 20.2 % respondents without partnership as compared to 29.7 % respondents of projects with partnership.

These results show that existence of the partnership contributes to better perception of the issue of equal opportunities. Even if we have supposed that the answers have been correlated by the fact, that respondents preparing the projects in partnership feature positive attitude to the equal opportunities, they at least transmit this issue to their project partners.

[45] More details on this survey see in Technical Annex.

Test of effect of OP HRE projects with partnership to employment of women

Calculation of contribution of the partnership principle to equality of opportunities was tested by regressive analysis on similar basis as in case of evaluation question related to total impacts of the partnership principle at the project level (2.5).

$$\Delta ZAMzo = \alpha_0 + \alpha_{1*}PARo + \alpha_{2*}EA_{2007o} + \alpha_{3*}PORo + u \text{ , where}$$

particular input data were defined by the same manner as in the test of impacts of the partnership principle within whole OP HRE. The difference is that variables related to total employment were replaced by variables related to employment of women.

Variables related to partnership, economic aggregate were used by the same manner as in assessment of the partnership impacts within whole OP HRE.

The results of the analysis did not prove statistical influence of projects realised in partnership too employment of women in districts of the Czech Republic.

4.6.2 Summary of Conclusions

Questionnaire survey and structured interviews among the OP HRE applicants showed that the partnership principle contributes to increased perception of the equal opportunity issue between the project partners. The conclusion is stated even with consideration to fact that the problem of equal opportunities and sustainable development is generally solved very poorly in the OP HRE projects (usually only formally and due to the fact that the application includes items related to the issue).

Statistical tests did not proved different effect of projects realised in partnership to changed employment of women. The results showed that both partnership and non-partnership projects feature similar effect to the OP HRE impacts. More detailed results of the analysis can be provided after some time, when other projects within the OP HRE will be completed.

4.7 Partnership and Innovations (2.7)

Analyses performed within this question showed that the partnership principle features no effect to the innovation principle, i.e. project innovation is not dependent on number of project partners and thus it is determined by other factors.

Main solved evaluation question is as follows: To what extent does the partnership principle strengthen and supplement effectiveness of the innovation principle?

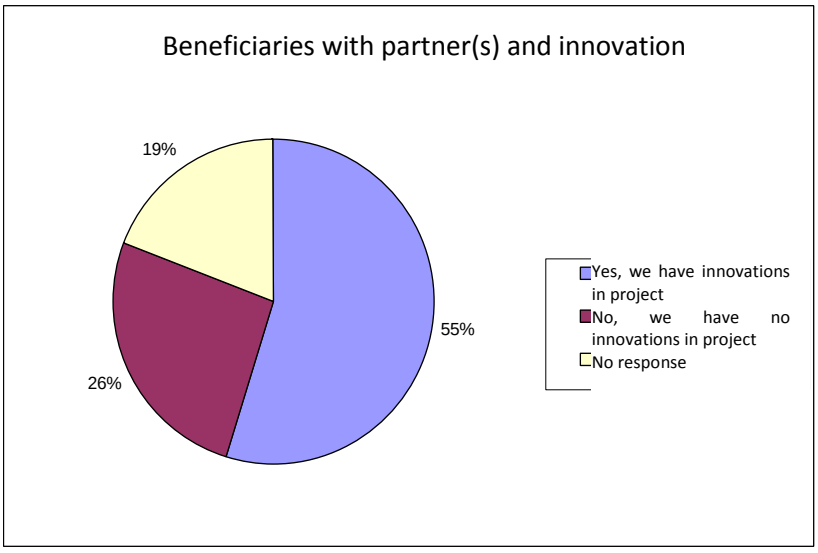
4.7.1 Data Processing Method and Commented Results

Analysis of the question was based on data from questionnaire survey, as well as from the Monit 7+ system (data on number of partners and innovations). Regarding the fact that the ToR requires

verification of implementation of the partnership principle in OP HRE, only project realised within OP HRE were selected from the questionnaire survey, not project from other operation programmes. Additionally, structured interviews with the beneficiaries were used for the qualitative analysis.

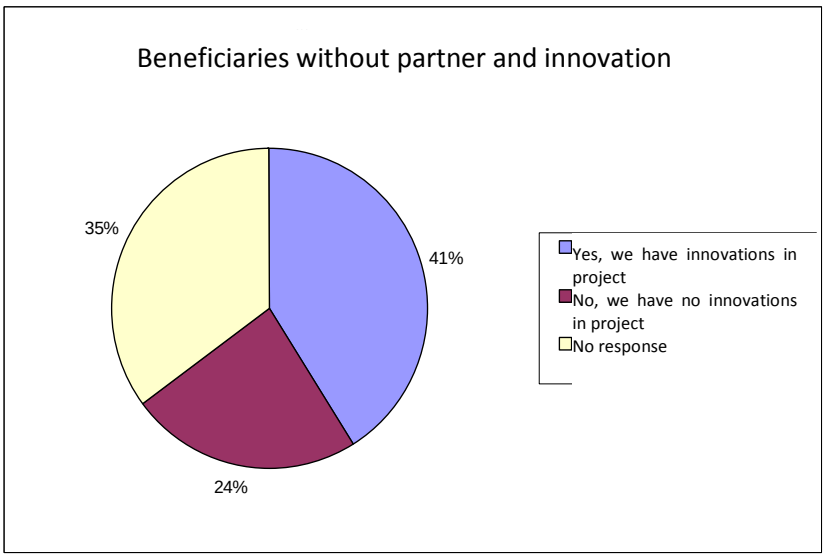
Data from questionnaire survey were sorted to projects without partner and to projects with one or more partners. Following graphs show project innovations in projects with partner (partners) and without partner (partners). It is clear from these simple graphs that existence or non-existence of the innovations is roughly the same regardless to the fact, whether the projects are realised with partner partners) or without partner (partners).

Graph 20: Recipients with partner (partners) and innovations



Source: Questionnaire survey IREAS, data from 26th November 2010

Graph 21: Recipients without partner and innovation



Source: Questionnaire survey IREAS, data from 26th November 2010

Further analysis used again the data from questionnaire survey and data on partnership and innovations, which are compiled into contingency table.

Table 56: Contingency table - Sorting of innovation products acc. to partnership

Partner/Innovations	Our project included innovations	Our project did not include innovations	Total
We did not have a partner	6	4	**10**
We had a partner	23	11	**34**
Total	**29**	**15**	**44**

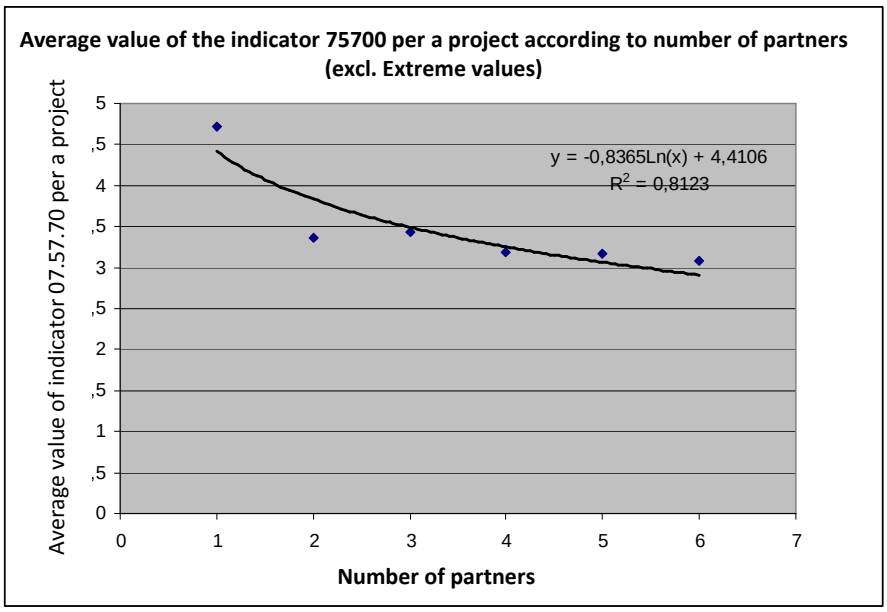
Source: Questionnaire survey IREAS, data from 26th November 2010

Regarding acquired statistical values it may be stated that the innovations are independent to the partnership.

The same results are achieved on basis of data from Monit 7+ system, where we have gained the data on innovations, or on monitoring indicator 07.57.70 Number of new developed/ innovated products (due to small amount of completed and realised projects we have used planned, not actually achieved value of monitoring indicator). All projects gaining the public aid (this excluded projects, which did not match the conditions needed for obtaining the public aid for any reason) were selected for the analysis.

Average value of monitoring indicator 07.57.70S slightly decreases with increased number of partners in the project. It is also clear from following graph, in which we excluded extreme values, i.e. projects with number of partners exceeding 5 – such projects are less frequent within whole set and they distort the total result.

Graph 22: Average value of monitoring indicator 07.57.70 per project acc. to number of partners (extreme values excluded)



Source: Own data on basis of data from Monit 7+ system; data from 23rd August 2010

Also these data from Monit 7+ show the same results as in case of questionnaire survey - the partnership has no significant effect to innovations. The data from Monit 7+ exhibit decreased average value of indicator 07.75.70 with increased number of partners (maximum average values achieved in projects without any partner), but the differences are not significant.

Tests among the beneficiaries showed that the innovations most often took the form of implementation of new or innovation processes in production or provision of services (12 respondents out of 42) and implementation of new methods of company process organisation and cooperation with companies and public institutions (19 respondents). 17 respondents released new or innovated products to the market, 3 respondents implemented new sales and marketing channels.

24 respondents answered to question „How do you assess the success of innovations?“, and they could select from five options (multiple choice question). 22 respondents stated that innovations helped to improve the situation of target group, according to 6 respondents the innovations helped to improve competitiveness, 1 respondent stated that innovations feature neutral effect to target group and 2 respondents stated the innovations feature neutral effect to competitiveness. Regarding the territorial impacts, 19 respondents (out of 37) stated that the innovations had an impact on the Czech market, acc. to 2 respondents they had impact also on the European market, and 16 respondents stated that the innovations have no impact to the market.

4.7.2 Summary of Conclusions

No used method or data set proved relation between the partnership principle and the innovation principle. On basis of our findings it may be state that there is no such relation and therefore no recommendation can be formulated to this relation. During structured interviews there occurred only one case, when the innovation could not probably be realised without the partner. It is project in South Moravian County, which cover innovation in form of complexity and systematic solving of problems of exempted Roma localities. The innovation could not function without a partner in form of municipality, which implements the project results into its action plans. In the other cases the respondents admit that they could be able to realise the innovation (as well as the whole project) even by themselves, without any partner.

Nevertheless it must be stated that during the structured interviews we have often encountered certain helplessness related to innovations and monitoring indicator 07.57.70 Number of new developed / innovated products. Additionally, it is related to wide range of answers and concept of innovation principle - some respondents developed real innovation in the project, i.e. service/product, which did not exist so-far, and vice versa large number of respondents identified for innovation a product/service, which is common on the market, but it is not used in particular company - it is often the case of educational courses etc.

Term innovation is misleading in this aspect – these are rather „pseudo-innovations“, however they may be also assessed positively, as they affect e.g. the company competitiveness.

5 Institutional, legal and financial frame of the partnership principle

Whole following task is focused to analysis, comparison and evaluation of institutional, legal and financial frame of the partnership principle functions in praxis in the Czech Republic and in selected EU member states.

Regarding the fact that it is assessment of legislative and institutional frame, the partnership principle will be views even beyond the OP HRE range. Not only the partnership, but also the participation view generally will be applied.

Proper and strong partnership significantly increases effectiveness and total success of the EU cohesiveness policy. Partnerships is tool of sustainable, economic and social development: due to this the EU funds are more sensitive to needs of subjects at the lowest level; the partnership increases visibility of EU and strengthens democracy. Successful partnership shall be based on long-term perspective of actual participation and provide equal opportunities with view to enable to private partners playing the active role alongside the public bodies.

The experience from other new member states encountering similar historic experience and problems are interesting for the Czech Republic, too. Particularly NGOs, which represent civil society in participation, are active in partnership and participation.

Non-profit organisation in Central Europe, in the Czech Republic, in Slovakia, in Poland and in Hungary have long-term experience in drawing of financial means from the EU funds (pre-accession aid from nineties, period 2004 - 2006). Many of them gained professional experience in realisation of European projects, and particularly due to European Social Fund they obtained professional management and teams, implemented innovation procedures and developed their activity. The non-profit organisations in Bulgaria and Romania gained experience at least from use of pre-accession aid funds.

5.1 Legal, institutional and financial regulations of partnership (3.1)

Firstly, a list of relevant legal norms and rules related to the partnership principle shall be compiled for analysis of the partnership principle uses within and beyond the ESF frame.

Main solved evaluation question is as follows: Which legal, institutional and financial regulations and rules are applicable for the partnership institute in the Czech Republic and in selected EU states?

Answer is list of regulations, which is stated in the Technical Annex.

5.1.1 European Partnership Frame

Partnership as one of basic principles was implemented into the cohesion policy in 1988 as basic principle of EU structural policy implementation (SEA, 1987). The principle formed requirement that the member states should create partnership in each supported region and it should supervise the

governance related to drawing of financial mean. In time the requirement become more particular to ensure not only representatives from public sector from various regional levels, but also representatives from non-public sector (Bache, 2000). Acc. to Bache (2010) the partnerships was initially implemented as technical tool with view to improve decision making effectiveness and increase purposefulness of policies, however in course of time it developed in political tool with very different impacts in relation to context.

Initially the partnership was thus perceived as multi-level governance covering interested actors at all territorial and sector levels.

The partnership as key principle of cohesion policy is preserved and is applicable also in programme period 2007 – 2013, even after revision of the cohesion policy. Bache (2007) quotes one of European Commission officials: „Some of these local projects are very important, but in relation to creation of permanently sustainable jobs and the region economical development their benefit probably cannot be simply described.“ During discussions there were concerns that the initiatives „from bottom level“ could be outbalanced by national projects controlled „from upper level“. Partnership in cohesion policy was matched to Lisboa and Gothenburg agenda and governance in partnership with engagement of all relevant partners in region is considered as valuable as financial benefit (Hübner, 2004).

The partnership principle gave rise also to support of „local development“, which was particularly important in the Community Initiatives (Urban, Leader) and which was supported in several member states also within the Objective 1 and 2. This „from bottom level“ approach put particularly local inhabitants and non-profit / community organisation into centre of decision-making. In the local partnership support projects the partnership is not a principle, but a „method“ (Bache, 2010).

4th Report on Economic and Social Cohesion states that the partnership principle is basic principle supporting all aspects of Cohesion Policy. It concludes that tha partnersip principle was adopted as key element of „good governance“ of open public administration and that the multi-level governance system based on strategic planning and covering EC, national, regional, and local public administration and interested partners ensures better matching of the realised projects with local needs. However the conclusions are not supported with any statistical data.

Initially the partnership focused only to traditional economic and social actors. Now, „all other suitable subjects representing civil society, partners in the environment protection area, non-governmental organisation and subjects engaged in enforcement of equality of men and women“ form integral part of it. This development reflects the EU strategic objective in form of proper administration, which was recently re-affirmed by the Europe 2020 outlook.

Examples of legislative regulations abroad: Local strategic partnerships in Great Britain

In 1947, the „Town and Country Planning Act 1947, 10 & 11 Geo. 6. Ch. 51, HMSO“ was adopted and opened potential of participation of inhabitants on planning.

In 1969, the „Skeffington Report“, *People and Planning, was issued, the report determines principle of engagement of public into the decision-making processes.*

Unlike many other EU states, the partnership concept was no news in Great Britain in 1988. Cabinet of M. Thatcher implemented the partnership principle in eighties for the regeneration policy of urban centres. The partnership approach was financially supported and served particularly to strengthening of role of private sector and weakening of role of local authorities. However this concept was different from the concept proposed later by European Commission.

Before 1988, the implementation of structural funds in Great Britain was managed only centrally - lower levels could consult, but priorities were set by central government. Situation changed in middle of nineties. The partnerships were established at the level of supported regions. However their composition were very subtle limited particularly to government officials and representatives of local public administration. Trade Unions were explicitly excluded from the partnership. Government policy persisted that the local public administration shall be represented by officials, not by politicians.

However in Britain there were positive examples, too, particularly partnerships in West Scotland, where the central government did not intervene into the implementation as else-where. Characteristic feature was that the administration of structural funds was in 1989 taken-over by „independent secretariat“, whose employees and sponsors were a number of partners rather than the „Scottish Office“ itself. By 1997 it was the only example of region in the Great Britain, which operated in such manner. In 1997, similar arrangement was implemented in Southern Wales.

In 1998, the Great Britain ratified the Aarhus Convention. In 2000, the Local Government Act 2000 (para 4 (1), www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/ acts2000/ukpga_20000022_en_1) was adopted, which clearly says that the local administration shall prepare a strategy (community strategy) supporting the life quality improvement in economic, social and environmental area and contributing to achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom. This put legislative basis for creation of local strategic partnerships.

In 2007, the Sustainable Communities Act 2007, which emphasised requirement of sustainability and participation, was adopted.

In 2004, the government adopted resolution as follows: „Strengthening of community engagement is crucial to government planning reforms“.

In 2005, the Planning Policy Statement No 1: Delivering Sustainable Development was issued by Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, where the role of community and sustainability is again emphasised.

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 established an obligation for local administration to involve representatives of community into each activity, if it is relevant. (www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2007/ukpga_20070028_en_14).

Present approach of the government is summarized in White Book „Communities in control: real people, real power“, which focuses to strengthening of community and local democracy by increased involvement of public into the decision making processes.

Specifics of Central and Eastern European Countries

Although the partnership principles have been enforced in the structural policy and in the cohesion policy since end of nineties, this principle is still new in the Central and Eastern European countries. The partnership application started at first in projects financed from pre-accession EU funds, particularly from the Phare and Sapard funds, almost 15 years after 15 EU original member countries.

But the preparation of strategic development documents for implementation of the cohesion policy considered the partnership principle for the first time only in preparation for period 2000 - 2006. Strategic development documents resulting from partnership of multiply sectors were at that time brand new approach to the development planning in the Central and Eastern European countries.

In the programme period 2004 - 2006, the partnership principle was enforced in the Central and Eastern European countries subsequently also during the project realisation. E.g. the projects with participation of more partners were preferred in assessment. It was period, when the partners had to learn to jointly solve the tasks resulted from the projects, to mutually communicate and relay on each other, in addition to completely new obtained skills of the project management and monitoring.

Actual legislative frame in EU

Requirement for partnership applying results from several sources (e.g. art 11 of the Directive No. 1083/2006 on structural funds). One of the sources is reform of European administration, which is priority of European Commission. The European Commission obligated EU (EC Regulation No. 1081/2006) to closer cooperation with regional and local administration bodies, and in addition with wider civil society. This cooperation should not be unilateral and should not be grounded on the matter that the participated parties would make contacts only with view to realisation of European policies, on which the decisions were already made.

Article 11 of General Regulation is key to determination of scope and implementation of the partnership principle. The member states shall involve relevant partners into the programme individual stages. Additionally, they shall appoint most representative partners at national, regional and local level in economic, environmental and other sectors „in compliance with national rules and procedures“. Annually the Commission consults organisations representing economical and social partners at the European level.

The regulation establishes „global grants“; administration of these financial means may be assigned only to intermediate bodies, incl. regional development bodies and non-governmental organisation (article 42).

Technical assistance measures can be focused to all partners, recipients of aid from funds and general public. The measures include dissemination of information, networking, raise awareness, promote cooperation and exchange experiences (art. 45–46).

Article 163 of Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and article 104 of above-specified Council Regulation appropriate special task to social partners within the European Social Fund (ESF).

On the ESF administration the Commission is supported by committee composed from representatives of government, trade unions and employer organisations.

Regarding the ESF, the partnership is detailed in the Regulation No. 1081/2006/EC.

Good governance, partnership, capacity-building and experiences from EQUAL programme are particularly mentioned and their assistance should be realised by involvement of social partners and other participated parties.

ESF should support partnerships, pacts and initiatives by networking of relevant bodies, such as social partners and non-governmental organisations at the level of member states, and regional, local and supra-national level (art. 3 par. 1 item e)). It should be supported by capacity-building (art. 3 par. 2 item b)).

ESF has particular objective laying in strengthening of social partners and social dialogue in regions eligible within the convergence objective. Particularly non-governmental organisations should play active role in programmes for support of social inclusion, gender equality, and equal opportunities (article 5).

Particular attention should be paid to innovation activities within the partnership context (article 7).

Contrary to Regulation on ESF or EAFRDthe EC Regulation No. 1080/2006/EC on European fund for regional development (EFRD) does not include any particular provisions on partnership. Thus the EFRD should be re-focused to small enterprises, innovations and local development by means of tools, which prefer the partnership (such as target measures, global grants).

5.1.2 Legal frame of partnership in CR

On analysis of the legal environment we have often encounter the fact that the Czech Republic legal order does not include any definition of partnership nor specific enactment of this institute. Nevertheless the application of the partnership principle is not excluded and in sporadic cases it is even required.

Crucial legal norms regulating the legal environment are constitutional Act No. 1/1993 Coll. - Constitution (art. 4), than Act No. 40/1964 Coll. Civil Code (§839 – Association Agreement), further Act No. 218/2000 Coll., in budget rules (financing of partnership §7), Act No. 250/2000 Coll., on territorial budget rules (financing of partnership §9 and §10), and Act No. 137/2006 Coll., on public orders (financing of partnership §2). As stated above, the norms do not include any specific legal definition of the partnership institute. Their task is creation of conditions to allow the functioning of the partnership.

5.1.2.1 Responses to evaluation questions

Analysis of above-stated question concluded that the question includes multiply examination subject, i.e. legislative regulations and rules, as well as institutional regulations and rules, and financial regulations and rules.

We derive from the grammatical interpretation, that the legislative regulations represent norms (normative legal acts) regardless their legal effect, if they are of the generally binding nature. Thus they are following types of legal norms:

- Primary legal regulations (statutory) - constitutional acts, laws, statutory measures of the Senate acc. to art. 33 of the CR Constitution
- Secondary legal regulations (sub-statutory) - directives of government, decrees of ministries and other administration bodies, regulations issued by the regional authorities.

We conceive the term of institutional regulations and rules in compliance with general understanding as the EU institutional law. It is set of regulations of EU primary and secondary law regulating institutional development of EU, i.e. set of EC institutions and other bodies, their composition, authorities, decision making procedures, form of decisions (acts). Into the ES institutional law, we have included also regulations controlling creation of ES law, its application and enforcing.

We understood financial regulations and rules as legal regulations (see above) in the branch of financial law.

If we outline the relation between the firs and third examination subject as the relation between general and particular, it may be said that the third examination subject is covered by the first subject. The order, analysis objectives or content do not imply that there is any reason to separate examination of general and particular issue, thus we may assess the third examination subject within the firs examination subject, i.e. within legal regulations of all legal areas.

The above stated implies that in relation to the examination subject the research question may be divided to two partial questions:

1. Which legal regulations define and control the partnership institute in CR?
2. Which EU primary and secondary regulations define and control the partnership institute?

Upon consultation with the client of the analysis it was specified that the second partial question will be processed separately. Thus this analysis will be engaged only in legal implementation of the partnership institute in legal regulations of CR.

5.1.2.2 Specifics of data / information acquisition

Data for legal analysis was searched from below stated formal sources of the law. Applicability and effectiveness was verified for all monitored norms.

Data source for legal analysis:

1. Statutory legal regulations, Source: CR Collecting of Laws (available online: http: http://aplikace.mvcr.cz/sbirka-zakonu/)
2. Sub-statutory legal regulations.
   Source: CR Collecting of Laws (available online: http: http://aplikace.mvcr.cz/sbirka-zakonu/)
   Journals of Counties (available online: http://portal.gov.cz/wps/portal/_s.155/6966/_s.155/704)
3. Government Decisions. Source: Government Decisions (available online: http://kormoran.vlada.cz/usneseni/usneseni_webtest.nsf/web/cs?Open&2010)
4. Statements, legal studies, analyses. Source: MLSA ČR, MF ČR, Office for Protection of Competition

5.1.3 Definition of Partnership

Definition of the partnership is crucial for this analysis, as it determines examination area.

Client presumes that the partnership is generally used term with contextually stabilized content. In this case the term content is not results of the analysis, but its basis.

Content analysis of this term in legal regulations did not result in corresponding legal definition. Closest term category was achieved by the term of registered partnership acc. to art. 1, par. 1 of the Act No. 115/2006 Coll. on registered partnership, which defines permanent companion of two persons of the same gender. However it is not definition relevant for purpose of analysis of the partnership principle.

Further examination however requires creation of working definition of the partnership without legal support and with regard to already performed analyses and researches. Significant role was taken by study of Sociology Institute of Science Academy named Participation and Partnership in local public administration.

This study shows that on analysis of terms used in the Czech language the partnership term is characterized by three topic areas:

- Participation, attendance (as synonym),
- Cooperation, partnership PPP (Public Private Partnership),
- Social capital, social coherence, social cohesion (as synonym), confidence,

Within studies related to the public administration and governance, the term of partnership is significantly less frequent than participation, buts its limitation is rather more difficult. Two main approaches to its defining may be encountered. First approach is based on concept of political participation as various intensity scale of actual influence to administration of public matters [Arnstein 1969]. Partnership is defined as highest, or at leas one of highest levels of the participation, situation, when participating inhabitants become equal partners for administrative and municipal authorities in preparation and implementation of public policies. At this level of participation there occurs „actual re-distribution of power in the process of negotiation between citizens and power holders“ [Arnstein 1969].

Second approach perceives the partnership as creation of less or more formalised bodies engaged in the public administration, which consist from representatives of various sectors. De Rynck [2003: 77] thus includes into the partnership concept „range of processes and phenomena occurring between organisations, starting from simple and ad hoc consultations, through traditional neocorporation cooperation, up to long-term and stabile exchange of inter-organisational sources in proven and structured organisation“. Thus the partner bodies extends the range of direct actors of the public administration by representatives, who have no electoral mandate, but significantly engage in areas related to the public policy. The established partner bodies usually include also the civil sector representatives. Typical partner bodies at the local level include Local Action Groups (MAS) composed from representatives from public authorities, business subjects and civil sector.

Specific concept of the partnership is institute of Public Private Partnership (PPP). Simple meaning of the term as partnership between the public and private sector is rather misleading in this case, as the

PPP principles relate exclusively to cooperation at the economic level. Public administration uses private capital for ensuring of services, for which it is responsible, and by such manner making profit to the capital holder. Involvement of the private capital into provision of public services is advantageous in moment, when the immediate costs for provision of service exceed financial potential of public administration. But as Potluka [2005] shows, transfer of the service from monopoly public sector to competing environment may result in substantial decrease of costs for provision of the service. Thus the PPP in certain manner extends the range of public administration actors, however not at level of the policy planning and decision making, but rather at the implementation level.

The above-stated show that the partnership term has no clearly understood content and the most suitable items had to be selected from the available approaches to fulfil the objective of the analysis.

The definition is based on guide for recipients of financial aid from OP HRE, version 1.4 (p. 40) and on guide for recipients of financial aid from OP EC, version 4 (p. 25). Then the definition was consulted with representatives of Client on 10th November 2010, who answered 5 additional questions. Thus for the purposes of the analysis the partnership is defined as follows:

Partnership is relation between two or more subjects, both public, and private ones, which is based on cooperation of the subjects in preparation and subsequent realisation of the project and/or plan. Content of cooperation of the partners is joint development, coordination, organisation, control, monitoring and assessment of the plan and/or project. The partnership is based on shared responsibility and on democratic principles of the decision making during development and control/management of the project. Share of partners on the joint plan and/or project need not be equal. Participation of the partners shall be justified and un-substitutable. Their benefit for creation and/or realisation of the project shall be based on ensuring of activities, which non-realisation would prevent achievement of the objectives, and additionally the objectives cannot be achieved by single subject by means of own sources and efforts.

5.1.4 Legislative definition of partnership institute

5.1.4.1 Partnership of Municipalities

European Charter of Local Self-Government ratified by CR in 1999 declares in art. 10 the right of local authorities shall be entitled, in exercising their powers, to co-operate and, within the framework of the law, to form consortia with other local authorities in order to carry out tasks of common interest. The state is obliged to acknowledge the right of local authorities to cooperate with their counterparts in other states and to be member of international associations of local authorities. This right of municipalities is reflected and specified in our Act No. 128/2000 Coll. on municipalities (municipal arrangement) in head II, part 3 Cooperation between municipalities (§. 46–54), and part 4 Cooperation with municipalities of other states (§. 55).

The Act specifies that municipalities at execution of their separate competency may mutually cooperate. The Act does not define methods of the cooperation, however it states following forms of particular execution of the cooperation:

- Cooperation on basis of agreement concluded between the municipalities to perform particular task,
- Cooperation on basis of agreement on creation of voluntary alliance of municipalities,
- Cooperation originating from establishment of legal person by two or more municipalities acc. to Commercial Code (Act No. 513/1991 Coll.).

In all three cases the cooperation is fully in authority of the municipalities and shall be approved by their municipal councils.

5.1.4.2 Partnership of schools and educational institutes

On searching legal definition of the partnership and in addition to Act on municipalities we have encountered the legal enactment of partnership adopted in 2009 in the Act on schools[46]. This legal enactment responds to regulation of partnership for purposes of drawing of subsidies from financial means of European Union.

Legal person executing the activities of school or educational facility, which is willing to realise a project financed from means of the European Union, the subject of which support of quality, development and/or availability of education and school services, may conclude agreements on partnership with the other legal persons executing activities of school or educational facility and with other persons authorised for execution of activities related to the project subject.

Although it is very single-purpose legal regulation, the specification of responsibility of partners for result of the project is very important, as well as obligation of the partners to specify in the partner agreement the content and scope of activities and amount for financial means, which will be invested by a partner to the project.

5.1.4.3 Cooperation acc. to act on social services

The Act No. 108/2006 Coll. on social services cannot be omitted, as it entails the counties with obligation to create middle-term development plans of social services in cooperation with municipalities on the county territory, with representatives of providers of social services and with representatives of persons, to whom the social services are provided, and to notify the municipalities on the county territory on results find out within the planning process[47].

Restrainedly it may be said that above-specified definition is an example of good definition of partnership. This completes the regulation of relations between partners. Charging of partnership, as well as definition of mutual relations between the partners, remain non-regulated. Risk of the legal regulation lays in the fact that responsibility for results lay only on one of the subjects (county) and this substantially discriminates the partnership principle.

Execution of community planning of social services (KPSS) by the partnership methodology is not explicitly specified by the law. It is recommended methodology of MLSA for ensuring and coordinating of provision of social services, incl. general availability of information on potential and

[46] §32a of Act No. 561/2004 Coll. on pre-school, primary, intermediate, advanced vocational and other education.

[47] § 95, item d) of the Act No. 108/2006 Coll. on social services

methods of use of such services on specified territory of municipalities, acc. to Act No. 108/2008 Coll. on social services.

In 2008, MLSA realised an order „Ensuring of local and type availability of social services", within which the KPSS methodologies were developed.

The community planning of social services is implicitly based on partnership (see Methodologies for planning of social services, MLSA, 2009):

„Values intercepted in principles distinguish the community planning method from other planning procedures. Newly it implements following items into the social service planning area:

- Emphasis to active role of users of the social services and representation of their interests within the planning process,
- Involving of wide range of peoples and co-workers into creative work,
- Repeated verification of conclusions with wishes of people,
- Emphasis to negotiation and authorisation of public to check the decision-making process and realisation.

„Trade principle: Minimum three parties mutually plan and cooperate within the community planning method:

- Users of social services,
- Clients (municipals, county)
- Providers of social services."

Support of community planning of social services (KPSS) is not explicitly specified by the law. It is recommended methodology of MLSA for ensuring and coordinating of provision of social services, incl. general availability of information on potential and methods of use of such services on specified territory of municipalities, acc. to Act No. 108/2008 Coll. on social services.

5.1.4.4 Interest groups of legal persons

Legal persons may for protection of their interests create *interest groups of legal persons*[48]. This legal form differs from the associations of municipalities established acc. to Act on municipals in spite of the fact that only municipals may be members of such group. With regard to the fact that the interest group is legal person, this form does not comply with above-stated definition of partnership.

But the Civil Code enables other form of partnership, i.e. by so-called *agreement on partnership*[49]. It enables both to natural and legal persons to associate with view to common achievement of agreed purpose. Such originated association is not subject of law. § 830 specifies that each participant of the association is obliged to produce activities to achieve agreed purpose by manner specified in the agreement and to refrain from any activity, which could prevent and/or eliminate achieving of the purpose. If not specified otherwise in the agreement, the participants provides fulfilment at the same amount. Provided money or other items determined acc. to their type are co-property of all

[48] § 20 f – 20 j of the Act No. 40/1964 Coll. of Civil Code

[49] §829 j of the Act No. 40/1964 Coll. of Civil Code

participants. Assets gained during execution of common activities become co-property of all participants. The participants are obliged to fulfil the claims toward third persons jointly and severally.

If not specified otherwise in the agreement, the participants decide on acquisition of joind items by common consent.

Each participant is entitled to quit the group, however not in unsuitable time or to damage of another participants of the group. Based on serious reasons, any participant may quit the group at any time, even if the notice period was agreed upon. Based on serious reasons, participant may be disqualified from the group, however only by unanimous resolution of the other participants of the group, if not specified otherwise in the agreement.

This legal regulation is very crucial, as it enables to form the legal relations between partners and third persons and between the partners themselves.

5.1.4.5 Council of municipalities for sustainable development of territory

Council of municipalities for sustainable development of territory[50] may be another form of partnership. It is covered by the Act No. 183/2006 Coll. on territorial planning and building code and it enables participation of all affected municipalities for administrative district of municipal authority of municipality with extended competence.

The council is established by major of relevant municipality with extended competence with approval of municipalities within its administrative district - in each such municipality the approval must be expressed by resolution of the municipal council. The Council of municipalities for sustainable development of territory is formed by major of the municipality with extended competence, who is its chairman, and one representative from each municipality of the administrative district. The Council discusses both the territorial-analytical materials for the administrative district, and ‚assessments of impacts of the territory plans for sustainable development of the territory and issues its opition or statement to the builder.

5.1.4.6 Area of human resource development and partnership in CR

Human resource development strategy for the Czech Republic 2001 - 2004 (elaborated within Phare project in 2000 and adopted by resolution of the Government of the Czech Republic No. 210/2003, which also approves the Status of Government Council for Human Resource Development) specifies that „The county councils for human resource development composed from representatives of county self-administration and social partners must be established as one of the first steps. In addition to execution of functions of joint development and realisation of the human resource development strategies in regions, the councils should guarantee to the investors basic frame of social accord, cooperation in solving of conflicts and support in solution of crisis situations in the region, such as abrupt increase of unemployment or crucial deficiency of certain professions.“ RLZ Strategy for CR clearly encourages the development of system of strategic control of human resource development at the county level, similarly as at the national level. It should be an institutionalised

[50] § 9 of the Act No. 183/2006 Coll. on territorial planning

frame of the human resource development, which should engage and connect all significant institutions into the process of participation in the human resource development, such as county administration bodies, state administration bodies, incl. employment offices, trade unions, entrepreneur and employer organisations, schools and other educational institutions, important regional plants, advisory and consultation companies, non-profit organisations, foundations, civil associations and, last but not least, also representatives of clients of educational systems. **CR Strategy of Lifelong Learning** from 2007 underlines tendency of narrowing the perception of the human resource development. This shift is evoked by perception of education as best investment into human resources.

5.1.4.7 Public Private Partnership

Public **P**rivate **P**artnership identified generally as PPP, in large extent applied abroad, is rather new institution in our country, which is not yet properly regulated from the legal and methodology point of view. It lays in cooperation of public and private sector with view to use of sources and capabilities of private sector in ensuring of public infrastructure or public services. Institution of the public sector as „Client" and private sector organisation as „private partner" or „supplier" conclude long-term contract related to public services or public infrastructure. It is presumed that successful application of PPP will increase quality and effectiveness of the public services and accelerate realisation of infrastructure projects [PPP Centre 2004; Kramařík 2003].

The Government has adopted since 2004 several resolutions for implementation of PPP. Particularly important is mainly resolution of CR Government No. 7 from 7th January 2004 on Public Private Partnership in the Czech Republic. In this resolution the Government approved document Public Private Partnership Policy in the Czech Republic and adopted number of measures, which should create presumptions for application of this method.

Establishment and financing of PPP is regulated mainly in the Act No. 137/2006 Coll. on public contracts (it is applied particularly in selection of public administration partners), and in the Concession Act No. 139/2006 Coll. (regulation of relations between partners)

The definition of concession relation is of particular importance, the subject of which is obligation of the [51] concessionary to provide services or execute the work in exchange to take benefits resulting from providing of services or use of executed work, or additionally to provision of partial fulfilment in cash. Contrary to supplier relations, the partnership principle is strengthened by transfer of substantial part of risk related to taking of benefits resulting from provision of services or use of executed work to the concessionary.

Unfortunately, even the Concession Act does not presume conclusion of the concession contract with more subjects, so when the work and/or service is performed by several partners, the relations between the partners are considered for sub-contractor relations, and solely the concessionary is responsible for result. When more suppliers apply on the concession and the shares in the concession are equal, they usually establish separate legal subject (association of legal persons).

[51] §16 of the Act No. 139/2006 Coll. on concession contracts and concession proceedings

5.1.5 Legal regulation of partnership financing

5.1.5.1 Placing of Public contracts

It may be clearly said that legal regulation of placing of the public contracts, which is included in the Act No. 137/2006 Coll., on public contracts, forms one of most crucial impacts to legal regulation of partnership in environment of the Czech Republic.

The regulation covers an area of project financing by public subjects.

Rules for placing of public contracts apply to the partnership financing only upon fulfilment of conditions specified in this Act:

- It is public contract
- Contracting body of the procurement is exhaustively specified subject

'Public contract' shall be a contract for pecuniary interest concluded between the contracting entity and one or more economic operators, having as its subject-matter supply of products or the provision of services or the execution of public works. [52].

Acc. to this Act, the Submitter of the public procurement is:

- **The contracting authority** shall be the Czech Republic, a State allowance organisation, a territorial self-governing unit or an allowance organisation in respect of which such a erritorial selfgoverning unit exercises the function of the founder thereof, another legal person, provided that having an industrial or commercial character, and it is financed, for the most part, by the State or by another contracting authority, or is subject to the management supervision of the State or another contracting authority, or having an administrative, managerial or supervisory board, more than half of whose members are appointed or elected by the State or another contracting authority.[53].
- **Subsidised contracting entity** shall be understood as a legal or a natural person that awards a public contract, which is reimbursed by more than 50 % from financial means provided by the contracting authority, even through another person,[54,]
- **Sector contracting entity** shall be a person that pursues any of the relevant activities pursuant to § 4, if it pursues such a relevant activity on the basis of a special or exclusive right, or over which the contracting authority can exert a dominant influence, whether directly or indirectly. [55]

As stated above, partnership is not relation of provision of mutual services or deliveries between the partners, but joint preparation and realisation of the project. Thus the partnership nature implies that no public contracts are placed between partners. On the other hand, mutual payments may occur. For assessment of existence of the partnership the identification of payments between the recipient and its partner acc. to accounting regulations is not important, the important is actual content of mutual legal relations.

[52] § 7, par. 1 of the Act No. 137/2006 Coll. on public contracts
[53] § 2, par. 2 of the Act No. 137/2006 Coll. on public contracts
[54] § 2, par. 3 of the Act No. 137/2006 Coll. on public contracts
[55] § 2, par. 6 of the Act No. 137/2006 Coll. on public contracts

5.1.5.2 Subsidies from state budget and EU funds

Provision of subsidies from state budget is regulated by the Act No. 218/2000 Coll. on budget rules and on modification of certain related laws (Act on budget rules).

This legal regulation covers also provision of subsidies from EU funds.

Projects realised in partnership may be subsidized on basis of provisions of § 7, par. 1, item e), g), i). However in praxis the solving of partnership financing method from the state budget often encounters an obstacle that the subsidy may not be provided to two or more subject in one project on basis of single decision. This is the reason, why the partner projects are solved by means of single main applicant, which acts as the provider of a subsidy. Relations between the partners are then solved usually by separate agreement. This procedure enables to fulfil the requirement that the subsidy has specified recipient, both regarding the subject determination, and conditions of its drawing. On the other hand, this procedure accents the recipient of the subsidy and suppresses responsibility of partners, as the sanction impacts may affect the partners only implicitly and under condition the sanctions are included in the partner agreement. These reasons lead to the fact that the contractor-customer relations of realised subjects dominate over the partnership in projects financed from the state budget.

5.1.5.3 Subsidies from budgets of self-administration territory units

Regarding assessment of influence of legislative to partnership, crucial item is regulation of partnership financing from budget of municipalities and counties. This is covered in the Act No. 250/2000 Coll. on budget rules of local budgets.

The Act on budget rules enables provision of subsidies by the self-administration units. The subsidy means monetary expense of municipality or voluntary association of municipalities for support of subjects executing public useful activities and for support of private business beneficial for the municipality, and additionally the expenses to other expenses realised within the municipality competence, incl. donations and contributions to social or other humanitarian purposes[56].

Subsidies of counties are defined similarly, only supplemented by *subsidies to Regional Council of Cohesion Region*[57].

Thus the Act on budget rules creates space for financing of public useful projects. The Act does not specify recipient of the subsidy regarding the legal form, however the act diction does not imply possibility to provide subsidy for single project to more recipients. Due to this the financing of partner projects is solved in such manner that there is only single recipient of the subsidy with subsequent financial settlement between the partners. However this procedure must be explicitly enabled in terms of the subsidy drawing, as otherwise the subsidy recipient would violate the budget discipline.[58]

[56] §9, par. 1, item h) and i) of the Act No. 250/2000 Coll. on budget rules of local budgets.
[57] §10, par. 1, item i) to k) of the Act No. 250/2000 Coll. on budget rules of local budgets.
[58] §22 of the Act No. 250/2000 Coll. on budget rules of local budgets.

When the subsidy recipient is subsidized organisation established by provider of the subsidy, such subsidy couldn't be allocated between more partners, as § 28 of the Act No. 250/2000 Coll. does not anticipate, and thus does not enable such procedure.

5.1.6 Control of Partnership Financing

The control in this regard means only control of managing of association of municipalities, or recipient of the subsidy from the state budget or budget of local self-administration unit.

The control of managing is regulated by the Act No. 320/2001 Coll. on financial control in public administration and on modification of certain laws (Act on financial control) and by Decree No. 416/2004 Coll. implementing the Act No. 320/2001 Coll. on financial control in public administration and on modification of certain laws.

Control of managing with assets of the association of municipalities and with its financial means is executed by body authorised by Articles of the Association of Municipalities. Reports on results of the control are submitted by association of municipalities to representatives of member municipalities[59].

Another regulated area is control of management (drawing) of subsidy provided to project realised by form of partnership.

The act specifies scope of the control executed between the public administration bodies, between the public administration bodies and applicants and/or recipients of the public financial aid, and inside the public administration bodies. Regulation of the partnership principle is affected by financial control and by management control (preliminary, screening and subsequent) [60].

Preliminary control, which is performed before start of the project realisation, finds out readiness of the project and its objective is to identify and remove eventual faults yet before start of realisation.

5.1.7 Problems of binding of structural fund means to state budget

Contributions and subsidies provided in the Czech Republic from EU budget and accepted by the state organisation units within so-called National Fund become part of the state budget. Therefore provision of aid from the structural funds is regulated not only by EU regulations, which are binding for CR, but also by the Acts on budget rules.

The Ministry of Finance should specify the flow control method of means from the structural funds by a decree, however only Methodology of Financial Flows and Control of Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund is available on web pages of the Ministry of Finance, which specifies detailed rules for drawing of aid from the Structural Funds.

Acc. to interpretation of MF CR, financing of OSS (organizational institutes of the state - for example ministries), municipalities and counties as partners of the subsidy recipients is forbidden by provisions of the Act No. 218 on budget rules determining type of means, which may be income of the budgets of such institutions. In praxis it is therefore not possible for OSS, county or municipality

[59] § 39, par. 5 of the Act No. 250/2000 Coll. on budget rules of local budgets
[60] § 26 and 27 of the Act No. 320/2001 Coll. on financial control in public administration

to accept in their budgets the means from recipient, which is not a subject financing the OSS, counties or municipalities on basis of a law.

Particularly, this interpretation is basis if problems in following projects:

- Projects of Community planning of social services (KPSS), when the main recipient of a subsidy is e.g. non-profit organisation: the KPSS process requires partnership and close cooperation with municipality. Such projects usually have an initiator in form of NGO, but the municipality does not engage in the project, as it may not be a partner, and thus it cannot pay from the project the costs resulted from work of its employees, co-participation on organising of actions etc. When the applicant is municipality, number of partner projects decreases, but the KPSS methodology is based on the partnership.
- Projects are disintegrated and does not impact more than one municipality in solving of issues with employment or social integration - however the problems are regional, or exceeds the boundaries of a region. But when single municipality is recipient of a subsidy, it cannot invite the other municipalities on the region to joint solution, as it cannot compensate them the costs related to organisation of the action (e.g. it cannot pay the travel expenses to meetings, as representative of other municipality is not member or realisation team, and cannot be, as the other municipality is not partner with financial contribution). The municipalities may solve the issue by application of the projects via pre-established association of municipalities. The municipalities, which are not members of association, and where the partnership cooperation should be encouraged, cannot cooperate in the project as partners.
- Projects of public administration education, when the municipality of III type cannot have municipalities on its territory as financial partners, however also these municipalities suffer the costs from the project and had to pay them from other sources, or it is recommended to include the staff of the municipalities as a target group.
- Impossible financing of OSS in national projects - impossible cooperation of individual ministries in projects, persisting resort division within the solution: e.g. further education cannot be solved in cooperation of MEYS and MLSA.
- Impossible financing of projects connecting research, education and praxis: Academy of Sciences (OSS) cannot accept the financial means as the project partner from an university or other organisation or private company as main realisator of the project
- Impossible cooperation of České školní inspekce (OSS) (Czech School Inspection) as partner in educational projects, which are realised by subsidized organisations of MEYS (NIDV, VÚP) or by other educational institution
- Impossible cooperation of Probation and Mediation Office (OSS) on innovation projects, where the main realisator is e.g. Partners Czech, or Sdružení pro probaci a mediaci v justici, o.s.
- Employment Office and other municipalities within a region cannot be partners of the municipality, which is solving unemployment. Within the Czech environment it is then not possible to realise projects such as „Territorial employment pact“ (Austria), or „Learning Region“ (Germany), or LAA (England). However benefits of such partnerships were many times confirmed and such limitation is clearly contra-productive.

Problem of maintaining of financial flows is described in thr Act No. 218/2000 Coll. does not affect only the partnership. It forms also an obstacle in financing of schools from European projects. The financial means travel from MEYS via counties and promoters (municipalities) to schools. There occur delays. It results in delays in financing of European projects.

Classic example is represented by projects built on implementation of unit prices, so-called „templates“ for elementary schools, support area 1.4 OP EC: After the money leaves MEYS, it pass as so-called „flow subsidy“ via accounts of counties and promoters (municipalities) resulting in delays. These are however financial means provided by MEYS directly to schools, and the county does not play here role of an intermediate body.

This interpretation was included into the OP HRE methodology in May 2010. However generally there are exceptions from such interpretation, and maybe the interpretation is not generally known and/or accepted, e.g.:

- The interpretation does not apply to OP Cross-border cooperation ČR - PL (the SF means are considered as off-budget means within this programme)
- The interpretation does not apply to projects/programmes registered in ISPROFIN, in which the SF/CF means are released in compliance with the Decree No. 560/2006 Coll., as amended by the Decree No. 11/2010 Coll. on participation of state budget on financing of programmes related to assets acquisition and reproduction.
- Municipalities may be partners in projects within micro-regions in projects of cross-border cooperation, where they are also recipients of public means from main realisator, either on Czech part or abroad, and this is not subject specified for their financing by the law.
- Acc. to the OP EC methodology, the ME is possible partner of MEYS in national projects of MEYS (but it does not apply to MLSA and other ministries), however MEYS is not subject providing financing of ME by the law
- This interpretation is not included e.g. in OP EC
- It is not applied also in cases, when the municipalities are partners in projects supported from financial mechanism of European Economic Area, financial mechanism of Norway and from programme of Switzerland-Czech cooperation.

5.1.8 Summary of Conclusions

On analysis of the legal environment we have often encounter the fact that the Czech Republic legal order does not include any definition of partnership nor specific enactment of this institute. Nevertheless the application of the partnership principle is not excluded and in sporadic cases it is even required.

Crucial legal norms regulating the legal environment are constitutional Act No. 1/1993 Coll. - Constitution (art. 4), than Act No. 40/1964 Coll. Civil Code (§839 – Association Agreement), further Act No. 218/2000 Coll., in budget rules (financing of partnership §7), Act No. 250/2000 Coll., on territorial budget rules (financing of partnership §9 and §10), and Act No. 137/2006 Coll., on public orders (financing of partnership §2). As stated above, the norms does not include any specific legal regulation of partnership, but they create area for its implementation.

The analyses of legal obstacles showed lack of legal regulation, which would enable to provide subsidy from the state budget and from budget of territorial self-governmental units to more subject for single joint project.

Additionally, the analysis of obstacles in financial flows showed that actual legal regulation defining transfer mechanism of financial means (state – county – municipality – established organisations) does not correspond for European project financing system regarding the partners with financial contribution.

5.2 Perception of partnership by public administrations (3.2)

Participation of more partners is crucial for application of the partnership principle. Public administrations have exclusive position in number of partnership activities, as they feature certain level of enforcement power (such as decrees, draft acts etc.). From this point of view, their perception of the partnership principle is crucial for the principle sustainability itself.

Main evaluation question is as follows: How do the individual public administrations co-forming this frame perceive/interpret the partnership principle and its justification?

Although EC has created frame for implementation of the partnership principle both at vertical, and at horizontal level, the member states have been given wide freedom to seize partnership principle. In the area of Cohesion Policy there was established shared system of control at European, national, regional and local level. However it differs throughout individual member states and regions. National governments and actors at regional / local level are engaged in the governance in various range and with various competences.

5.2.1 Solution method of evaluation question

Transfer of idea and implementation of partnership from EU level to level of the governments of member states encounters the problems of the transfer of policies, as it is too complex – it is simultaneously:

- Concept;
- Administrative technique;
- Form of institution (Bache, 2000).

Thus it may be useful to repeat, what factors (Economix, 2009) affect the **perception and implementation of the partnership principle in the member states:**

- Previous experience with partnership is important;
- „Learning“ mechanisms – transfer of good praxis and experiences;
- Traditional form of national institution;
- Decentralization level;
- Tendency to decentralization with impact to composition of partners;
- Development, or in certain cases dissolving of well-established corporate model of governance, which may relate to removal of actual partners;
- Willingness of partners to cooperate.

5.2.1.1 Importance of context perception in partnership evaluation

Actual situation in the Czech Republic is closely related to processes leading to actual status of partnership in other countries; thus some sections, particularly related to the EU countries, go as back as to 1989, when the partnership principle was implemented into cohesion policy.

Examples from the Great Britain (see below) show that development of high quality partnership needs one crucial aspect: time.

Assessment of experience of V4 countries with partnership in the CIP EQUAL projects does not purport clearly positively and authors point out many problems related with the partnership. Comparable experiences from the Great Britain are however hard to find out today. Their story began 20 - 30 years ago.

5.2.1.2 Gaining experience with partnership: How do the public administrations perceive/interpret the partnership principle and why they support it?

Great Britain

Bache in 2000 examined in the Great Britain status of partnership 18 months after appointment of new cabinet (Labours, former critics of Conservative Party in relation to partnership, particularly impossibility to engage social partners)

4 selected regions were financed under Objective 2: South Wales, West Scotland, East Midlands, and Yorkshire and Humber. Whereas South Wales and West Scotland created partnerships controlling implementation of Structural Funds, East Midlands and Yorkshire and Humber were controlled by regional representatives of government administrations. It was thus possible to compare benefits from partnership in individual regions.

West Scotland

This partnership is recognized as model for other regions due to its cohesion and effectiveness. It was based on effective engagement of regional actors, local government felt that it has higher influence than the others in the Great Britain. Officials from Scottish Office were well integrated into local politic community and the ministry was perceived rather as a partner, in more scope than in other regions. Additionally, the partners positively perceived contribution of independent secretariat to performance of whole partnership.

Initiative originated from Strathclyde Regional Council (RC) (abolished in 1996). The Strathclyde RC had developed partnership since middle of seventies and provided experience with partnership exceeding 10 years to West Scotland.

Range of problems encountered by Strathclyde region from middle of seventies required coherent approach. Core of problems laid in Glasgow, which combat with competition of the other new towns. Key representatives of Strathclyde RC believed in successful Glasgow and decided to regenerate the town by combined social-economical strategy covering local agencies and communities.

However effort of the Strathclyde RC itself does not explain, why it became model for the others and why it received such significant support from EC and from the Scottish Office officials. One of the factors was surely politically sensitive requirement of lower central control in Scotland, and

additionally there were financial reasons. The Scottish Office saved the financial means by transfer of certain functions to wider partnership, and further the model could be clearly supported from EC.

Yorkshire and Humber

Since 1980 the partnership had been pre-condition for financing from EU sources or from UK regeneration programmes. Although in many cases the partnership were only single-purposeful, in many other cases the function relationships were created. However even the „conditional" partnerships contributed, though slowly, to improved relations between the partners in the Yorkshire and Humber region.

More significant improvement of the cooperation environment was experienced by the partners after 13 to 15 years (by 1994). In the middle of nineties it became obvious that the region, which was among the most disintegrated ones, starts to be one of the most cohesive regions. Main explanation for improved partnership relations was experience that the partnership works. Development of effective partnership on this region was accelerated by change of leadership presented by local officials, which occurred after personal changes in European Secretariat of the Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber (GOYH) in the programme period 1994-99. Since 1998 the GOYH has been perceived as facilitator rather than dominator of whole partnership.

Long-term evaluation of local strategic partnerships and agreements.

In 2009 all local strategic partnerships and local area agreements were assessed. It included assessment of question, which structures for control of partnership and communication are established within the partnership and how is their work effective.

During 2006 – 2008 the most important topics for local strategic partnerships were as follows (only five most important selected):

- Development of sustainable community strategy,
- Consolidation of partnership,
- Consolidation and development of partnership structures and processes
- Development and approval of shared partnership objectives
- Focus to exempted groups of inhabitants

In the **Great Britain** 88 lagging localities have been selected, into which support from NRF fund is directed. Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. **NRF** has been form of financing of local administrations in England since 2000. The intention lays in financial support of social regeneration of lagging territory and decrease of lagging in these regions, e.g. in health, education or criminal rate. The localities were selected on basis of 2000 deprivation indicators. Financing from NRF is not automatic - the partnership shall pass through an accreditation process performed by staff of the government office. The accreditation is performed in on-site discussion with the partnership participants. Quality of partnership, quality of strategy and progress achieved by the partnership are assessed. The accreditation forms necessary condition of each further financing from NRF. Quality of partnership is assessed on basis of criteria which were specified as condition for accreditation for gaining of grant in Special Grant Report No. 78.

For support of partnership development, the government issued methodology Local strategic partnership, 2001 and subsequently acc. to methodology Accreditation Guidance for Local Strategic Partnerships, 2001. This methodology is intended not only to 88 selected localities, but also to the other occurring local partnerships.

Criteria for accreditation of local strategic partnership in England:

Accreditation methodology defines criteria in six areas:

1. **Strategy:** Partnership is effective, representative and able to play key strategic role.
2. **Inclusion:** Partnership actively engages all key partners, incl. public, private, community and non-profit sectors.
3. **Focus to Action:** It includes specified common priorities and objectives, approved activities and defined deadlines and indicators enabling measurement of improvement.
4. **Quality Control:** Members of partnership (organisation) have defined quality control system (performance management systems), objectives and criteria, and procedures to achieve the partnership objectives
5. **Effectiveness:** They decrease bureaucracy load.
6. **Learning and Development:** It is based on examples of good practice from successful partnerships, which are taken from local, regional, as well as national level.

Additionally, the criteria are explained in detail.

For comparison: Approach to assessment of project partnership within OP HRE:

The evaluator recommend to the Selection Commission to particularly exclude such projects, which include artificially created partnerships related to risk of potential financial enrichment of partners.

Following items are also assessed:

- Scope, in which the partnership in specific project is beneficial for realisation of its activities,
- Communication between partners on the project intention,
- Whether the project contributes e.g. to networking of organisations (cooperation between individual actors at the local level) etc.,
- How the partner gains e.g. new skills in work with target group, project control or realisation of particular activity due to involvement of partners,
- Competency and experience of partner.

Financial aid and focusing of local strategic partnerships in England

In 2000/2001 total 200 millions pound was allocated into selected 88 localities. each locality was allocated with particular amount from 0.2 mil. pound (Lincoln) to 11 mil. pound (Birmingham).

Only frame obligation to use the means in compliance with so-called floor targets was specified:

- Increase of education;

- Increase of employment;
- Decrease of criminality in lagging areas;
- Decrease of social differences.

Local administration gained the financial aid on basis of project with specified objectives, which are to be achieved. However it was subject to accreditation.

Example abroad: Territorial Employment Pact, TEP in Austria.

In 1998 Austria Government decided to promote the Territorial Employment Pacts (hereinafter referred to as TEP) in whole Austria to gain aid for realisation of National Employment Action Plan. Thus the partnership was supported „from upper to lower level".

Approach based on partnership should have been realised in Austria in the employment policy and in all possible relevant policies with requirement to support the common links. Since 1999 the Territorial Employment Pacts have been established in all 9 countries of Austria and others have been established ta lower and local level (NUTSIII).

Composition of partnership

TEP is partnership at the region / community level, which includes at least following contractual partners (obligatory):

- Public Employment Service (AMS),
- Representatives of public administration (Federal governments or local administrations),
- Social partners.

It should include all other relevant partners (such as Federal Office for Social Matters, local initiatives for support of employment, specialist in gender area, regional development associations, educational institutions, other participants and representatives of various interests).

Typical representation in TEP: Federal government, regional employment office, Federal Office for Social Matters, Economic Chamber, trade unions, industrial associations, local administration associations, regional agricultural chamber, representatives of schools, experts in gender policy area, representatives of employees, representatives of employers, representatives of regional NGOs, regional associations of managers.

Strong Points:

The substantial matter is partnership, which joints the labour market and employment policy with other policies, i.e. with social, economic and regional policies. The objective is increasing of employment at regional and local level. In cooperation with partners, TEP contributes particularly to:

- Increase of effectiveness and focusing the source use;
- Increase of target group support quality;
- Ensuring and creation of jobs;
- Creation of point for recipient of sources for region;
- Sustainability of region as place for life.

The partnership develops regional strategies regarding the employment policy. It identifies local and regional problems and develops ideas and strategies to improve situation on the labour market. It implements measures in compliance with these objectives. All partners are engaged in the cooperation in implementation of - mostly annual - TEP Action Programmes.

TEP leads to positive results, both in the area of improved cooperation between the partners, and in the area of implementation of political measures. In 2003 the TEP was evaluated and it showed that the partnerships contributed to increased effectiveness and focusing of active employment policies at regional level, supported integration of unemployed into the labour market and increased employment rate. Additionally, the partnership approach affected indirectly also other policies within the region. Particularly emphasis to equal opportunities was described as added value of TEP.

TEPs use number of various measures and tools to solve regional and local problems. The tools include e.g. “Arbeitsstiftungen” – increase of qualification and education, support of local business, advisory services, support at start of businesses and innovation projects.

Weak Points

Often missing direct contact with local level was identified as weak point of TEP in 2006, i.e. in involvement of interests of civil society.

In 2006, additional weak point was identified as follows: TEP feature only low influence to development of participation democracy, as particularly members of official organisations form part of committees making the decisions.

Opportunities

During 2007-2013 TEPs realise also innovation project in the area of social inclusion (priority 3b), so they are on heir good way to become yet stronger partner at implementation of policies at regional and local level.

Financing

The realisation is financed from contributions of agreement partners. E.g. in 2006 the contributions achieved total level of 700 mil. euro.

Support from ESF

TEPs were established and subsequently financed from ESF during 2000 – 2006, but at this time no specific priority was focused to them.

During the EQUAL programme in Austria the federal countries expressed requirement that EQUAL should use already existing TEP. The TEP partners were involved into creation of the EQUAL development partnerships. This achieved close connection of the EQUAL programme themes with the labour market and with education. Additionally, the transfer of know-how and methods between the partnership members was strengthened. In total the TEPs supported creation of 44 development partnerships in EQUAL.

TEPs are supported from OP Employment 2007-2013 in following priorities:

Priority 5: OP promotes TEP for support of achieving of the employment policy objectives on basis of improved coordination at local and regional level. Support of TEP implementation, particularly

organisation structure, is financed from Priority 5. Co-financing of provided from ESF at 46%. 54% is financed from Austrian Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour.

Additionally, the TEP regional and local coordination is presently financed annually by approximate amount 200 thousand euro from Priority 5.

To enable TEP to become a recipient of aid from Priority 5, the partners have to sign mutually an official agreement, in which they express their consent with cooperation on the project under specified rules.

Priority 3b: Objective of the priority is integration of persons excluded from the labour market. TEP plays here further important role: it serves as recipient and prepares and co-finances the projects at regional and local level.

In all priorities of the operation program the TEP contributes to coordinated implementation of the operation programme at regional and local level.

Technical assistance at national level: TEP coordination unit support various projects of TEP and partner institutions with regard to exchange of information, strategic coordination and common activities.

Reasons of support of TEP from OP Employment in Austria

Reason, why the partnership os supported from OP Employment, is as follows: partnership approach supports better synergy between the programmes, particularly at regional level (federal countries). It enables cooperation in financing area at the strategic planning level and promotes creation of common basis between members responsible for the labour market policy (employment offices, federal governments).

In Austria it was proved that stabile financing of partner structures is key to success of the partnership. As the partner structures are supported from ESF (particularly priority 5), they may be further developed and support and develop innovation projects.

Such development supports better focusing and solving of problems lay at interface of policies, e.g. social policy and labour market policy. During 2007 – 2013 the TEPs are thus more focused to integration of excluded persons into the labour market. Additionally, TEPs gain support from the TEP Coordination Unit, which ensures exchange of information between the partners (TEP network), supports the partnership monitoring and evaluation and provides PR. This approach may be compared with missing strategic approach to support of human resources in CR - see below.

Central and Eastern European Countries

The Central and Eastern European countries started the preparation and implementation of programme documents for period 2007 - 2013 with experience gained from the Leader, EQUAL initiatives and from structural funds during 2004 – 2006.

Analysis: Experience with partnership in CIP EQUAL in V4 countries

For many new member states, creation of partnerships was completely new matter. In spite of it, the created partnerships were based on former cooperation of certain partnership organisations, as

possible. In the Czech Republic, long-term former cooperation between the partners formed basis of created partnerships and other partner organisations joined the original partner organisations on basis of its regional or theme competency (ECONOMIX, 2009, p. 21).

Role of Individual Partner Organisations

Development partnerships were formed by various types of organisations, and the composition of such partnership assemblies differs between individual countries (ECONOMIX, 2009, p. 22-24).

Educational and Training Organisations – These organisations plaid significant role in development partnerships in all states. E.g. in Hungary, the educational and training organisations covered ca 20% of all partners.

Social Partners – Whereas in some member states (Malta, Cyprus) these partners were represented in practice in each development partnership and often had a role of organisation leaders, the partners from social sphere were not represented in the partnership in such a high scope in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. It could be caused by lower importance of social partners at national level and lower rate of association of such organisations in unions.

Private Organisations – Weak engagement of private organisations is often criticised, but their engagement could be useful and it would contribute to deeper understanding of specific issue.

Public Sector (State Administration) – Engagement of governmental institutions generally seems to be useful. But in Hungary, only to partnerships out of 38 included also partners from public sector. Control body reasoned it by insufficient capacities of public institutions, realisation of other projects by these institutions (Human Resources Development Programme – ESF) and continuing reform of public sector. As compared to it, the employment offices formed ca one third of partners in Slovakia.

Research Organisations – These organisations were represented in higher scope in the development partnership in no Visegrad country. In Poland, relative passivity of research organisations was pointed out, at it was explained by low financial sources of the organisations. In the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, these organisations were not represented in the partner assemblies in higher scope.

Local Administration and Other Local Institutions – Local administrations and other local actors were represented in many development partnerships, even if their representation could be much higher. In Slovakia, the local administrations were considered as important members of partnerships. Acc. to Hungary control body of CIP EQUAL it was shown that the partnership principle is very effective for Gypsies, and their representatives were often member of local development partnerships. However there are considerable regional differences in all Visegrad countries.

Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations – They are main actors in the area of social inclusion and they were also in large scope included in the development partnerships. E.g. in Slovakia it was shown that small organisations are more innovative than the large ones, which corresponds with results of EQUAL evaluation in original member states before enlargement in 2004. The reason is that particularly large organisations from the public sphere are accustomed to execute the policies within specific procedures and are not apt to search new solutions.

Conditions of Partnership Principle Effectiveness

In Hungary it was shown that certain different organisations compete mutually and it is very difficult for them to mutually cooperate. The Czech Republic featured the same experience, when some organisations follow preferably their own interests. Effectiveness of individual partnerships depends on ability of the partners to mutually share joint responsibility for the project (ECONOMIX, 2009, p. 25). The case studies in the Czech Republic showed that some partners only fulfil given tasks, which testifies non-understanding of the partnership principle. This fact was proven particularly at private organisations and public institutions, whereas non-governmental non-profit organisation fulfilled the partnership principle much better (ECONOMIX, 2009, p. 25). In Poland, the effectiveness increased due to involvement of many various institutions and organisations with wide range of experience and various approaches to solving of complex social problems. At the same time, the partnerships could be effective only when such different organisations were able to share their knowledge and skills (ECONOMIX, 2009, p. 25).

It is obvious in all examined countries that the partnership effectiveness is affected particularly be willingness of partners to contribute to joint project and to share knowledge, skills and experience with the other ones.

Internal Control Structure of Development Partnerships

Different approaches to control of whole partner assembly of organisations are applied in praxis. These assemblies differ acc. to various hierarchy of the partner arrangement.

E.g. in Hungary, the excessive centralisation was removed the measure that the financial means were paid by the control body directly to each of the partners (ECONOMIX, 2009, p. 27). In the other V4 countries, the means were paid to recipient of the subsidy, which re-allocated them to other partners. Interesting thing in Poland is that evaluator recorded different operation of various types of partnerships. Partnerships of private companies feature small number of meetings, but they are more democratic. Research organisation arrange also few meetings between the partners, but the financial means are directed to leading partner, whereas public institutions arrange many joint meetings, but their partner structures are hierarchically arranged (ECONOMIX, 2009, p. 27).

Former experience with partnership in the Czech Republic

Regarding the key factors, the Czech Republic is a country, which should have suitable position for development of the partnership principle. It may be said that former 15 years form period of collection of first experience and creation of first more durable partnerships, whose effectiveness can however be hardly measured.

The experience are gained in CR particularly die to support of projects from foreign donors (ca by 2002) and European Commission. The foreign donors mean large foreign foundations, which during nineties supported projects focused to development of democracy, involvement of public to decision-making processes and community cooperation. The projects were led particularly by non-profit organisations, public administration at lower scope. Thus in CR the initiators of partnerships

are non-profit organisations rather than public administration. They have experience and trained specialist, which are engaged in the topic of partnership and participation.

By 2000 the public administration, training of its staff in the issue of partnership or creation of partnerships have not available such sources and opportunities, and this may be a reason of passivity of the public administration in creation of partnerships, too. However the partnerships are developed in spite of the fact that it is substantially limited particularly by legislative environment for establishment and functioning of the partnerships.

Experience with building of partnerships, in which the public administration and other partners are engaged, exist in CR particularly if following areas:

- Rural development;
- Community planning of social services;
- Urban development;
- Community non-profit schools.

In these areas there are not only methodologies, which help to create new partnerships, accredited training programmes, but in case of Local Action Groups (MAS) even special strategic and financial tools, which guarantee certain level of independency of the partnership.

Partnership for human resource development is not systematically developed

However building of partnership for the human resource development, employment and social integration is not systematically developed. The main problem lays in weak awareness on necessity of strategic control and on need of human resource development; often we encounter non-readiness, even non-competency of county politicians regarding execution of strategic control. Additionally, there is lack of any central covering and management in this direction [28].

Skalická (2010)[61] proves that the RLZ county councils, partner organs, which are crucial actors of strategic control of the human resource development within regions, work in praxis only in 2 counties of CR. It results from the fact that in relation to county administration elections in 2004 and 2008 in some counties there occurred personal changes in composition of the county council (RLZ), or re-assessment of importance and action-ability of the council and subsequently of its status.

„Originally established councils did not succeed in bringing sufficiently strong awareness on importance of the strategic control f human resources into the county policy. New political representation than usually damaged the built links by intervention into the personal composition of bodies and conception of developed strategic control disappeared."

County projects in area 3.3 JROP supported during 2004 – 2006 did not successively seize this possibility to develop the strategies for the human resource development. The process was successful only in 2 counties, where such partnerships continue just in form of Council for Development of Human Resources.

County Councils for Development of Human Resources miss the covering and coordination unit – Government Council for RLZ, which would be reliable link of county policies to the national level. The

[61] Skalická, V.: Strategic control in the human resource area at region level, Diploma thesis, Masaryk University 2010.

Council executed its activities by 2006, when the new cabinet did not establish it for next election period.

Connection to the councils of cohesion regions may be identified as entirely non-functional, in spite of the fact that the cooperation between the cohesion region councils and RLZ councils is considered as beneficial by experts in this area.

Regarding notified changes in organisational structure of the Employment Offices in 2011 (general management and 226 affiliates in municipalities with extended competence) it may be indicated that CR starts the way towards central control of the human resource development problems. It is to consider whether this way is in compliance with recommended procedures (EC, OECD).

Consequence of non-conceptual environment of perception of partnership justification for RLZ

Due to non-conceptual environment and obviously lacking feedback from the counties, the individual areas of RLZ are solved without partnership, even when European experiences and good praxis examples show different way.

Example solution within OP HRE:

In its basic document, the OP HRE declares support to partnership, e.g.: „To ensure selection of most effective tools and intervention areas in particular region, the partnership principle of all actors on the labour market will be basis for strengthening of e.g. advisory boards of employment offices composed particularly from representatives of social partners, organisations of medically handicapped persons and territorial self-governing units. This will lead to proper focusing of interventions of the labour market institutions acc. to needs of particular region.“ (p. 85).

Further, the OP HRE brings definition of partnership and also sample partner agreement as help to the partners.

But only priority axes 5, which support international partnerships, are focused to the intervention area 80 (Aid to establishment of partnerships, pacts and initiatives by means of networking of national, regional and local actors).

Within the OP HRE there are no financial means focused to various and penetrating and supplementing target groups and tools, and thus there is in praxis no partnership between the Employment Offices and non-profit institutions and/or private organisations.

E.g. in the aid area 3.3 (invitation 31) totally 329 projects was applied for support of integration of socially disadvantaged persons, including their integration into the labour market, but only 8 of them were applied in partnership with employment office (no of them was supported).

The reason may be that the employment offices themselves apply their individual projects in the aid area 2.1, whose objective is modernisation of employment services. For example 98 projects were applied in invitation 11. There were only 11 projects in partnership, but 9 of them make partnership with other employment office. Inter-sector partnerships were established only in 2 cases, and only 1 project was supported, in which the employment office cooperates with several associations of municipalities. Nevertheless interesting approaches originate in these projects, but all services, which the employment office needs to be ensured above its possibilities, are secured by suppliers. This completely contradicts the partnership and in many cases clientelism occupies the way.

Influence of Legislative to Partnership Perception

The work client is attracted to above-described procedure also by interpretation of partnership within OP HRE, or view of evaluator. In praxis, the evaluator is engaged only by issue, whether the service may be purchased, and whether it is not „hidden procurement" within a partnership. To this purpose MA OP HRE issues also guide - exhibition composed from three examples.

We believe that stated numbers of established partnerships in the area, where the partnership is highly desirable, should lead to re-evaluation of this interpretation and releasing of rules for the partnership support.

This interpretation arisen due to the fact that there is generally no legislative definition and regulation of the partnership considering its nature and not external signs.

Contrary to OP HRE, the Operation Programme Education for Competitiveness features less strict rules for support of partnership. One example of the different approach may be assessment of project applications. Though the partnership is not assessed with points within the OP EC projects, the project partnerships occur much frequently than in OP HRE.

There are no recommendations to this evaluation question.

5.3 Opportunities, Threads, Weak and Strong Points of Partner Projects (3.3)

SWOT analysis must be at first performed with view to further strategy of the partnership principle development. Such analysis is basis for strategic considerations.

What opportunities, threads, weak and strong points result for preparation and realisation of ESF projects based on the partnership principle from actual institutional, legal and financial frame for functioning of this principle in praxis in CR and in selected EU states?

Elaborated SWOT analysis of the partnership principle is described below. The analysis is included in Technical Annex and is available upon request.

Partnership Principle SWOT Analysis:

<u>Strengths:</u>

1. Quality improvement of decision-making processes, as experts and specialists will be engaged;
2. Building of consensus over the programme and/or plan between partner parties
3. Quick decision on program, plan, project within the implementation stage
4. Increased knowledge of the team members, incl. manager skills and knowledge
5. Sustainability of partner networks and sustainability of partner activities
6. Mutual use of knowledge, skills and potential of partner organisations
7. Shared information on potentials, quality, capacities of service providers
8. Shared information on needed services and problems within community

9. Mainstreaming – focusing and aiming of common efforts to solving of particular problem
10. Joint solutions and innovations, possible creation of structural solutions (cross-sector cooperation).
11. Political support by resolution of relevant authorities;
12. Use of jointly available sources, not only financial means, but also creative human potential;
13. Positive experience and benefits of participants (creation of links to place, where they live, notion of cohesion and co-responsibility, interest in public activities, meeting and communication between different generations, different interest groups, meeting of citizens and representatives of administration bodies, experience from cooperation and interception)

Weaknesses:

1. High exigency regarding project cash-flow, financing of partners
2. High exigency regarding reliable and smooth financing from the responsible bodies (often very crucial weak point in combination with thread – non-adhering to financial schedules from responsible bodies)
3. High exigency regarding administrative, management, leadership
4. High exigency regarding reliability and confidence between partners and contractual treatment of relations

Opportunities:

At level of individual partnerships:

1. High-quality elaboration of project intention based on strategy developed within partnership, or at least it will be elaborated in partnership
2. Education of partner organisations and potential partners, incl. public administration, in:
   - Management, leadership, control of partnership;
   - Skills in strategic management and project management of European projects;
3. Use of modern communication and technological tools for improved communication between partners (shared project tasks, shared schedules, shared client databases, shared monitored reports, social networks);
4. Development of clear rules for communication, meetings and decision-making processes inside the partnership and for financing and control of financial flows inside the partnership;

At national level:

5. Initiate the legislative regulation of partnership definition, its functioning rules and possible support.
6. Creation and/or maintaining and development of development programmes focused to support of development partnerships, partner development strategies ad engagement of public into the decision-making process. This recommendation can be realised inly in cooperation with Ministry of Finance and other departments.

At level of operation programmes

7. Focus support from operation programmes to educational programmes for public administration in good governance, management, leadership, partnership, quality control, communication, and involvement of public into decision-making process. This recommendation may be realised only with change of focus of the public administration education
8. Focus support from OP TA to creation of capacity of all potential recipients and partners, particularly in following areas: management, leadership, partnership, quality control, communication, involvement of public into decision-making process
9. Focus support from OP TA to creation of networking and building of partner structures. This recommendation may be realised only in cooperation with control body of OP TA.

Threats:

1. Non-prepared and/or non-experienced partners, particularly in area of leadership, management and administrative
2. On case of non-prepared and non-experienced partners: unclear share of responsibility for tasks and wrong control of cooperation between partners
3. Improper adhering to schedule of financial costs or realisation of control activities from responsible public bodies
4. Legislative preventing engagement of public administration into partnership (in CR due to budget rules)
5. Formal conception of partnership, avoidance of placing of public contracts

Partnerships for preparation of programme documents: in vertical partnerships there is i risk of non-prepared partners, non-available information for partners and demanding processes of preparation of programme documentation. Missing plan for engagement of partners during programming, small administration capacity and passivity of partner organisations.

5.4 Minimizing of Threads to Partner Projects (3.4)

One of strategies of the partnership principle support is minimizing of adverse effects on side of aid recipients (threads as external factors may be not affected by the aid recipients, thus it is rather minimizing of their impacts). The items are covered by following analysis.

Main evaluation question is as follows: How are the identified threads or potential problems minimized or eliminated in praxis by the aid recipients?

5.4.1 Data Processing Method and Commented Results

The processing is primary based on information gained during elaboration of former evaluating questions. Here the sorting of individual areas, in which one can find threads and potential problems on side of aid recipients, is explicitly specified.

Proposed steps primary respond to weak points and threads of the partnership, particularly to points 3 and 4, which consider the capacities of recipients to realise the projects with partnership. At the same time the proposed steps are based on opportunities of the partnership. We have selected such strategy, which is able to influence the potential aid recipients in the partner projects and their partners.

Proposed educational programmes are focused to improvement of situation in areas, which were identified as weak points, preparation of potential to use the opportunities and limit potential impact of external threads.

5.4.1.1 Self-Education

Self-education is response to weak points of the partnership:

- Weak point 3: High exigency regarding administrative, management, leadership
- Weak point 4: High exigency regarding reliability and confidence between partners and contractual treatment of relations

The recipients may at the partnership internal level particularly:

- Educate themselves in management, leadership, partnership control (strong points 1, 2, 4, 5; weak points 1, 2, 3; opportunities 2, 7, 8; threads 1);
- Educate themselves in strategic management and project management of European projects (strong points 1, 3, 4; weak points 1, 2, 3; opportunities 2, 7, 8; threads 2)
- Use modern communication and technological tools for improved communication between the partners (shared project tasks, shared schedules, shared client databases, shared monitoring reports, social networks) – (strong points 3, 7, 8; opportunities 3);
- Develop clear rules for communication, negotiations and decision-making processes inside partnership (strong points 1, 2, 3; weak points 3, 4; threads 2);
- Develop clear rules for financing and control of financial flows inside partnership (strong points 6, 11, 12; weak points 1, 2, 4; threads 1);

- High-quality elaboration of project intention, which will be based on strategy created in partnership, or at least it will be created in the partnership (strong point 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13; opportunities 4).

However no information sources in Czech language are available to the recipients. One of few methodology sources may be e.g. good praxis manual „Partner projects of non-profit organisations" issued in 2011 by Koalice nevládek pardubicka within project COMMUNEM REDDERE (support area 5.1, OP HRE).

Additionally, e.g. template partner agreement may help to the recipients (OP HRE).

But actually there are no financial tools or supported programs for development of knowledge and skills on management, leadership, partnership, involvement of public etc. for the recipients.

5.4.1.2 Avoidance of Rules and Resignation to Partnership

In other cases the recipients rather try to match the specified rules of the operation programme or to think-up a solution verging on avoidance of non-satisfactory rules for partnership, or which do not enter the projects at all.

Example: Czech Republic

OP HRE identified thread of partnership establishment by limitation of entry of municipalities as partners with financial contribution to projects supporting KPSS (threat 5). We suppose that limitation of entry of municipalities as partners with financial contributions into the project is solved by (NNO or municipalities) **by several methods:**

1) Leading organisation is a NGO: partners (municipalities) do not enter into the project without financial motivation, the project is not realised (consequence: decrease of share of NGOs projects and decrease of total number of applied projects).
2) Leading organisation is NGO: municipalities are non-financial partners in the project (consequence: under-estimation of financial intensity of the KPSS process – financial and time loads of staff of the municipality, the municipality cannot „raise" own employee, who would engage in KPSS in the future, development of dependence on NGO, which takes the role of consultant and producer of KPSS)
3) Partner is association of municipalities or micro-region as separate legal person, for which there is no such limitation
4) Leading organisation is municipality: realised project without partner (consequence: contradiction of KPSS principles, under-estimation of financial intensity of engagement into KPSS by other participants and their de-motivation (they work for free, whereas staff of municipality is paid for the work).
5) Leading organisation is municipality: partners are hidden and financed by form of contract for services as employees of leading organisation - municipality.

In the area of employment policy the non-admission of OSS or municipality as financial partner is perceived as a problem, too. The employment policy area is attractive for business subjects, which could cooperate as presenters with an employment office or with municipality for ensuring of

services for support of employment. However partnership without financial contribution means inferior role for partner without financial contribution. And Employment Offices (OSS) have no motivation to enter such partnerships - „Particularly the Employment Offices are often the good, poor Cinderella, who execute majority of works (chooses people, ensures re-qualifications and contact with employers), and has from it almost nothing.“ (Employment Office in Ústí nad Labem County, recipient of o.p. 2.1 OP HRE, response within questionnaire survey.)

5.4.2 Summary of Conclusions

The recipients may eliminate only weak points and threads at internal level of the partnership. They may avoid the non-suitable rules for the partnership function, or they resignate to the project in partnership. The recipients may only rarely intervene into solution of the other threads at other levels.

They however may e.g. affect the opinion of public and public administration to the partnership by assessment and publishing of results and impacts of their activities.

This would be supported by cooperation with MA, e.g. by obligation of recipient to assess the impacts of partner projects and/or CBA partnerships (e.g. as part of final report or sustainability report).

Recommendations:

- We recommend support of educational and advisory programmes within OP HRE intended to applicants, recipients and occurring partnerships to enable initiation, development and management of partner projects.

5.5 Alternative Methods for Minimizing of Threads to Partner Projects (3.5)

Main evaluation question is as follows: What are the alternative methods within the actual institutional, legislative and financial frame enabling minimizing or elimination of threads or problems identified in praxis from part of subsidy recipients and from part of responsible public administrations in CR and in selected EU states?

5.5.1 Data Processing Method and Commented Results

The processing is primary based on information gained during elaboration of former evaluating questions. Here the sorting of individual areas, in which one can find alternative methods for minimizing the threads and potential problems on side of aid recipients, is explicitly specified.

5.5.1.1 Support of Partnership by Public Authorities

Government and parliament may minimize threats to the partnerships particularly by legislative support to involvement of citizens into decision-making and participation democracy and creation of national strategies in partnership. The government agrees with involvement of public into preparation of governmental documents (Government Resolution No. 185/2009).

This recommendation is also opportunity for development of partnership and direct response to thread 1.

The ministries may minimize threads to partnerships particularly by following steps:

- Creation and implementation of departmental and inter-departmental strategies in partnership and consistent applying of RIA methodology (regulatory impact assessment). Methodology support to the government and central administration bodies is Methodology for involvement of public into preparation of public documents, which was approved by the Government Resolution No. 1146/2009;
- Methodology support and education of public administration and other subjects in areas of good governance, management, leadership, partnership, quality control, communication, involvement of public into decision making process;
- Regular evaluation and assessment of partner strategies and projects and publishing of results.

These recommendations are also opportunities for development of partnership and direct response to threads 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and weak points 3, 4, 5.

Regional and local administration may minimize the threads to partnership particularly by following steps:

- Building of partnerships at local, regional and supra-regional level;
- Creation and implementation of regional and local development strategies in partnership;
- Methodology support and education of public administration and other subjects in areas of good governance, management, leadership, partnership, quality control, communication, involvement of public into decision making process;
- Evaluation and assessment of partner strategies and projects and publishing of results.

These recommendations are also opportunities for development of partnership and direct response to threads 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and weak points 3, 4, 5.

Control bodies of operation programmes may support the partnership particularly by following tools:

- Building of vertical partnerships on creation of operation programmes;
- Consultations with partners on course of programme and preparation of invitations;
- More intensive mutual cooperation throughout EU on solving of similar problems.

These recommendations are also opportunities for development of partnership and direct response to threads 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and weak points 3, 4, 5.

5.5.1.2 Vertical Partnerships

Support of initiation and professional management of vertical partnerships in programming is recommended by many sources, such as:

Survey of BusinessEurope (in: BUSINESSEUROPE'S ANSWERS TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S CONSULTATION BASED ON THE 4TH REPORT ON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COHESION FOR A WIDE DEBATE ON THE FUTURE OF COHESION POLICY, 2009) proves significant improvement in creation of partnerships in programme period 2007–2013 as compared with previous period due to higher experience of bodies and social partners, larger transparency during discussions and better organised consultation and implementation procedures. Generally the involvement is perceived as more satisfactory at national rather than regional level. Thus the improvement should surely occur in recently accessed member states, but also in countries with long-term membership in EU. BusinessEurope notifies imbalance between short consultation process and lond delay in programme implementation and requires improved feedback within the consultation process.

UEAPME (European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises) in its statement „Multilevel Governance - Response to the Committee of the Regions' White Paper on "Multilevel Governance" (2009) prefers approach from bottom to upper level based on principle „green to small and middle enterprises", which will be adopted to needs of small enterprises and communities. The partnership would then be developed within multi-level administration with more actors. UEAPME underlines the horizontal subsidiary concept as success factor, i.e. simultaneous involvement of socio-economical partners at European, national and local level. It is necessary to simplify the administration and financial rules and there occurs need of higher advance payments, but also global grants, which are highly effective. Acc. to UEAPME there are regions, in which small enterprises gain only 1–2 percents of available EU financial means. To get the access to financial means, SME shall work in partnerships and by means of intermediate bodies. Technical assistance is a must. UEAPME requires from Commission issuing manual on method of fund use.

EKOS assumes that no significant improvement occurred in last programme period. It requires that regulations shall include clear rules for defining of partnership. It call for determination of minimum requirements. Quality of partnership highly depends on will of bodies with respect to execution of this principle. EKOS agrees with the fact that the national and regional partnership works better than local partnership. Exchange of experience is important. Inter-regional cooperation programmes must be strengthened, particularly by involvement of inter-regional trade union councils. EKOS published manual based on practical experience of its members with work of trade unions with ESF.

In February 2010 European social partners (EKOS, BE, CEEP) published joint report on ESF. Main conclusion is that building of capacities is crucial for increase of effectiveness. Other identified obstacles are administrative inflexibility and low understanding level of partnership in some member states. Social partners call for strengthening of partnership between them and regional / local administrations.

European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) proposes that the consultation should be extensive and thorough; they should cover various types of organisations by combination of many method. The costs of participation should be compensated and the meetings should be organised in sufficient intervals. For EAPN it is important to build on experiences from EQUAL programme within ESF and concentrate to principles of innovations, partnership, inclusion regarding gender equality and supra-national character. More attention should be paid to small projects, similarly as in previous programme period.

ECAS proposes that member stated and regions should elaborate the schedule of informedness, consultations and participation, which would cover all stages of programmes and their projects. Such schedule should be published and evaluated within multi-level administration and partnership and should provide possible cooperation to local leaders. ECAS proposes that regions, which wish to stay ahead of the process of the experience exchange should establish community engaged in practical procedures.

EP report based on case studies states that transfer of administration to lower territorial levels features high importance, as well as creation of intermediate platforms or coordinating subjects and informal networks. Additionally, this report recommends decrease of programme complexness. Exchange of know-how in the area of creation of policies and building of capacities should be executed by means of specific measures, such as strategic discussions, supra-national measures, support structures, dissemination of proven procedures.

5.5.2 Summary of Conclusions

Factors endangering partnership lay at the society and community level, internal and external level of the partnership. At the internal level the threads and weak points may be minimized by the recipients themselves. At the external level, level of concept of partnership in society, the responsibility lays with local, regional and national bodies of public administration, incl. control bodies of the operation programmes.

Actually there is a space supported by legislative, where the partnership can be applied and developed, and thus support its acceptance in the society.

Recommendations:

- In actual period, we recommend consistent application of methodologies and techniques of involvement of affected groups and public into all decision-making processes, in which it is allowed by actually applicable legislative, and creation of partnerships, both horizontal (project), and vertical (creation of programmes and strategies).
- We recommend application of Methodology for involvement of public into preparation of government documents, which was adopted by the Government Resolution No. 1146/2009.

These recommendations are also opportunities for development of partnership and direct response to threads 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and weak points 3, 4, 5.

5.6 Possible Modifications of Legal and Institutional Frame of Partnership (3.6)

In some cases, suitable solution of the partnership support is system change rather than modifications and responses to causes of setting of actual system.

Main evaluation question is as follows: How could the threads and weak points be minimized or eliminated by modification of actual institutionalised, legislative or financial frame for functioning of the partnership principle in CR and in selected EU states?

5.6.1 Data Processing Method and Commented Results

Analysis of benefits and potential support of partnership abroad and comparing with status in CR show that the partnership support should be based on modification of actual institutional, legislative or financial frame.

Government and parliament may minimize threads of partnership by following steps:

- Taking account on partnership in modifications and creation of new legal regulations
- Creation of financial programmes for support of development partners and partner development strategies

The recommendation is based on analysis of the legislative (see evaluation question 3.1). This recommendation is supported by findings in Netherlands and Lithuania, where formalized groups of partnerships backed up by legislative are supported. This recommendation also flows particularly from experience of England, Austria and Germany, which legislatively, as well as financially support regional and local development partnerships.

These recommendations are also opportunities for development of partnership and direct response to threads 1, 4 and weak points 1, 2.

The ministries may minimize the threads of partnership by creation of financial tools supporting networking, regional and local partnerships and their strategies, for support of sustainability of partner projects.

This recommendation is based particularly in good practice within the Rural Development Programme, from LAG aid. In CR, the approach has been so far applied only in the rural development area, and it has not been applied in support of human resource development strategies.

These recommendations are also opportunities for development of partnership and direct response to threads 1, 4 and weak points 1, 2.

Regional and local administration may minimize the threads to partnership by following steps:

- Creation of financial tools supporting networking, regional and local partnerships and their strategies, for support of sustainability of partner projects;
- Methodology support and education of public administration and other subjects in areas of good governance, management, leadership, partnership, quality control, communication, involvement of public into decision making process;

- Evaluation and assessment of partner strategies and projects and publishing results with view to strengthen public awareness on benefits of the partnership.

These recommendations are based on good practice of cooperation of municipalities in rural areas, additionally on functioning Strategies for Human Resource Development (Moravia-Silesia County, South Moravian County) and on foreign projects and support systems. The area of capacity building is pointed out in most of examined countries.

These recommendations are also opportunities for development of partnership and direct response to threads 1, 2, 3, 4, and weak points 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Control bodies of operation programmes may support the partnership particularly by implementing of following tools:

- Clear focusing to particular forms of partnerships, which are subsequently monitored. Example of good practice is Slovakia, where number of „social inclusion partnerships“ is specifically monitored within the monitoring indicators;
- Setting of partnership evaluation criteria to evaluate quality of partnership applying for the project. Example of good practice is partnership quality assessment in England;
- Support focused not only to particular partner projects, but also to creation of networking and building of partner structures. Building of capacities and initiation of partnership approved itself e.g. in Bulgaria, where within OP HRD one support area is focused to creation of networks and education of their members. It is application of articles 3 par. 2 item b of the EC Regulation No. 1081/2006;
- Setting of condition of work in partnership in development projects, were it is obvious from so-far realised evaluations of partnerships in CR and in EU that the partnerships are beneficial. This recommendation is based particularly on finding of benefits from development strategies in England (LAA), Germany („Learning Regions“) and Austria (TEP);
- Support of absorption capacity by means of methodology management and education of public administration and other subjects in area of good governance, management, leadership, partnership, quality control, communication, involvement of public into decision-making process, project management, multi-level financing, human resource management – increased knowledge and skills in these areas are crucial not only for partnership, but particularly for high-quality project management. Actually in CR there is no supported programme and technical assistance is not used for it. It is indirect support of partnership by application of article 3 par. 2 item b of the ES Regulation No. 1081/2006 – capacity building;
- Support of absorption capacity by financing of projects focused to searching, networking, participative involvement of partners and primary building of partnerships. It is indirect support of partnership by application of article 3 par. 2 item b of the ES Regulation No. 1081/2006 – capacity building;
- Modification and simplification of rules of operation programmes to eliminate the barriers. The simplification requirement results from European Commission and Czech Government (see „Report on progress in solving of selected legislative areas with view to simplify administration of structural funds and Cohesion Fund“, MMR, MF, October 2010);

- Modification of rules and deadlines of reporting, pre-financing and financing to consider needs of partner projects. This requirement is repeated at all recipients in all analysed countries;
- Methodology support of project retaliators, incl. establishment of position of MA consultants, who would be methodology support of recipients, implementation of formative assessment and providing of feedback and support within the project monitoring. These and similar requirements are repeated at all recipients in all analysed countries;
- Increase of number of MA employees engaged in material side of the projects, monitoring, evaluations, processing of monitoring report and ordering of applications on payment. This is pre-condition for mote intensive support of recipients during realisation of projects.

These recommendations are also opportunities for development of partnership and direct response to all specified threads and weak points.

5.6.2 Summary of Conclusions

The partnership threads and weak points may be minimized or eliminated at level of governments, ministries, regional and local self-governing administrations and control bodies. Experience from abroad and from individual departments and MA OP in CR show that there is need to focus particularly to setting of legislative enabling creation of partnerships and subsequently also financial support from particularly specified programmes. It results not only to factual support of partnership, but also to gaining of particular experience, strengthening of awareness on partnership and creation of environment of confidence in the society and community.

5.7 Causes of Different Legislative Frames in EU (3.7)

Main evaluation question is as follows: How and why do the legislative, institutional and financial frame for functioning of the partnership principle differ in ČR and in the other analysed EU member states?

5.7.1 Data Processing Method and Commented Results

5.7.1.1 Partnerships in development projects in EU resulting from national legislative

Examples may be projects from England arisen from LAA environment LAA (local development partnerships), or projects from Germany and Austria (arising from local agreements on employment, TEP).

In Italy, many MA of 21 regional OP cooperate with regional tripartite committees. The committees consists from social partners and employer associations and act as coordinators and evaluators of new pilot programmes for educational systems and employment policy at regional level.

In Netherlands, the operation programme supports existing partnerships between local administration and national employment offices and national body for social security insurance, which is supported by law and institutionalised.

5.7.1.2 Requirements to formal form of partnership

Following table shows that pre-condition of support in majority of countries is at least basic, informal agreement between the partners.

Table 57: Requirements to formal form of partnership

	Informal			Formal
	Agreement on cooperation/Commitment to cooperate on project	Agreement on understanding and cooperation describing work in project, roles, responsibility, act rules, processes.	Agreement between all partners / bilateral agreements	Agreements on basis of legislative requirements, creation of new legal forms, special roles of partners
Austria		X	X	
Czech Republic		X	X	
Estonia	X			
Belgium	X	X		
Germany		X		
Hungary	X		X	X
Ireland				X
Italy		X		
Lithuania	X	X		
Malta	X			
Poland	X			
Portugal				X
Romania	X			
Spain	X	X		
Sweden				X

Source: How ESF Managing Authorities and Intermediate Bodies Support Partnership, Community of Practice (CoP) on Partnership in the European Social Fund, 2008.

5.7.1.3 Partnership Arrangement

In all examined countries and programmes (incl. 7th frame programme, LLL programmes and cross-border cooperation programmes) the partnerships create hierarchy structure with single main applicant – partnership leader, which is the main coordinator of all processes.

Equality of partners in acting and intervention into the project activities is regulated by the partnership execution rules. E.g. Koalice nevládek Pardubicka, which formed a methodology of partnership management within the international project, publishes a sample template of the partnership execution rules in its publication.

Responsibility for the project and provided means is born by the main partner, or the partners feature equal responsibility towards the provider of subsidy.

5.7.1.4 Partnership Added Value

Partnership is perceived as structure creating „added value“, i.e. something, which could not be achieved in projects with single realisator, or by replacing the partner for sole provider of services.

The „Community of Practice (CoP) on Partnership in the European Social Fund" team compiled overview, how the partnership added value is perceived in various states:

Table 58: How is the partnership added value perceived in various states?

	Focus	Coordination	Use of sources	Social capital	Innovations	Capacity Building	Empowerment / Inclusion	Participative Democracy	Stability	Sustainability
Austria	X	X	X	X	X					X
England	X	X								
Estonia						X	X			
Belgium	X			X	X		X			
Germany	X	X								
Greece		X			X				X	
Hungary								X		
Ireland							X	X		X
Italy	X	X			X		X			
Lithuania							X	X		
Malta	X					X				
Netherlands				X						X
Poland				X	X	X	X			
Portugal	X				X					
Romania				X	X	X	X			
Spain		X								
Sweden		X						X		

Source: How ESF Managing Authorities and Intermediate Bodies Support Partnership, Community of Practice (CoP) on Partnership in the European Social Fund, 2008.

5.7.2 Summary of Conclusions

Main reason leading to different perception of the partnership between examined countries is particularly experience with application of partnership on creation and realisation of national, regional and local strategies and concepts. Legal norms defining partnership are supporting elements of the processes.

Implementation of the „partnership" term in the legislative is not self-purpose step. It is followed by implementation of partnership as principle for creation and implementation of national, sector, or regional development strategies and it supports establishment of purposeful partner projects.

Important issue is that in all examined countries the basic benefit of the partnership may be recognized in terms of its added value. The added value may have different characteristic features, on which an emphasis is put in various countries. Accentuation of certain aspects of the partnership is based on experience, application and legislative regulation of the partnership.

Assessment and perception of the partnership added value depends on experience and legislative regulation of the partnership principle in particular countries.

Partners always conclude an agreement defining a leader partner with main responsibility and coordinator role. Responsibility towards the provider of subsidy may be also on the other partners of the project.

Recommendations:

- Need of agreement between partners and hierarchy structure of the partnership is resoluble in the Czech environment by possibility to create associations without legal form acc. to Civil Code, in which all members of the association are responsible to third persons. Association may be concluded by written agreement, which is not defined by the law – therefore it may be „Agreement on Partnership“.

5.8 Consequences of Different Partnership Frames in EU (3.8)

Main evaluation question is as follows: What consequences have the identified differences in implemented frame for functioning of the partnership principle to threads and/or opportunities related to application of the partnership principle in praxis?

5.8.1 Data Processing Method and Commented Results

5.8.1.1 Different perception and support of partnership added value in EU countries

Focus

Focusing of sources and attention to various target groups enables better identification of „white areas“, needs and priorities related to employment, social inclusion and human resources and to develop target measures.

Example from Sweden: In Sweden, there is established strong regional and political partnership „Structural Fund Partnerships (SFPs)“, in which politicians cooperate with social partners, NGOs, representatives of public and private sector. SFPs serve as selection committee for partner projects, which best comply with priorities of ERDF, as well as ESF programmes, on which many various partners are to cooperate.

Coordination

Cooperation in partnership may improved and coordinate the departmental policies, focusing of programmes and projects to local conditions and prevent duplication.

Example from Austria: Territorial Employment Pacts (TEPs) support employment policy with other policies at local and regional level. The example is detailed in case studies.

Example from Romania: Partnership is tool for planning at regional and local level and it supports integrating and decentralized approach in solving of problems related to the employment and social inclusion policies.

Use of Sources

Sources of partners are used for solving of particular problems.

Example from CR: The project partners shall describe, in which areas they are experienced and how the sources allocated to them in the project will be used to enable mutual complementation.

Social Capital

Relations and links between countries, regions, sectors and organisations may strengthen social networks and deepen understanding of values and problems of other sectors and their role within the society.

Example from Netherlands: Partnership supports and strengthens strong tradition of partnership, which is close to social dialogue and relations between social partners, public administration and ministries, and long-term history in building of programmes and projects on basis of already existing, often formalized (but not formal) partnerships.

Example from Estonia: In Estonia, the control bodies cooperate with roofing organisations. Their links to social partners and NGOs, which they represent, are basis for communication with target group and also provide feedback to control body.

Innovations

More creative, new and dynamic approaches to solving of changes in the society are possible only if observed from various view angles simultaneously.

Example from Portugal: Partnership in projects focuses to creation of new integrated approaches for support of social cohesion and endangered groups of inhabitants.

Capacity Building

Work in partnerships does not provide to partners only access to financial sources. It also strengthen the capacities of partners and improves strategic and management skills. Sometimes it is necessary to develop the capacities of organisations to become full-valued project partners.

Example from Malta: Limited capacities of social partners and non-profit organisations lead to situation, when one of areas of the operation programme engages in support of effective social and civil dialogue.

Example from Estonia: One of priority axes of OP Human Resource Development is „Strengthening of Administrative Capacities“ and contains two measures focused to social partners. One of them is strengthening of administrative capacity focused to public administration and non-profit organisations, also named „Fund for Wise Decisions“. It includes two sub-measures focused to creation of strategic approaches, and additionally to development and implementation of local analyses. The second measure is focused to education of officials of public administration and non-profit organisations. It includes two sub-measures: development of organisations and educational programme. There is also special programme for trade unions to support focused to increasing of their skills and capabilities as partner of governmental institutions.

Example from Bulgaria: Capacity building is covered by one aid area of OP Human Resource development, which is focused to education and networking of public institutions, incl. NGOs.

Empowerment

Direct involvement of target groups should help to disadvantaged groups to strengthen their position on political scene and to make them active in solution of their problems.

Example from Italy and Greece: Italy supports involvement of target groups as partners at all levels. In Greece, the partnership is considered for best method for support of involvement of high number of actors in support of inclusion.

Support of Participative Democracy

Political decisions and reforms gain larger support, if various actors are included in their preparation, incl. generally recognized organisations. Additionally, involvement of public strengthen political responsibility in the problem solving.

Example from Lithuania and Netherlands: Partnership means wide involvement of public into decision process at level of creation of policies and realisation of the project.

Example from Hungary: One of operation programmes is focused to support of partnership between public administration and social partners to strengthen participative democracy and improve social links at local and regional level.

Stability

Engagement of civil society relates to stage of strategic planning and local projects. It contributes to better understanding to policies, plans, and strengthen cohesion throughout society. However it must be ensured that the opinions of public are assessed as opinions of equal partner, as formalized and improperly executed involvement of the civil public leads to disillusion and destabilisation.

Example from Ireland: In Ireland, support of partnership in operation programmes reflects implemented method, by which the partnership and involvement of public is perceived and accepted. Social partners and on-profit organisations know, how to move in the structure and how to involve in constructive and purposeful way.

Sustainability

Support of active cooperation in society and share of sources may support long-term and permanent positive solutions of social problems.

Example from Austria: TEPs (Territorial employment pacts) make added value by the fact, that they adopt political and programme measures to local needs and target groups, increase number of participants actively solving the employment problems, and improve effectiveness, purposefulness, and transparency of the employment policy, and ensure financial support to regions, also due to engaged partners.

5.8.2 Summary of Conclusions

5.8.2.1 Perception and support of partnership added value in the Czech Republic

Key actors for solving of problems (OSS, incl. employment offices, municipalities) cannot be financial partners. Additionally, there is very low awareness on partnership, i.e. these partners usually do not initiate the partnerships with the other subjects. Development strategies at local and regional level are created in partnership in limited scope, e.g. in LAG in rural micro-regions, or KPSS. At the county level, the Strategy for Human Resource Development is created and implemented only in two counties. Joint projects with focusing and covering of „white areas“ are established as “innovations“ rather than regular approach.

In CR the participative democracy and involvement of public into decision-making have no traditional roots. Public administration is not systematically educated in techniques and methods of high-quality engagement of public. Thus such approach is not support for building of partnership approach in CR.

In CR, the partnership is assessed regarding and approach to sources and correct use of financial means in relation to planned activities and prevention of overlapped use of financial means.

In CR, benefit of partnership to innovations is positively perceived: it is assessed what the partnership brings in addition and beyond common potential within single organisation, or uniquely and exclusively in comparison to system of supplier-customer relations.

In CR, direct engagement of target groups as partners is not required. The projects distinguish position of target group and project partner. The project partner is usually in position of actors providing services, the target group is in position of recipient. However the target groups may be supported not only by activities of the project, but also by measures, incl. financial ones, which facilitate their participation in the project.

The building of capacities is in CR described by organisations as unexpected benefit. It is not considered during assessment of the project application. But the rules sometimes enable to support realisator, partners and target group within single project: for example in projects focused to education.

No operation programme, incl. OP Technical Assistance, support building of capacities of recipients and potential partners.

5.9 Improvement of Legal and Institutional Frame of Partnership in CR (3.9)

Following responses to evaluation question are synthesis of analyses from former sections of evaluation.

Main evaluation question is as follows: How could be the actual legislative, institutional and financial frame for functioning of the partnership principle in CR improved and make more effective on basis of foreign experiences?

5.9.1 Summary of Conclusions

These are general final recommendations of evaluation team.

In the Czech Republic, it is necessary to focus to several areas:

1. Taking account on partnership in modifications and creation of new legal regulations;
2. Creation of national, regional and local financial programmes for support of development partnerships, partner development strategies and involvement of public into the decision making process;
3. Methodology support and education of public administration and other subjects in areas of good governance, management, leadership, partnership, quality control, communication, involvement of public into decision making process;
4. Focusing of operation programmes supported from ESF and of technical assistance programme to above-mentioned educational programmes;
5. Evaluation and assessment of partner strategies and projects, and publishing of results at national, regional, local and project level;
6. Modification of operation programme rules for support of partnership.

Recommendations:

- Support use of partnership by methodology support and education of public administration and other subjects in areas of good governance, management, leadership, partnership, quality control, communication, involvement of public into decision making process;
- Publishing of evaluation and assessment of partnership strategies and projects and publishing of results at national, regional, local and project level, as possible in all cases.

5.10 Possible Legal Modifications in Partnership Area (3.10)

Following evaluation question is synthesis of possible modifications in legal norms of CR on basis of above elaborated analyses of the partnership principle.

Main evaluation question is as follows: What are the legal regulations, or other rules, into which the proposed modifications are to be reflected, and what is the most suitable way?

5.10.1.1 Change of budget rules

We recommend initiation of modification of the Act No. 218/2000 Coll. on budget rules and the Act No. 250/2000 Coll. on budget rules of territory budgets to

- Explicitly include possibility and conditions, under which the projects, activities or actions realised in partnership of more subject may be financed (provide subsidy) from the state budget and from budget of territorial self-governing units, and
- Explicitly include possibility and conditions, under which the projects, activities or actions realised in partnership, where one of the partners is state body or subsidized organisation established by it, or territorial self-governing unit, or subsidized organisation established by it, may be financed (provide subsidy).

This recommendation may be realised only in cooperation with Ministry of Finance.

5.10.1.2 Development Programmes

We recommend creation and development of development programmes focused to support of development partnerships, partner development strategies ad engagement of public into the decision-making process. This recommendation can be realised only in cooperation with Ministry of Finance and other departments.

5.10.1.3 Operation Programme OP HRE: Education of public administration for support of partnership

We recommend to focus support from operation programmes to educational programmes for public administration in good governance, management, leadership, partnership, quality control, communication, involvement of public into decision-making process. This recommendation can be realised by change of focus of public administration education (4th priority axis).

5.10.1.4 OP Technical Assistance: Building of absorption capacity

We recommend focusing the support from OP TA to:

- Building of capacity of all potential recipients and partners, particularly in following areas: management, leadership, partnership, quality control, communication, involvement of public into decision-making process
- Creation of networking and building of partner structures

This recommendation may be realised only in cooperation with control body of OP TA.

5.10.1.5 Operation programmes: simplification of rules, methodology support and more flexible acting

Regarding operation programmes supported by ESF, we recommend unification of rules for applicants and recipients to equal - minimum level.

Further we recommend increase of number of control body employees engaged in material side of the projects, monitoring, evaluations, processing of monitoring report and ordering of applications on payment.

Additionally, we recommend implementation of methodology support of project realisators, incl. establishment of position of MA consultants, who would be methodology support of recipients, implementation of formative assessment and providing of feedback and support within the project monitoring.

These recommendations may be realised only in cooperation with control bodies and intermediate bodies of these operation programmes and relevant ministries.

5.10.1.6 Modification of operation programme rules for support of partnership

Within revision of operation programmes and particularly for new programme period, we recommend to ensure that in all OP, or in such OP and their aid areas, where possible - the material assessment should prefer projects, in which the applicant for the stage of preparation or realisation

of the project documents credible partner. It should be usually subject- or territory-relevant partner, whose contribution into the project will not be negligible, either regarding human, financial or material sources, or as bearer of know-how and significant experience in implementation of materially similar projects, i.e. partner, which helps to applicant to achieve principally better results and outcomes[2].

We recommend to asses the partnership quality by wider range of indicators, both during the application assessment, and during realisation.

We recommend to actively support creation on inter-sector partner projects, and as substantial development of previous item to implement the rule that each applicant from public administration – or at least at local and regional administration level (county, association of municipalities, municipality) – before submitting of application for financing of own intention from public sources invited publicly the subject- or territory-relevant non-governmental non-profit organisations and business subjects to cooperation in preparation and realisation of the project, which it is going to propose. In case of proven non-acceptation of the offer the public administration body will proceed independently, in case of accepting of the offer it will discuss the project cooperation. Such principle will increase effectiveness of use of sources of EU and state budget and radically open the area for inter-sector cooperation of public administration, business and non-profit sector, incl. full applying of PPP, Local Agenda 21 and other tools for effective use of public means.

In next programme period, we recommend to clearly define and focus to particular form of partnership, which are subsequently monitored – it will be reflected in more detailed definitions of monitored indicators (e.g. partnership for labour market, partnership for social inclusion).

[2] Risk of the measure is that recipients will notify in increased scope partners from speculative reasons of point bonification. It would be necessary to specify not only clear conditions for acceptability of such partnerships, but also to propose effective control of the partner benefit to the project results.

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

Following part of evaluation summarizes conclusions and recommendations from analyses to particular evaluation questions. It is classified to general conclusions from analyses, conclusions to individual examined topics, recommendations and finally there is objective tree scheme for implementation of the recommendations.

6.1 General Conclusions

General View to Partnership Principle in OP HRE

OP HRE is one of programmes, which actively uses the partnership principle. Partnerships is viewed in this evaluation from many view angles. Although there are no sufficient information and data for assessment of relatively small area of partnerships, as most projects are only in the realisation stage, this principle may be evaluated as positive element in realisation of the OP HRE projects.

OP HRE Programme Level

At the programme level the partnerships exhibits higher effects in form of matching of programme objectives with needs of target groups. It is important especially now, when OP HRE moved to middle of its programme period. For OP HRE the partnership at the programme level is important from the relevancy point of view. Longer period passed since the OP HRE has been prepared. External environment of the programme changed and also the needs of target groups have been developing. Consultations with the target groups may improve focusing of the call for proposals and thus better solving of actual needs and problems.

Applying of this principle will be important also in planning of ESF intervention in programme period after 2014. Experience with partnerships reflected in results of the evaluation may be used also in these negotiations.

Experience from previous programme period from CIP EQUAL is obvious particularly in priority axis 5 OP HRE. This priority axis generates procedures focused to system changes. It is achieved particularly due to realisation of projects in partnership and experience of beneficiaries with realisation of more complex projects. Some of the partner projects is usable also for system changes in area of the human resources development in CR. Selected projects, which could have such impacts, are stated in the recommendations.

Project Level

Fulfilment of partnership principle at the project level brings about the synergy effect for the target groups in form of mutual use of knowledge, skills and potential of partner organisations. The partnership seems to be the supporting element also for long-term sustainability of results from the project activities.

The applicants are relatively cautious at selection of partners. Proven organisations are usually selected. It may decrease the potential of project activities to innovations, but it also reduces risk of realisation of problem projects.

In case of the OP HRE partnership, the tendency to centralized decision-making is exhibited as soon as in the elaboration of project application itself. It is determined by distribution of responsibilities at eventual subsequent realisation of the project.

Engagement of partners means for the participating subjects extension of project sources by other skills, know-how, organisation capacities, or financial sources. Involvement of partners has high importance particularly for contacts with target groups and for better achieving of program objectives.

At the project level there is significant positive shift in the area of financial and organisational flexibility of OP HRE as compared to programmes in previous programme period. It is particularly related with experience gained by individual partners. Presently the system of continuous payments is not perceived by the respondents as a big problem. Actually much more subjects are prepared to realisation of ESF projects within partner projects as compared to status within the previous programme period.

6.2 Conclusions to Individual Evaluation Themes

The partnership principle may be assessed as positive element both at programme, and at project level. Fulfilment of partnership principle at the project level brings about to target groups the synergy effect for the target groups in form of mutual use of knowledge, skills and potential of partner organisations. The partnership seems to be the supporting element also for long-term sustainability of results from the project activities.

Realisation of partner projects in individual priority axes of OP HRE

In individual priority axes we may most often encounter the partnership in applications for the assistance from priority axes 2, 3 and 5. In priority axis 5, the partnership is a requirement of support from OP HRE. The partner applications occur also in priority axis 1, but at lower scope. The partnership almost does not occur in the priority axis 4.

By now [62] the OP HRE supported 424 projects with partnership out of total number of 2680 projects. In priority axes 1 and 3 the partnership projects are slightly more successful in applications for aid from OP HRE than projects of single applicant. But in priority axis 2 the projects without partnership are significantly more often supported than the partner projects. It is determined by the fact that potential partners are primarily from the public administration area. In connection with financial and legal obstacles it is obvious that the projects without partners are selected.

In calls for proposals in OP HRE the partnership was not an assessment criterion affecting assessment by external evaluators of the applications. Exception is priority axis 5, where the partnership was required by the calls.

Within the priority axis 1 most projects are realised only by recipient (91 % of supported projects). This situation is apprehensible from the enterprise point of view. However partnership has importance for the enterprises particularly in period of economic recession. Some of partner projects lead to joint savings and thus to strengthening of these companies on market.

[62] January 2011

Projects in priority axis 2 are realised particularly by one organisation (91.1 % of supported projects). Employment offices feature important position.

Within the invitations of priority axis 3 the partnership is non-mandatory part of preparation and realisation of the project. In spite of it, 30 % applications are prepared within partnership. Within the realisation itself, however, the share of partner projects is higher and exceeds one third.

Regarding the fact that most invitations in the priority axis 4 were declared for individual projects, majority of the projects is by now realised without this tool. The partnership occurs only in 0.4 % of project applications. In case the use of partnership is purposeful for realisation of particular activities, the partnership is specified in invitations for grant projects of municipalities and counties. Regarding the fact that these were individual projects within these calls. the OP HRE rules did not enable partnership with financial contribution, but another variant enabling cooperation in given territory was selected.

For priority axis 5, the partnership is basic principle, i.e. all realised project have partners. Partnership in this priority axis brings about number of impulses with potential large impacts to the labour market. These are mainly several representative studies of the labour market, efforts to system solution of problems of target groups and also networking; the factors are engaged in this particular issue in the long-term. Within evaluation of implementation of the OP HRE partnership principle, projects with this potential were selected and use of their results was recommended.

Experience of recipients from previous programme period

Realisation of ESF projects within previous programme period enabled transfer of experience from previous to new partner projects. In priority axis 3 of OP HRE it was probably a factor increasing the number of project applications in actual period.

Experience gained by individual partners helped, that recipients and their partner organisations are able to easily solve the process related to partner projects financed from ESF.

Experience from CIP EQUAL helped in priority axis 5 to generate outcomes focused to system changes. This is particularly due to realisation of projects in partnership, when some of partners are responsible for mainstreaming.

In addition to CIP EQUAL and projects ESF, also the JROP 3.3 and Leader method use the partnership principle in previous programme period.

Effects of county projects and whole JROP 3.3 measure were during the project realisation and indirectly even later positive. Yet the partner bodies in counties were established, but sometimes they were assessed as formal and after financing (on completion of projects) they mostly ceased. Actually the partnership within the meaning of 3.3 JROP measure continues now only in some counties and in limited form. Often result is that original project team did not meet upon completion of the projects and there were no joint actions or activities. Many links between individual partners were maintained with result of occasional, as well as permanent cooperation and often even interconnection between relevant organisations. Almost all representatives from counties agreed that if sufficient financial means exist, some activities could be fully recovered.

It was clearly shown by survey in counties that inter-sector partnership features positive influence to use of EU funds and to further development of counties. Particularly, the partnership could positively contribute to e.g.

- Specification of needs of counties for period 2014-20 regarding cohesion policy (with similar role as during preparation of ROP for period 2007 – 2013),
- Preparation and updating of strategic projects within counties,
- Searching of partners for the project (it is possible to obtain contact data of partners suitable for joint activities from databases developed within the projects).

Leader method is based on long-term cooperation of local subjects, which create local inter-sector partnership on form of local action group (MAS) and realises on their territory the development strategy. Core of activity lays in cooperation (partnership) of three groups of local subjects: public administration, business sector and organised part of civil society (local NGOs). Actually there operate cca 145 active LAG on 68 % of CR territory. They are financed mainly (but not only) from the CR Rural Development Programme. Under conditions of ESF, the global grants are close to position and tasks of LAG.

Principle of inter-sector partnerships (Leader method) may be fully applied even outside the rural regions. LAG may operate in areas, where there occurs synergy effect from influence of various local subjects, such as in priority axes 3 and 5 of OP HRE. In OP for next period after 2013 substantial strengthening of partner approaches could be considered. Best outlooks for these partnerships could be in area of profession education of adults, in social services, incl. integration of socially disadvantaged groups, and in support of employment of specific groups of population.

Partnership Typology

Basic used models of partnerships are local partnerships (cooperation of subjects within a municipality, or max, within borders of a county), inter-sector (subjects from various sectors) and intra-industry (subjects with the same business branch). Size of partnership is usually limited to 1 partner. Often case of inter-sector partnership is cooperation of non-profit organisation and municipality.

This classification implies that the recipients are relatively conservative and realised such partnerships, in which they are well oriented and have the control in their own hands (both from geographical, and substantial point of view).

Although more intensive use of the partnership principle is somewhat limited by missing legal definition, regulation and limitation in OP HRE may be considered as sufficient. Potential misunderstandings may be solved by improvement of texts of manual, as specified below in recommendations.

Partnership Creation and Composition

Improper interpretation of the partnership principle (mainly joint decision-making) by applicants leads usually to poor quality of prepared applications resulting in rejection by external evaluators as insufficient for aid from OP HRE.

Thus the aid recipients during creation of the partnership search balance between innovation (and maybe more risk) approaches and formal requirements. Most applicants chose more conservative approach and select partners from proven partners. In case of the OP HRE partnership, the tendency to centralized decision-making is exhibited as soon as in the elaboration of project application itself. It is determined by distribution of responsibilities at eventual subsequent realisation of the project. The applicant (potential beneficiary) tries to have all under control.

Engagement of partners means for participating subjects extension of project sources by another skills, knowledge, organisation capacities, or financial sources (for co-financing or for the sustainability period). All of this is beneficial to target groups.

Involvement of partners into the project has high importance particularly for contacts with target groups and for better achieving of program objectives. Less frequent, but still important benefits from the recipients lay in gaining of skills and know-how for management of project and for cooperation outside the project itself. In both cases it is such combination, which may result in effects for target groups.

Joint decision-making features worse seizure for many recipients, as just they are legally responsible for realised project. Sometimes the partners are in position, where they affect the realised project, but do not bear any legal responsibility. It requires increased costs to achieving of consensus from the partnership.

Partnership Financial Side

The evaluation did not find direct relation proving real financial savings due to the partnership principle. Objectively we may talk about timesavings, higher effectiveness of realised activities, direct action to target groups etc. Projects with the partnership mode have larger potential to affect the target groups and to match the outputs from the projects to them, but no clear financial saving was documented for these types of projects.

Typical characteristic of actual OP HRE is centralised setting of decision-making system regarding the financial flows. It depends on legal responsibility, which is on side of the beneficiary.

Within analysis of achieved and planned values of monitored indicators, the existence of differences between partner projects and project without partnership was not verified. In case if real values of monitored indicates after completion of the projects was given by the fact that only relatively small sample of cases was available.

Eventual co-financing would increase the effectiveness of realised project activities. It would probably increase also the effort of non-governmental non-profit organisation regarding creation of partnerships with companies and municipalities. On one hand this step would help to expand the partnership, but on the other hand it could put the non-profit organisations at risk, as they are not prepared to such situation and their financial capacities are weak.

Contribution of Partnership to OP HRE Implementation

When the projects are realised in partnership, they are probably more sustainable from long-term horizon. These are mainly cases, when the partners are representatives of target groups, who are also in position of users of the project outputs. With this regard the partnership principle itself is one of structures supporting sustainability.

It may be presumed the impacts of projects realised in partnership and their sustainability may be increased by such method that the beneficiaries will ensure part of the project funding from other sources outside the OP HRE. This would increase their engagement and effort to achieve the planned impacts. At the project level the steps would lead to increase of potential impacts. On the other hand, it is necessary to notify the risk related with this step in relation to the partnership at the programme level. It is highly probable that representatives of NGOs and other actors will stand against this step. In this regard the ex-post evaluation of PO5 will surely give some interesting information, as there the foreign partners have no share in the project budget and thus they co-finance the projects by some way.

Reason for support of partnership is improvement of the situation by involvement of stakeholders from target regions and target groups. This will lead to better understanding of the problem and setting of priorities. They are supposed particularly in 3 benefits from partnership:

- Solution is shared by more participants, who bring about new views and new solutions.
- Participants during the discussion adopt the decision for their own and follow its realisation by more intense manner.
- Upon consensual decision, the long-term maintaining of the decision results is easier.

Partnership of MA OP HRE with representatives of target groups and social partners in preparation of call for proposals may contribute to clarification of actual needs of target groups and to increase of absorption capacity, both regarding potential to absorb the funding from ESF, and regarding achieved effects. This may play positive role in discussions on allocations for following programme period.

From the horizontal theme point of view there is obvious trend of partner projects to higher perception and fulfilment of horizontal themes (particularly gender equality at labour market).

By contrast, difference between the innovation rate of partner and non-partner projects has not been detected.

Partnership Legislative Regulations

The analyses of legal obstacles showed lack of legal regulation, which would enable to provide subsidy from the state budget and from budget of territorial self-governmental units to more subject for single joint project. The analysis also showed that this setting does not support higher absorption capacities within the European project financing system. Then the recipients are apt to create the informal forms of partnership.

Probably most important barriers for full-valued application of the partnership principle are legislative rules for partnership. Provisions of the Act No. 218 on budget rules prevent financing of organisational units of state, municipality and county as partners of the recipient. These provisions specify type of means, which may be budget income of these institutions. In praxis it is therefore not possible for OSS, county or municipality to accept in their budgets the means from recipient, which is not a subject financing the OSS, counties or municipalities on basis of a law.

Modification of law in area of financing of partner projects (particularly the Act No. 218/2000 Coll. on budget rules and the Act No. 250/2000 Coll. on budget rules of territorial budgets) could enable financing of the partners, who cannot be partners with financial contribution, and thus to evoke increased interest in partner projects from part of these actors.

6.3 Recommendations

The evaluation established five basic groups of recommendations, which in detail define more particular steps for realisation of the recommendations. These recommendations are included into the problem tree scheme created by the evaluation team at the start of realisation of this study.

6.3.1 Intervention Logic

Following section contains problem tree scheme defined by evaluation team before launching of work. This tree was transformed into the tree of objectives. The evaluation study proposes recommendations, which response to found problems and focused to their solving.

At first, basic problems related to fulfilment of the partnership principle are defined. Then there is the problem tree itself, which depicts mutual relations of causes and effects between individual problems. The tree of objectives forms final part, in which the problems are transformed to the objectives. Main objective and three specific objectives are stated. Target situations one level below the specific objectives (and further) always contain references to recommendations advised by the evaluation team for solving of particular situation.

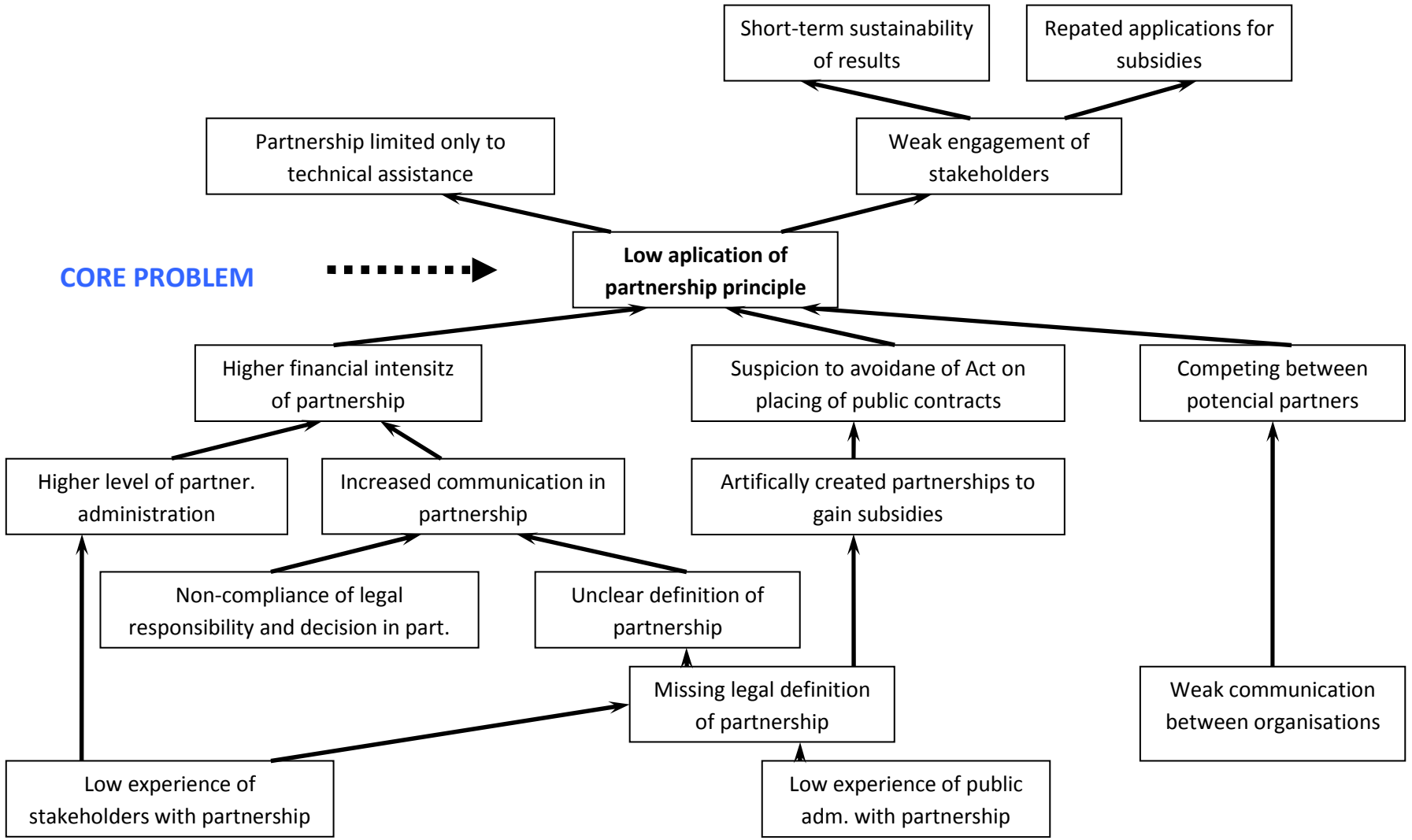
Regarding the fact that many recipients and applicants are able to realise their projects even without legislative definition of the partnership, in the tree of objective we have focused to understanding of partnership rather than its legal definition.

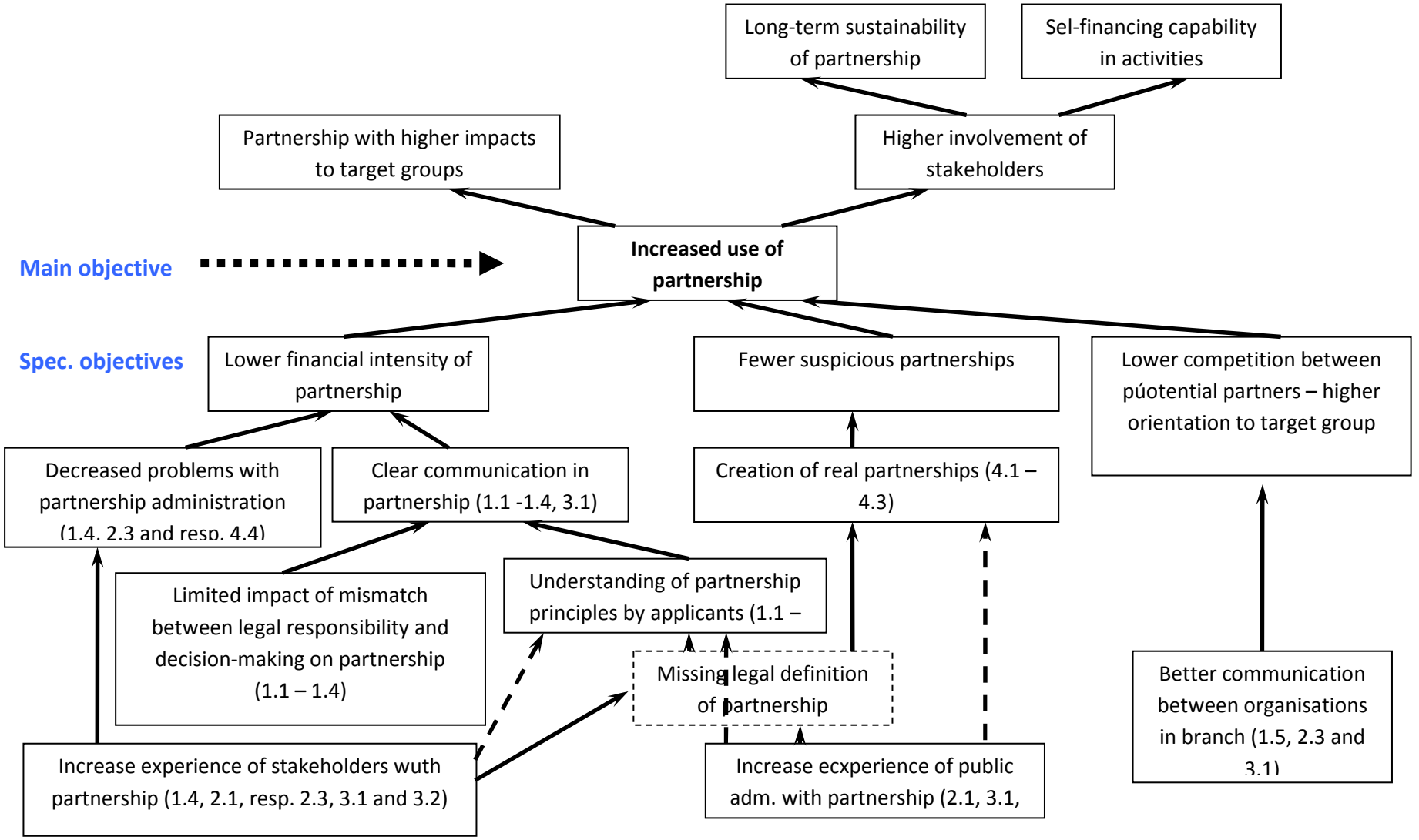
The tree of objectives integrates following areas (in alphabetical order):

1) **Competition between potential partners** – Operation of several organisations in the same branch and their acting on the same target group causes that the organisations perceive themselves as competitors and their mutual cooperation in projects with the partnership principle is limited, if not excluded.
2) **Short-term sustainability of results** – Project activities are realised primarily to period, for which the activities are supported from EU. With this notion the sustainability is perceived only as necessary extra weight to these projects.

3) **Low experience of stakeholders with partnership** – The partnership principle began to occur only in projects financed from EU. Particularly question of mutual decision-taking reflects the relatively low experience of many organisations presenting applications for financing from EU funds.
4) **Low experience of public administration with partnership** – Partnership principle occurs also in area of drafting of public policies. Political system, which clearly separates political decision from civil society, causes that many authorities are not able to effectively use the partnership principle.
5) **Unclear definition of partnership** – Non-clearance of relatively new term brings about unclear definition characteristics both for public administration, and for organisations applying the partnership principle at the project level.
6) **Non-compliance between legal responsibility and decision-making in partnership** – acc. to legal regulations, the beneficiary (recipient of subsidy) is responsible for realisation of the project, but application of the partnership principle requires that also the partner organisations would be engaged in the decision-making,
7) **Low application of partnership principle** – ignorance of projects realised in partnership leads to presentation of projects without partners.
8) **Necessary improved communication in partnership** – more partner organisations means also higher transaction costs related to necessity to communicate with more people and more organisations and worse achievement of consensual agreement.
9) **Repeated application for subsidies** – non-solved problem of sustainability (particularly financial) of the project activities leads to repeated presentation of project applications both in programs financed from EU, and from other sources.
10) **Partnership is limited only to technical matter** – In case the programmes are inquired by projects with the partnership principle, the applicants response to the inquiry only in form of formal partnerships to fulfil the condition in particular invitation.
11) **Suspicion to avoidance of the Act on placing of public contracts** – Suspicion that partners re not real partners, but only hidden sub-contractors of services.
12) **Missing legal definition of partnership** – non-regulation and non-definition of the partnership term in the Czech legal system.
13) **Weak communication between organisations in the branch** – Existence of various associations, disintegration in the branch, lead to improper exchange of information and discussion oer specific topics.
14) **Weak engagement of stakeholders** – Weak communication leads also to neglecting of particularly the target group, to which the project activities are to be focused.
15) **Artificially created partnership for gaining of subsidy** – In some cases the „partners“ are in the project only for reason that they are separately not able to get the subsidy, or at a lower amount. An example may be „presenting“ of non-profit organisation, which then covers activities for companies.
16) **Higher financial intensity of partnership** – Necessary more intensive communication and higher administration means also higher demands to covering of the activities by financial sources.

17) **Higher level of administration in partnership** – Within the projects financed from EU means the rules causes necessary larger to match the formal procedures and result to the programme rules.


Short-term sustainability of results
Repated applications for subsidies
Partnership limited only to technical assistance
Weak engagement of stakeholders
CORE PROBLEM
Low aplication of partnership principle
Higher financial intensitz of partnership
Suspicion to avoidane of Act on placing of public contracts
Competing between potencial partners
Higher level of partner. administration
Increased communication in partnership
Artifically created partnerships to gain subsidies
Non-compliance of legal responsibility and decision in part.
Unclear definition of partnership
Missing legal definition of partnership
Weak communication between organisations
Low experience of stakeholders with partnership
Low experience of public adm. with partnership


Long-term sustainability of partnership
Sel-financing capability in activities
Partnership with higher impacts to target groups
Higher involvement of stakeholders
Main objective
Increased use of partnership
Spec. objectives
Lower financial intensity of partnership
Fewer suspicious partnerships
Lower competition between púotential partners – higher orientation to target group
Decreased problems with partnership administration (1.4, 2.3 and resp. 4.4)
Clear communication in partnership (1.1 -1.4, 3.1)
Creation of real partnerships (4.1 – 4.3)
Limited impact of mismatch between legal responsibility and decision-making on partnership (1.1 – 1.4)
Understanding of partnership principles by applicants (1.1 –
Missing legal definition of partnership
Better communication between organisations in branch (1.5, 2.3 and 3.1)
Increase experience of stakeholders wuth partnership (1.4, 2.1, resp. 2.3, 3.1 and 3.2)
Increase ecxperience of public adm. with partnership (2.1, 3.1,

6.3.2 Recommendations

The evaluation established five basic groups of recommendations, which in detail define more particular steps for realisation of the recommendations.

1) The MA OP HRE should support the definition of partnership and conditions for suitable composition of partnership for more efficient project feasibility and benefits for the target groups

A clear definition of partnership could help a number of „applicants-beginners“ to apply for support from the OP HRE.

Involvement of partners in the project was of great importance especially for contacts with target groups and for better achieving of project objectives. Less common but yet still significant benefits for the beneficiaries consist in acquiring skills and knowledge for project management and cooperation beyond the project itself. In both cases, it is such a combination that can ultimately lead to effects on the target groups.

1.1 We recommend introducing provision of legal services for review and possible creation of appendices to the partnership agreement as eligible project costs. This eligible expenditure must be limited by a maximum amount per project (e.g. up to CZK 10,000 per project). Although it is considered as a strength that the MA provides a template of the partnership agreement, lack of experience with partnership and project management can be reflected in practice in that partnership agreements are only written according to this template formally. Only when the project is being implemented, the beneficiary sees that the partner does not provide anything that is not in the agreement and that the cooperation must be specified much more precisely (evaluation questions 3.1, 3.7 and 3.10).

1.2 For the project level, it is recommended to specify the terms partner and supplier in the OP HRE Implementation Document (page 12), in the Guide for Applicants (page 31), in the Guide for Beneficiaries (page 42) and in the relevant calls as follows: (evaluation question 1.23)

a) An entity, which only or mainly provides the beneficiary or other partners with access to the given target group without fulfilling any other important or irreplaceable tasks within the key activity, is not an acceptable partner;

b) An entity, which (besides participating in the project management) provides services to partners who ensure participation of a target group, is not an acceptable partner or beneficiary.

1.3 When submitting the application, the MA is recommended to require more carefully the statement of reasons for involvement of individual partners. We therefore recommend an assessment of suitability of a change in the C3 criterion (Partnership) in the OP HRE Guide for Project Evaluators in the regard that the evaluator also has to assess the functional irreplaceablity of partners in terms of the outputs. The evaluator would assess this by the rate of involvement and contribution of partners to the implementation of the project (in the category of monitoring indicators) and the rate of drawing of funds in the case of partners with a financial contribution.

The proposal of an amendment to the assessment criterion C3: The criterion also assesses whether all proposed project partners are necessary and irreplaceable in terms of the output or functionally. I.e. it must be clearly stated in the application (or in the appendices) what added value the partner brings to the project and why the project could not be implemented or would be very difficult to implement if the partner was not part of the project. The irreplaceability can be of two types as follows: a) the partner is irreplaceable if the value of the monitoring indicators could not be achieved if the partner was not involved (e.g. if two businesses are partners who have their employees trained, they are both irreplaceable in terms of the output because each contributes with a certain number of supported persons, b) a partner is irreplaceable if it plays a significant role which cannot be played by any other partner (including the recipient) and which cannot be omitted without a risk of failure to meet the project objectives and monitoring indicators (evaluation question 1.23).

1.4 We recommend considering the possibility that in the case of more than two partners the applicant provides proof of previous experience with management of partnership projects and the ability to manage a partnership project. It will be part of evaluation of project applications (evaluation question 1.7).

1.5 We recommend including the following types of entities as possible partners in projects in the areas of support listed in the table. Thereby, a wider groups of target groups can be addressed and included (evaluation questions 1.7, 1.C and 1.D):

Area of Support	Type of Entity	Brief justification
2.1	Business associations, chambers of commerce, entrepreneur guilts	Entry only as partners without financial support.
3.2	Job centres	Extension of beneficiaries/partners by important entities in the area of integrations of Romani people.
3.3	Semi-budgetary organizations (e.g. schools, hospitals etc.), providers of social services who are not NGOs, job centres	Enlargement of the range of possible beneficiaries with relevant needs and capacities for meeting the objectives of the area 3.3.
3.4	Entrepreneurs and business associations.	This only regards explicit confirmation of their acceptability.

2) Through partnership, the MA OP HRE should encourage compliance of the focus of the programme and the calls with the needs of the target groups.

Partnerships of the MA OP HRE with representatives of the target groups and social partners during the preparations of the calls can help clarify the actual needs of the target groups and increase absorption capacity both in terms of the ability to absorb the ESF funds and in terms of the achieved effects. That could play a positive role in the discussions on allocations for the following programming period.

Application of the partnership principle may be helpful particularly for the long-term impact of support.

2.1 At the programme level, we therefore recommend greater involvement of representatives of target groups not only in the preparations of a new programme (for the following period) but also in designing the concept of new calls in the current period so that the needs of the target groups comply with the objectives of the programme, priority axes and individual calls. To fulfil the above, methodologies and techniques of involvement of affected groups and public should be consistently applied in the decision-making processes in which it is allowed by the current

legislative and the establishment of horizontal (project) and vertical (when creating programmes and strategies) partnerships. We recommend to apply the Methodology for Public Participation in the Preparation of Government Documents which was approved by Government Decree No. 1146/2009 Coll. Particularly in accordance with the principles of involvement of public (chapter 1.6 of this methodology – timeliness, clarity, adequacy and expertise, resource availability, comprehensiveness, transparency, openness, trust and consensus). The following parties should be invited to join the discussions:

PA1: Business associations, chambers of commerce, entrepreneur guilts,

PA 2: Job centres,

PA 3: NGO associations,

PA 4: Municipalities, Association of Towns and Municipalities, Association of Regions and other associations in the public sector

PO5: the above.

(evaluation questions 2.1 and 3.5)

2.2 We recommend to the MA OP HRE to use representative studies, strategies and networks that have been established in partnership projects and use these results for planning next calls and the following programming period (e.g. study made for the issues related to persons over 50 years of age on the labour market in the project No. 48 in the Call No. 12 or projects No. 34 and 46 in the Call No. 51 even though these projects have not made any progress in their implementation). If using such studies, the MA would not have to spend any more funds when preparing the new programme because part of the analyses has been carried out (evaluation question 3.9).

2.3 We recommend the MA OP HRE to use in projects creating thematic networks and the results of these networks for information on creation of 2014+ programmes. For example, in the area of improvement of access and return to the labour market for persons who are difficult to integrate – projects 12.00001, 12.00037, 51.00042, 51.00047; strengthening the social economy, especially community services - projects 12.00021, 51.00010 and 12.00038, 12.00125 (community partnership projects), equal opportunities for women and men - project 51.00066 and labour market integration of foreigners in the project 12.00072. (Evaluation question 3.9)

3) The MA OP should support the partnership principle through building capacities of beneficiaries and partners.

The evaluation results showed that the overall view of the application of the partnership principle is positive. In a number of evaluated aspects, positive influences of partnership on the implementation of projects were found. From this perspective, this principle should be supported.

3.1 The partnership principle (and therefore also its positive effects – see summary of evaluation conclusions) could benefit from the use of the OP HRE support for building of capacities of beneficiaries and partners, particularly in skills which are necessary for the implementation of partnership projects:

- Creation of networking and building of partnership structures,
- Initiation, development and management of partnership projects,
- Management,
- Leadership,

- Performance Management,
- Communication.

It particularly applies to PA3 and PA5 where it regards strengthening of existing approaches. In the case of PA4 and PA2 it regards the use of the partnership principle as such. Publications have been issued within this evaluation and should be used for any possible educational activities (evaluation questions 3.4 and 3.9).

This type of education should lead to increased interest in partnership projects in PA2 and PA4, particularly for the programming period 2014 – 2020. The interest could be also encouraged by possible legislative adjustments.

3.2 In the long-term perspective, the partnership principle (and achieving greater effects of supports), the methodological support and education of public administration and other entities will help in the areas of good governance, management, leadership, partnership, quality management, communication, public participation in decision-making. This decision may be implemented through a change of focus of education of public administration (4th priority axis of the OP HRE). The ideal form of partnership in terms of implementation of ESF support is stated in the evaluation conclusions (evaluation questions 1.22, 3.1 – 3.10, particularly 3.4 and 3.9).

4. The MA OP HRE should support the growth of efficiency of partnership project financing

One of the most frequently discussed issues is the efficiency of interventions. It can be increased by implementing co-funding from the beneficiaries of support. This would increase the responsibility of beneficiaries for the implementation of projects. In many cases partnership projects would be implemented for financial reasons.

4.1 We recommend adding a criterion favouring those projects that do not require 100% funding in the system of evaluation of project applications for the programming period 2014-2020. This would increase the responsibility of beneficiaries if they provide part of the budget also from other sources. We suggest implementation of the following progressive system: 0% co-funding = 0 points, co-funding up to 5% = 5 points, co-funding up to 10% = 15 points (evaluation questions 1.10, 1.14, 2.5).

4.2 In the previous evaluations, co-funding within the OP HRE is suggested only for the priority axis 1 where the applicants are businesses. In the programming period 2014-2020 we recommend to introduce co-funding also in other priority axes (applicants will be competing among themselves in individual appeals within the appropriate priority axes). As a result, we expect that due to this step the applicants will plan more carefully which partners to include in the project. The partners will then expect that the project will bring real benefits for which they will participate in the project. Therefore, this is one of the key aspects of the benefits of partnership for the sustainability of activities (evaluation questions 1.10, 1.14, 2.5).

4.3 We can recommend carrying out an analysis of real impacts of the projects within PA5 where there are the most numerous partnerships and the roles of some partners are not entirely clear. However, this is a PA in which „hidden“ co-funding from the beneficiaries of support is already required (in that international partners are not able to get funding from OP HRE) and therefore certain pressure on achievement of higher effects can be expected (evaluation question 2.5).

4.4 In the area of support 5.1 (international cooperation) the MA should contact similar programmes (priority axes) in other EU countries and try to synchronize the dates for calls with at least some countries so that partnership projects can be submitted at the same time. These

are particularly those countries that are the most frequent partners in Czech projects (Slovakia, Great Britain, German, Austria, Poland). The responsibility for harmonization of the project proposals can be transferred onto the applicant by drafting the calls as continuous (evaluation question 1.3).

5. The MLSA of the CR should support the legislative framework of partnership

From the long-term perspective, it is possible to support the partnership principle through legislative support.

5.1 The partnership principle would benefit from an amendment to the Act No. 218/2000 Coll., on Budgeting Regulations and the Act No. 250/2000 Coll., on Budgeting Rules of Local Budgets containing the possibility and conditions under which projects and activities carried out in a partnership of multiple entities may be funded (subsidies may be provided) from the state budget and budgets of local autonomous areas (performed by the MLSA CR in cooperation with the MF CR).

5.2 The partnership principle would benefit from an amendment to the Act No. 218/2000 Coll., on Budgeting Regulations and the Act No. 250/2000 Coll., on Budgeting Rules of Local Budgets containing the possibility and conditions under which projects and activities carried out in a partnership where one of the partners is a state authority or a semi-budgetary organization established by a state authority, a local autonomous area a semi-budgetary organization established by a local autonomous area may be funded (subsidies may be provided) from the state budget and budgets of local autonomous areas (performed by the MLSA CR in cooperation with the MF CR).

5.3 In any possible amendments of partnerships it is suitable to base the actions on the legal anchoring of an unincorporated association under the Civil Code (provisions § 829 – 841 of the Act No. 40/1964 Coll., Civil Code as amended). This recommendation may only be implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice. (MLSA CR, Government of the CR)

7 References

ADRIAN, Charles R.; PRESS, Charles (1968): Decision Costs in Coalition Formation. *The American Political Science Review.* Jun 1968, Vol. 62, No. 2, pp. 556 – 563.

ARNSTEIN, Sherry R. (1969): A Ladder of Citizen Participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planers.* 1969, Vol. 35, No. 4, pp. 216–224.

BACHE, Ian (2000): Europeanization and Partnership: Exploring and Explaining Variations in Policy Transfer. Queen's Papers on Europeanisation, No. 8/2000.

BACHE, Ian (2010): Partnership as an EU Policy Instrument: A Political History. *West European Politics*. January 2010, Vol. 33, Issue 1, pp. 58 – 74.

BACHE, Ian: EU Cohesion Policy Background. Multi-level Governance in South East Europe (ESRC grant no. RES-062-23-0183 Project Paper CP/1 - EU Cohesion Policy: Background).

CEE Bankwatch Network; Friends of the Earth Europe (2005): Public eye on the EU funds. Civil society involvement in the structural, cohesion and rural development funds. Examples from Central and Eastern Europe. Duben 2005.

CEE Bankwatch Network; Friends of the Earth Europe; Institute of Environmental Economics (2004): Best available practices: Public participation in programming, implementing and monitoring EU funds. Září 2004.

CoP (2008): How ESF Managing Authorities and Intermediate Bodies Support Partnership, Community of Practice (CoP) on Partnership in the European Social Fund, 2008.

DG Employment, Social Affairs & Equal Opportunities: Social partners as beneficiaries. Information service of DG Employment, SocialAff airs & Equal Opportunities. Communication Unit.

DG Regio (2005): Partnership in the 2000-2006 programming period. Analysis of the implementation of the partnership principle. EC DG Regional policy. DISCUSSION PAPER OF DG REGIO. Listopad 2005.

DHV (2006): Ex-ante evaluace OP LZZ pro období 2007 – 2013. Prosinec 2006.

DHV CR; Tima Liberec (2010): Průběžné hodnocení Programu rozvoje venkova ČR za období 2007-2013, závěrečná zpráva. Sdružení DHV CR a Tima Liberec, říjen 2010.

EAPN (2007): Social Inclusion ngos' access to structural funds: State of play and challenges for 2007-2013. SEMINAR REPORT. Porto: European anti poverty network, september 2007.

EC (2007): Indicative guidelines on evaluation methods: evaluation during the programming period, Working Dokument 5. EC, duben 2007.

ECAS (2009): Working paper on the application of the partnership principle in EU cohesion policy, European Citizen Action Service, working paper připravený pro Open Days fórum v říjnu 2009, Brusel

ECONOMIX RESEARCH & CONSULTING (2009): Synthesis of the Evaluation Reports of the EQUAL Programmes in the EU10 Member States Submitted to the Commission within 2006 and 2009.

EDWARD, Deborah (2008): Metody fundraisingu v České republice léto 2008. Czech Fundraising Survey Preliminary Results, ICN, 2008.

EK (2005): Partnership in the 2000-2006 programming period: Analysis of the implementation of the partnership principle, discussion paper of DG REGIO, November 2005.

EU; Single European Act (SEA), 1987.

Evaluace opatření 3.3 JROP. Závěrečná zpráva, svazek 1 – 3, listopad 2008, aktualizace dílčích závěrů: srpen 2010.

Evropská komise (2001): Bílá kniha Evropské komise o evropské správě věcí veřejných, 2001.

Evropská Rada (2006): Rozhodnuti Rady o strategických obecných zásadách Společenství pro soudržnost, 2006/702/ES.

Evropský hospodářský a sociální výbor (2010): Účinné partnerství v politice soudržnosti, 14. července 2010, ECO/258.

FRIČ, Pavol; KUCHAŘ, Pavel; KRBEC, Šimon (2007): Hodnocení dopadu globálních grantů na kapacity příjemců podpory z Evropského sociálního fondu – Průběžná zpráva. Cheval s.r.o.: 2. srpen 2007.

Grater London Enterprise (2005): Fast forward grants - report on the London ESF global grants Programme Fast Forward grants 2002-3.

HAMEDINGER, Alexander; FREY, Oliver; DANGSCHAT, Jens S.; BREITFUSS, Andrea (2008): Strategieorientierte Planung im kooperativen Staat (Strategicky orientované plánování v kooperativním státě). GWV Fachverlage GmbH, Wiesbaden, 2008. ISBN: 978-3-531-14587-7.

HAMPL, Martin (2005): Geografická organizace společnosti v České republice: transformační procesy a jejich obecný kontext. Praha: DemoArt. ISBN 80-86746-02-X.

HARVEY, Brian (2005):The illusion of inclusion. Euro Citizen Action Service.

HARVEY, Brian (2006): Manual on the Management of the European Union Structural Funds. 2. Vydání. EAPN (European anti poverty network), 2006.

Hnutí Duha (2005): Strukturální fondy EU: význam otevřeného plánování, demokratického rozhodování a veřejné kontroly. Hnutí DUHA v rámci projektu CEE Bankwatch Network "Public Eyes on EU Funds", květen 2005.

IREAS (2008): Třetí etapa průběžného hodnocení Programu Iniciativy Společenství EQUAL, evaluační zpráva zpracovaná pro Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí ČR.

JANSSON, Gabriella (2003): The Eastern Enlargement and the Political Rationale of the EU Regional Policy: The Case of Hungary and the Implementation of the Partnership Principle. University essay from Linköpings universitet/Ekonomiska institutionen, 2003.

KRAMAŘÍK, Roman (2003): Partnerství veřejného a soukromého sektoru (Public Private Partnership). Právní analýza proveditelnosti v České republice. Praha: MFČR, 2003.

LACINA, Karel a kol (2006).: Analýzu platformy cestovního ruchu v regionech a metodika pro vytváření partnerství a efektivní řízení cestovního ruchu v regionech, UPCE 2006: [online]. [cit. 2010-

11-24]. Dostupný z http://www.mmr-vyzkum.cz/INFOBANKA/zaverecna-zprava-projektu-2778.aspx.

LION, Cristina et al. (2004): The Evaluation of European Social Fund Programmes in a New Framework of Multilevel Governance: The Italian Experience. *Regional Studies*. April 2004, Vol. 38, No. 2, pp. 207 – 212.

LOUDA, Tomáš; GROSPIČ Jiří a kol (2010): Partnerství veřejného a soukromého sektoru. 1. vyd. Praha: Ústav stát a práva AV ČR, 2010. 460 s. ISBN 978-80-904024-8-5.

MFCR: Metodika finančních toků. Dostupná z http://www.mfcr.cz/cps/rde/xbcr/mfcr/Metodika_2007-13__s_platnosti_od_1_01_2011_doc.doc#_Toc272391830

MMR (2006): Pokyny pro zajišťování evaluace programů hospodářské a sociální soudržnosti. Dodatek č. 5 k "Metodice pro přípravu programových dokumentů pro období 2007-2013.

MMR (2008): Evaluace opatření 3.3. JROP: Závěrečná zpráva. Tima Liberec, Evasco, CpKP SM.

MMR; MF (2010): Zpráva o pokroku v řešení vybraných legislativních oblastí za účelem zjednodušení administrace strukturálních fondů a Fondu soudržnosti. MMR, MF, říjen 2010.

MLSA (2006): The potential for utilising global grants in the Czech Republic in the 2007 - 2013 Structural Funds programming period. GLE, MLSA, 2006.

MLSA (2010): Evaluace ve vazbě na monitoring – vyhodnocení indikátorové soustavy OP LZZ. Závěrečná zpráva, MLSA, únor 2010.

MLSA (2010): MSSF Monit7+, data OP HRE.

MLSA: Operační program Lidské zdroje a zaměstnanost 2007 až 2013. Finální verze.

Národní observatoř venkova (2010): Analýza možností využití metody Leader a struktur místních akčních skupin pro implementaci programů SFŽP. Duben 2010.

Navreme Boheme (2009): Organizace evaluačních fokusních skupin OP LZZ a evaluačního workshopu: závěrečná zpráva.

NECHVÍLOVÁ, Stanislava; HOLÝ, Michal; KRÁTKÝ, Jiří (2006): Partnerství pro cestovní ruch. Pardubice: První regionální rozvojová, 2006. 100 s. ISBN 80-903866-1-X.

NEJDL, Pavel; ČERMÁK, Daniel (2007): Partnerství a participace ve veřejné správě. 1. vyd. Praha: Sociologický ústav AV ČR, 2007, 136 s. ISBN 978–80–7330–130–9.

NROS (2007): Třetí sektor, druhá šance. Jak peníze z Evropské unie pomáhají.

OECD (2006): Succesful partnership - a guide [online]. Forum on Partnerships and Local Governance at ZSI. Viena: 2006. [cit. 2010-11-13]. Dostupný z http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/42/49/36279186.pdf.

OECD (2006): The New Rural Paradigm: Policies and Governance. OECD Rural Policy Reviews. Paris: OECD Publications, 2006.

OSTŘÍŽEK, Jan. a kol (2007): Public Private Partnership, příležitost a výzva. Praha: C. H. Beck, 2007. ISBN 978-80-7179-744-9.

PARVONIC, Miroslav; ZAMKOVSKÝ, Juraj; ISTVÁN, Farkas et al. (2005): Environmental ngos role in

implementing EU Structural and Cohesion Funds Edited: Hajdu Zoltán. Published in the framework of the project: "Suistainable development for the Region 07".

POLVERARI, Laura; MICHIE, Rona (2009): New Partnership Dynamics in a Changing Cohesion Policy Context. . IQ-Net Thematic Paper No. 25(2). Glasgow, United Kingdom: European Policies Research Centre, November 2009.

POTLUKA, Oto (2005): Decentralizace a spolupráce mezi soukromým a veřejným sektorem. Partnerství a konkurence veřejného a soukromého sektoru. Brno: MU, 2005.

Priatelia Země-CEPA (2006): Aktuality Priateľov Zeme-CEPA, leden 2006.

Rada vlády pro nestátní neziskové organizace (2008a): Rozbor financování nestátních neziskových organizací z vybraných veřejných rozpočtů v roce 2006. Rada vlády pro nestátní neziskové organizace, 2008.

Rada vlády pro nestátní neziskové organizace (2008b); Zhodnocení koncepce podpory rozvoje neziskového, RVNNO: 2008.

Rada vlády pro nestátní neziskové organizace (2009): Rozbor financování nestátních neziskových organizací z vybraných veřejných rozpočtů v roce 2007. RVNNO: 2009.

RegioPartner (2010): OP LZZ: Roční operační vyhodnocení za rok 2009. Květen 2010.

RegioPartner (2010): Roční operační vyhodnocení OPLZZ 2009, evaluační zpráva zpracovaná pro Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí ČR.

ROSE-ACKERMAN, Susan (2007): From Elections to Democracy in Central Europe: Public Participation and the Role of Civil Society. *East European Politics and Societies*. February 2007, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp 31 – 47.

RYNCK, Filip de (2003): Místní partnerství v České republice. Pp. 77–106 in M. Jetmar (ed.). Společnost v přechodu: Obnova partnerství. Praha: MMR ČR, 2003.

MA OP LZZ (2010): Prováděcí dokument OP LZZ, vydání 1.6. Praha, 25. 8. 2010.

Stálé zastoupení ČR při EU; Stručný záznam z jednání s EK k OP Doprava pro období 2007-2013, červenec 2007.

SVOBODOVÁ, Petra; ČEPELKA, Oldřich (2008): PORVLK 2007+ neboli profesionalizace obnovy a rozvoje venkova Libereckého kraje. Zpráva o realizaci projektu. Národní observatoř venkova, o.p.s., červen 2008.

TÖDLING SCHÖNHOFER, Herta; WIMMER, Hannes; CAMUS, Xavier et al. (2008): Governance and Partnership in regional policy. Ad-hoc note. Vypracováno na žádost Výboru pro regionální rozvoj Evropského parlamentu. Brusel: Evropský parlament, 2008, IP/B/REGI/FWC/2006-Lot05-C02-SC02 04/01/2008.

USAID (2008): The 2007 NGO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia. 11th Edition – June 2008.

USAID (2009): The 2008 NGO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia. June

2009.

VAJDOVÁ, Tereza (2005): Česká občanská společnost 2004: po patnácti letech rozvoje. Akademické nakladatelství CERM, 2005. ISBN 80-7204-379-X.

WWF; 10 GOLDEN RULES for NGO partnership. Coalition on EU funds., 2007