

MAKING PARTNERSHIPS EFFECTIVE IN THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO LOCAL DEVELOPMENT: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Introduction

Local, or area-based partnerships between different development actors, be they private or public in their nature, attached to voluntary and community-based organisations, the business sector or others, with the aim of designing and implementing a local development agenda are an integral part of local development. The term "partnership" is used with different notions and often defining lines seem to be blurred between contractual arrangements in service and programme delivery and consistency in the objectives and activities of partners, resulting from a shift of boundaries and responsibilities in addressing social and economic development challenges. Local partnerships can be formal or informal in their nature.

Non-formalised partnerships and alliances are all over the world part of the local development agenda. In the European context, the 1993 White Paper by the European Commission on "Growth Competitiveness and Employment"²⁰ bundled the initiatives brought forward by various programmes and supported the establishment of the Territorial Employment Pacts (TEP). Some of these TEPs exist still today, but, most important, this process helped to embed the "partnership principle" in social and economic policy across Europe. In some countries a process of increased institutionalisation resulted in the establishment of local partnerships for development in the form of registered companies, non-for-profit organisations, or multi-agency partnerships that receive government funding for maintaining a permanent organisational structure and delivering a prior agreed programme of work. This is the case in Ireland, Austria and the UK, to name just a few country examples.

Previous OECD research on local governance and partnerships brought to light an assignment to partnerships by governments for the implementation of a "local governance agenda"²¹, which foresees partnerships to:

- pursue a policy goal, such as stimulating economic development and regeneration, promoting social inclusion and community cohesion, improving the quality of life;
- seek to attain this goal mainly through increasing the degree of co-ordination between policies and programmes across government services and levels, and adapting them to local conditions and community needs;
- pilot new projects and services; and,

²⁰ EC (1993): White Paper on growth, competitiveness, and employment: The challenges and ways forward into the 21st century, COM(93) 700 final. Downloadable copy at [http://europa.eu.int/ISPO/docs/htmlgenerated/i_COM\(93\)700final.html](http://europa.eu.int/ISPO/docs/htmlgenerated/i_COM(93)700final.html).

²¹ OECD (2001): "Local Partnerships for Better Governance", OECD Paris, p. 20, adapted.

- involve local actors in the definition of priorities and the design of strategies and action plans, as well as enhance co-operation during implementation and delivery of wider strategies and programmes.

The development of adequate participation and co-ordination mechanisms, resulting from decentralisation and devolution processes, which enable the involvement of different actors across all governance levels in policy design, delivery and evaluation, while keeping the balance between effectiveness and efficiency, will be a major prerequisite for making the "local governance agenda" work.

Regardless of whether the contribution of local partnerships is directed towards the delivery of policies and programmes, or the partnership aims at influencing public policy, in terms of the establishment of targets and objectives or the way delivery happens, local partnerships will operate within multi-level governance arrangements. There are preconditions that would need to be fulfilled by both government and local partnerships, if the latter are to become effective in their work. These include "(i) the need for government policies which are flexible and adaptable to change; (ii) the need for channels of communication within multi-level governance arrangements that are open to inputs from the bottom up; and (iii) the need for recognition within the policy process of local diversity and the value of evidence from practice. The local partnership on the other side, needs to: (i) ensure transparency and accountability of partnership structures; (ii) work on the basis of sound local knowledge and expertise, making reference to local data and indicators; (iii) demonstrate a strategic approach which goes beyond the delivery of projects and programmes and can adapt to changes in a globalised economy; (iv) demonstrate capacity to enhance policy outcomes through appropriate monitoring and evaluation; and (v) network partnerships at the national level and learn lessons form international experience to ensure efficient dialogue with government."²²

Local partnership development in Croatia: challenges and opportunities

Since Croatia's 1992 independence, the Government has sought to establish an appropriate balance between centralised and decentralised policies to foster overall economic development aligned with local conditions and context. In 2000, the Social Democratic Party-led coalition Government initiated broad-based decentralisation to bring the public affairs closer to the citizens and businesses. In 2007 the national, regional and local governments continue to negotiate the terms and pace of the division of responsibilities, roles, and authorities.

In the Croatian policy context, the notion of "partnership" is stated in a number of policy documents. The most prominent ones include (i) "Local Partnerships for Employment (LPE)" in the field of employment policy; and (ii) "County Partnerships" for regional policy and local development. The 2005 National Strategy for Regional Development, although endorsement by the Croatian government is still awaited, can be considered the main framework document for these organisational developments. Some of the documents are promoting co-operation between different levels of government, which supports local partnership agreements and the establishment of local strategic alliances. However, conditions for inclusion of the non-governmental sector organisations seem to be still difficult. Previous reports commissioned by the Croatian government state that "most of this co-operation is amongst different level of public legal entities (ministries, administrative organisations, local and regional units, public utilities).

²² OECD LEED Forum on Partnerships and Local Governance (2007): Vienna Action Statement on Partnerships. Presented and endorsed at the 3rd Annual Meeting of the OECD LEED Forum on Partnerships and Local Governance, on 1-2 March 2007.

There are no indication and clear criteria for involvement and active participation of non-governmental subjects (citizen's associations, entrepreneurs associations, social partners, etc)".²³

Against the backdrop of continued negotiations between the different levels of government an issue of equal significance is the local and regional governments' leadership in terms of policy coordination and implementation. These governments are after all closer to the people and the local environment which puts them in a unique position to establish communications networks and democratic structures. Furthermore, counties and local governments are able to leverage their public functions through locally-developed partnership structures and mechanisms.

USAID's Local Government Reform Project (LGRP, 2000-2007) has been at the forefront of the local government agenda setting tackling decentralisation and developing local government capacities and competencies. Areas of assistance included asset management to generate local revenues and introduce transparency to engage the public and media in local affairs. Similar motivations led to successes with local budgeting and capital investments, e-government systems and economic development strategic planning that bring local stakeholders, including national and regional governments, into the consultative and decision-making process. Several USAID-assisted communities partnered with leading non-government organisations (NGOs) to address pressing issues like drug dependency, health care and community action groups. Many cities adopted the NGO Charter to transparently and equitably administer government funding to local NGOs to form a cooperative mechanism between the city and its NGO community.

Such activities attest to the local government sector capacity and interest to forge partnerships. And local governments have demonstrated the inclination to partner with different organisations, from NGOs to business associations and the central government. Cities have been instrumental in the analysis and design of Croatia's public procurement system. Based on the local studies and consultations USAID developed a public procurement manual in cooperation with the EU and the Government Office for Public Procurement. The Government of Croatia will continue to revise the public procurement system with active involvement of local governments and the rest of the public sector, to keep up with EU procurement standards.

The public administration of the LGRP programme also attests to the partnerships at the local level. The programs currently run at four institutions of higher learning throughout Croatia: Universities of Zagreb, Split, Rijeka and the Zagreb School of Economics and Management. These institutions conduct mid-career professional trainings that bring together the academics, practitioners and local government professionals. Local governments increasingly demand consultations and answers to complex issues facing the local communities and political appointees require education and training in public management. The above institutions have recognised this opportunity and have, in fact, established continuing education centres to meet this long-term demand. The academy-oriented universities are beginning to recognise the benefits of establishing relationships with private and public sectors to re-evaluate academic approaches through empirical evidence and improve access to research and development.

Local governments have also explored outsourcing as a means of reducing costs and accessing technologically advanced goods and services without making large in-house investments. Although this may not be seen as partnership formation, its development is evidence of local governments' capacity to innovate and seize a market opportunity for public benefit.

²³ Ecorys (2004): "Analysis of Regional Development in Croatia", part of Strategy and Capacity Building for Regional Development (CARDS 2002 Programme for Croatia).

In 2005, Croatian cities from Dubrovnik to Karlovac and Istria recognised the opportunity to forge twinning relationships with progressive U.S. cities and regions. Common local challenges and opportunities brought the city leadership to explore sound approaches and strategies to solve economic and social issues and lay the foundations for long-term inter-city relationships based on mutual trust and confidence.

The above examples give some insight and inspiration to partnership building throughout Croatia. This is not to overlook the obstacles that may be roughly divided into organisational and individual. Local governments, like the public sector, best function in a stable (bureaucratic) environment with hierarchical structures. On the other hand, partnerships demand increasing degrees of inter-organisational communications and coordination. Although this challenge may be somewhat addressed by strong political vision and leadership, it nevertheless must involve organisational support and leading group networking. Initially, top management support would be paramount to launching the whole effort, and ultimately to its success or failure. Lastly, the middle management and professional staff will need to be convinced of its benefits and have the top level support to carry out its mandate.

The review process brought to light a set of important opportunities and strengths which build a solid base for the establishment of local partnerships that could be tasked with a local governance agenda. These include the above mentioned wide-spread reference to partnerships in policy strategies and documents, the imminent accession to the European Union and the availability of pre-accession funding that promotes local development action, access to international best practice and various opportunities for transfer of know-how and inter-agency international learning. To this list, which is by far not exhaustive, a much longer list of local assets can be added, which enhance partnering at local level.

The transition of a formerly centrally planned political and economic system, which had offered some limited space for decentralised decision-making, is characterised by a tendency to recentralise the policy arena and increase the role and relevance of central government agencies. Hence, the County Partnerships and, even more, the Local Partnerships for Employment risk to be considered a trial and error approach rather than a long-term approach to modernise the policy arena through an increased participation of alliances of public and private actors. Further, also recent developments in region-building might make it difficult for partnerships to find the appropriate jurisdictional level for their operations. In places with a long tradition in local self-government and/or 'naturally' grown territorial units, the on-going debate on the appropriate size of territorial agglomerations for local development programming and planning gives room for further thinking about a distribution of roles, responsibilities and duties between central government and new forms of local governance, such as partnerships, in identifying and satisfying local needs.

The recurring theme of this publication of moving beyond the project-based partnerships into sustainable relationships may benefit from the economic tool of resource based view. It espouses the need to look at organisational core competencies and unique characteristics which determine its competitive advantages. In the partnership context this may involve not only the individual organisations competencies but also the overall and bilateral synergies partnerships will generate. In short, it will take the right mix of demonstrated local government capacity to lead and the central government responsibility to assist and facilitate the local government sector in their common goal to address economic development in a coordinated and partnering approach for the benefit of the citizens and the local businesses.

Local partnerships in Croatia, although only in their first steps, find themselves with a steadily growing number of tasks. To accomplish these tasks effectively, a number of different contextual factors are important: a supportive local community and an enabling institutional framework at local and higher tier levels, dedicated partners aware of the costs and benefits of partnerships; and an effective core partnership structure.

Overall policy recommendations

The review process identified the following three main areas where intervention is suggested for a strengthening of local partnerships in what they contribute to local development:

- Increase co-ordination and integration between different policy areas at national level, concerning local development, and allow, for example through the establishment of an intermediary body, for a greater communication and exchange between local partnerships and central government institutions. Clear guidance for the work of partnerships, while maintaining the necessary flexibility, will be a pre-requisite for more effective partnerships.
- Enhance joining up efforts at local level within the framework of a local development strategy and establish a wider umbrella partnership that can be tasked with a greater role in the design and implementation of the strategy. Further, regular opportunities for organisational development and specialised training for the partnership and its partners should be provided.
- Assist in the establishment of strong performance management, monitoring and evaluation systems that would provide government and the wider community with information to measure and assess the contribution of partnerships to local development, thereby giving greater incentives to high performance.

These three main areas of intervention are discussed in turn below. Key issues arising from the review will be illustrated by existing practices in the Croatian and international context.

National support framework for local partnerships

Local partnerships will need to rely on a supportive framework at national level if they are to become more firmly embedded in local governance and if they are to maximise their contribution to local development. The role of central government and its agencies is crucial in establishing a sufficient space for partnerships in legislation, providing policy guidance to establish the framework for local partnership, such as the national guidelines for County Partnerships, and communication channels and mechanisms to enhance, manage and monitor local partnership performance.

The supportive role of national government would also need to include the provision of adequate financial and human resources for local partnerships. The Vienna Partnership Action Statement underlines that a solid, sustainable financial basis for operation, covering the partnership's overhead costs, is "key to enabling partnerships to take a long-term view on local issues and problems and contribute fully to better policy outcomes".²⁴ In order to secure this financial base from public or other sources, the partnership will have to demonstrate its ability to deliver and to be innovative in contributing to local development.

An effective partnership depends from a close collaboration between agencies and stakeholders at local level, but all the same also effective co-ordination within and between line ministries is of crucial importance to the work and performance of local partnerships. Innovation in policy can only match with the different stages of the policy processes, if procedures and regulations are flexible enough to allow for a contribution of local agencies to established local priorities, when implementing national policies and programmes against a set of national targets. Overcoming disconnections between the Ministry and the

²⁴ OECD LEED Forum on Partnerships and Local Governance (2007): Vienna Action Statement on Partnerships. Presented and endorsed at the 3rd Annual Meeting of the OECD LEED Forum on Partnerships and Local Governance, on 1-2 March 2007.

regional and local authorities will therefore be a major development task. Local partnerships can be the context for this to happen.

It is important to create fluid and effective links between policies and strategies at national and local level. In a number of OECD countries co-ordination and support are not provided by ministries, but by an intermediary agency which has been assigned with the responsibility to provide support to local partnerships. In Croatia, the Office for Social Partnerships is partially fulfilling this task. The efficacy of an intermediary organisation would depend from its status within government and from functioning communication channels that would allow the intermediary to bridge and accommodate between government and local partnerships and what might be very different interests, expectations and demands. To increase both vertical and horizontal communication and co-ordination takes time and requires consistency. An intermediary will have to change processes skilfully while ensuring delivery of assigned tasks and demonstrate progress made against overall objectives and goals. The concepts of partnership, participative governance, local capacity building will however not be translated into practice without some commitment of resources both at the partnership level and at the level of an intermediary organisation.

Local partnerships should be strategic and at the same time in close contact with beneficiaries and the wider community to contribute effectively to the local development agenda. Finding the right level for their operations tends to be difficult for local partnerships, especially when local government consists of two tiers. In OECD countries with two tier local government systems, local partnerships are often being established at both levels. This might create uncertainty about respective roles and responsibilities, which bare risks of overlap, duplication or competition. Also, political tensions both within and between local authorities can inhibit local partnerships and lead to a total blockage of activities or a doubling of efforts through the establishment of a parallel body assigned with a similar repertoire of tasks. The provision of guidance in the distribution of roles and responsibilities, through national government, or, if existent, through an intermediary organisation, can be useful in the settlement of disputes and may lead to an optimised task allocation. However, the right level for operation needs to be decided by the partnership itself.

Key activities recommended for a national supportive framework that is enhancing the local development contribution of partnership, increase co-ordination and integration between different policy areas, and allow for a greater communication between local partnerships and central government include: establishment of national guidelines for the work of local partnerships; foster the preparation and dissemination of toolkits to assist partnerships in concrete issues; consider the creation of an intermediary organisation; organise national meetings for County Partnerships, Local Partnerships for Employment and other local partnerships to stimulate the exchange of experience and enhance mutual learning; facilitate debates about the right level for partnership action through an introduction of international show cases and moderated negotiations between conflicting tiers.

The experiences of other OECD and selected non-member countries demonstrate in some concrete cases how central government have thought to introduce these types of initiatives. The following selection of good practice has been presented in this discussion paper:

- In Romania the building process of local partnerships has been supported through a national framework and the establishment of permanent technical secretariats.
- In Ireland, POBAL has been established as an intermediary organisation that figures as a ‘non-interested space’ and assists partners at all levels to advance co-ordinated services and integrated approaches across government levels and amongst local partnerships.

- The "Renewal.net" initiative in England facilitates the generation and dissemination of information around partnerships and local development in form of an internet based platform and knowledge pool.
- The "Action Learning set on two-tier partnership working in England promotes a constructive dialogue about local partnerships operating across different tiers of government that increase clarity over respective roles at county and district level.

Making partnerships strategic in their outlook and local in their operations

Every practicable local development agenda needs a sound strategy that translates a local development vision into concrete objectives and action plans around jointly agreed development priorities. If a partnership were to contribute effectively to this, it would need to be both strategic in terms of influencing key actors and strategic development issues, and local in its outreach, as it needs to be in touch with the local community and its needs and interests. Developments across OECD countries show that the establishment of one 'umbrella' local strategic partnership following a joined local development strategy can make a maximum use of available funding by pooling existing sources, but also by attracting new ones. Such an approach also helps to secure synergies between a wider strategy and single development projects and initiatives. The emerging County Partnerships in Croatia seem to be still in the stage of consolidating membership and building communication channels, both horizontally at local level and vertically with higher tier government.

Being part of the local development agenda also implies an approach that goes beyond project implementation towards a strategy for the partnership that gets rid of traditional separated and often distant approaches in thinking, planning and working. It seems that in Croatia much of the current and recent partnership working is limited to specific themes or is linked to a specific task or funding source. This is already a good starting point, but important would be to do the next step and embed the principle of partnership working on a more broadly based and permanent basis.

For local partnerships to function effectively and to contribute to the local development agenda certain preparation and continuous maintenance is needed. The membership of the partnership should be inclusive and involve all key players, and open for new members, if the partnership work requires an enlargement. So far it has proved difficult to create alliances between different levels of governance, namely between county and municipality levels, in Croatia. Moreover, broadening the partnerships to take on board wider local concerns in the process of establishing economic development strategies has been uneasy. Strategic linkages need to be developed between stakeholders, not at least to avoid duplication and inefficient use of scarce resources.

Although being inclusive, local partnerships must ensure efficiency in decision making processes. Civil society organisations and NGOs should be equal partners to public agencies and businesses. OECD country experience shows a prominent involvement of local governments and their agencies in partnerships. This way the often occurring problem of resourcing local partnership structures is solved. Hence, the partnership structure needs to be robust enough to avoid local government taking an overly dominant role in the partnership agenda and membership issues. The involvement of the business sector proves to be a long-term initiative with lots of ups and downs. Here, the involvement of business representative organisations at first place, could prepare the ground for a later involvement of single businesses. Private firms in general would like to see a demonstration of the value added resulting from participation and an investment of time and human resources.

Partnership structures should be following the principles of trust, reciprocity and mutual advantage amongst partners and should hence be enabling all partners to make their contributions. In a partnership

leadership should be shared and must rely more on consensus building and the "wisdom of crowds", than on the exercise of authority.²⁵ Taking into consideration the organisational specificities of a partnership, it would be important to develop an approach of 'distributed leadership', in which several important actors jointly exercise leadership of partnership agendas. Strengthening communication structures amongst partners will help to settle conflicts of interest and contribute to maintaining effective management and operational structures within partnerships. The process to reach an agreement on (i) the use of outcomes; (ii) the planning and managing of a wider programme of work and single projects and activities; and, (iii) strategic priorities often bares conflict potential both between partners and towards the government counterparts, which if not addressed adequately may lead to disruptions of wider relationships. Here, the development of training programmes in prior assessment of strategic options, participatory evaluation techniques and conflict management can be helpful to enhance performance management, monitoring and evaluation practices.

Outreach towards the wider community is all the same important for a local partnership to develop and maintain its legitimate role in local development processes. Here, partnerships will need to develop regular information material to widely communicate about their work.

Effective local partnerships will have a skilled and motivated partnership team that is able to steer the work of the partnership in strategy building, to take over communication with partners, outreach to the wider community, and successfully represent the partnership in political negotiations. Training and development programmes to enhance skills and capacity can facilitate the exchange and dissemination of good practice and lessons learned, which in turn will contribute to the organisational development within partnerships. Most of the skills and experts knowledge will be already existent within the partnership. It is thus important to mobilise single partners to contribute with their expertise to the organisational development of the partnership. Experience from across OECD countries shows that an involvement of crucial local development actors, such as regional agencies and other bodies that are closely working with a partnership, but are not member organisations, can be very supportive for an increased understanding of each others needs and interests. The introduction of an external facilitator, in the function of a neutral arbiter, demonstrated success in avoiding conflicts of interest, resolving tensions and problems and in finding joint solutions.

Across OECD countries, networking between local partnerships within one country and at international level is considered by partnerships as crucial to their work. In the exchange with peer structures partnerships become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses and learn from each other in an effective way. Here, the task of the above mentioned intermediary organisation would be to use the information gained for an identification of needs and the development of tailored support structures and initiatives. Key activities recommended to enhance the effectiveness of local partnerships in contributing to local development include: facilitate the creation of an umbrella partnership to take the lead in implementing the local development agenda, strengthen capacities of partnerships and their members in organisational development; allow for local piloting that can be later integrated in policy mainstream initiatives; and facilitate inter-partnership networking and exchange of experience.

The experiences made locally across OECD countries show how national government organisation and local partnerships together have thought to introduce these types of initiatives. The following best practice examples have been presented in this discussion paper:

- The Devon Strategic Partnership in England has been assigned with the task of setting out the strategic vision for Devon County. The partnership is seen as a vehicle for considering and

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Surowiecki, James (2004): *The Wisdom of Crowds*, Random House.

deciding how to address difficult cross-cutting issues such as the economic future of an area, social exclusion and climate change.

- Introducing organisational change and increasing co-operation of local actors through a series of small grants projects that are implemented under a local development strategy umbrella, is what the Local Social Capital initiative in Berlin, Germany is promoting.
- How to involving distant actors in the work of local partnerships and stimulate their full membership is being described by two examples from Berlin, Germany. A first case study discusses the case of a University of Applied Science in Berlin that triggered the development of a new niche in the local economy. The second case describes how companies are attracted to a location through a joint local business recruiting package. These are good practice examples of widening the strategic orientation of a local partnership.
- Piloting new initiatives locally that can contribute to national policy innovation is what the "Perspective 50plus – Employment pacts for older workers" has successfully aimed at. A shrinking local labour market and a surplus of well-skilled older persons have been the starting points for the development of a nation-wide pilot initiative in Germany to re-integrate elderly in the local labour market.
- Giving the local partnership a primary role in the design and implementation of a local development strategy through enhancing co-operation between key government agencies and the partnership has been successfully applied in the case of the Local Strategic Partnership of Coventry. Within the partnerships operational geographic area, a strategic plan was prepared for each locality based upon local data and resident surveys. During the implementation phase, public funding has been made available to kick start activities, and it was continued upon demonstrated success of the activities.

How strong performance management, monitoring and evaluation systems can be useful in measuring and assessing the contribution of partnerships to local development

Local development partnerships are relatively new in the Croatian institutional landscape. Unsurprisingly, little has been done so far towards the development of a performance management framework suitable to partnerships' nature and functioning. One reason for this is that government counterparts of local partnerships in Croatia are still uncertain of the contributions that the new structures can provide. The awaited enactment of a legal framework for regional development may help to nurture more accurate expectations in this respect. Local partnerships across OECD countries are understood to be flexible, innovative and close to community, which is why governments decide to assign them with a prominent role in the local development agenda. The performance of partnerships often depends on the robustness of their structure and the consensus reached on strategic priorities of the partnership.

Local partnerships will however need to demonstrate the added value of their work, and governments would like to monitor and evaluate the contribution of partnerships in terms of progress made on development priorities and governance improvements. Performance management will therefore require commitments and inputs from both sides. National government, and if existent, an intermediary organisation should establish guidelines that local partnerships could follow in managing performance, monitoring and evaluating their work. Also important is the provision of adequate financial resources. To introduce a strong performance management approach and a wider evaluation concept training and regular exchange of good practice and lessons learned will be important. Training to assess and improve performance has been introduced in nearly all OECD countries that endorsed the concept of partnership in policy design and delivery. Joint training series, bringing together partnership managers and government

counterparts, have proved to be successful in raising a general understanding of partnership work and in realising its benefits and limits.

Evaluation is important for the work of local partnerships and applies to both the internal governance of a partnership and its actual work. Evaluation should be considered an ongoing process, which is not limited to the finalisation of programmes or projects. Governments will have already preset targets, objectives and output against which they monitor and assess the work of local partnerships. These might not always reflect the local context and circumstances, and would therefore suggest an adaptation through the partnership. Often, a more outcome-based description of a programme of project result would allow a more flexible and effective approach, than the delivery against outputs, such as numbers of persons trained or re-integrated into the labour market.

Monitoring and information systems need to be robust and evaluation should be perceived as an objective exercise, free from political and single partners' interests. These systems are a valuable source of information for partnerships to create and expand the evidence base of their work. Here, it is important that the local partnerships have full access to existing statistical information, which they can use in developing additional local development indicators and development priorities, for instance through survey of residents' views and wider research. This way the evidence base generated by the partnership will be a useful pre-requisite for their greater role in the drafting process of a local strategy. It will also be a requirement for ensuring legitimacy and accountability towards government partners and the wider community, and it can demonstrate value for money and the general added value from partnership working. If the partnership and its partners lack capacity for establishing these systems, support by outsiders should be taken into consideration. The experience across OECD countries shows that universities are often strategic partners for local partnerships in "doing the job" or in providing assistance in developing evaluation and monitoring techniques.

Key activities recommended to build strong performance management systems and foster a culture of evaluation include: establish a framework for performance management, monitoring and evaluation that provides clear guidance to local partnerships, provide adequate funding, as well as offer incentives and impose sanctions; support training and networking activities to build and enhance skills and to foster the exchange of information on good practice and lessons learned.

The experiences made and projects developed locally in the UK, presented in this discussion paper, illustrate how national government have integrated their own expectations with the input provided by local partnerships on their needs in approaches to strengthen the performance management, monitoring and evaluation systems of local partnerships:

- The approach developed for Local Strategic Partnerships in England presents how partnerships are assisted in managing their complex agenda through offering guidance in establishing a strong performance management that allows for a review of objectives and outcomes, and partnership working and helps to improve planning and strengthen implementation.
- The "Learning to Deliver" programme developed by Local Strategic Partnerships in the Westmidlands shows how partnership managers worked together in identifying good practice and finding solutions to improve performance in partnership working and in making existing monitoring and evaluation practices best practice.
- Overcoming barriers between local government and local partnerships and getting senior local government councillors interested in the concept of partnership working have been set as two learning objectives of the Leadership Academy, a national programme in England.