

## FORUM E-Bulletin 02/08

### Local Partnerships and Governance in Croatia: Towards an Action Plan

In 2007-2008, the **U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID)** mission in Croatia and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) through its **OECD LEED Centre for Local Development in Trento** based Italy, have jointly undertaken an [Active review of local development partnerships and local governance in Croatia](#). To widely disseminate recommendations and lessons learned from this USAID-OECD review of local partnerships in Croatia, a web-based [Action Space](#) has been created, where local partnerships and their counterparts in government, business and civil society can consult OECD recommendations and international learning models. The aim is to inspire policy and practice innovation.

A conclusive [Round Table on "Local Governance in Local Development: the Role of Local Development Partnerships"](#) was organised in Zagreb on 10-11 March 2008 to present key findings and policy recommendations to a wider Croatian and international audience, with the aim to contribute to the on-going debate about the role of local partnerships in local governance and their overall contribution to local development.

Participants worked in small groups on the **preparation of an Action Plan** to foster local governance and the role of local partnerships by identifying and overcoming weaknesses and strengthening strengths.

Read more about the conclusions on:

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#### 1. The national support framework for local partnerships

It was generally recognised that **local partnerships need 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



Local partnerships can provide an arena in which **disconnections** between national, ministerial priorities and those of regional and local authorities, as well as those between local agencies and interests, **can be overcome**. However, this requires **national government** to be a partner in local development, through **more active 'vertical' dialogue between the centre and localities**, for example in developing the current strategic framework for local development. Relevant government departments, the Association of Cities and Municipalities, counties and local governments and sectoral interests should be

**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. For government, the advantage of such an intermediary organisation is that it can provide expert arms length management for a range of partnership-based programmes, such as programmes funded by the EU. The efficacy of any such intermediary organisation will however depend on its status within government and on functioning communication channels that would allow the intermediary to bridge and

The supportive role of national government needs to include the **provision of adequate financial and human resources** for local partnerships. As experiences in OECD countries reveal, a solid and 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. In order to justify this financial base, local partnerships will have to demonstrate their ability to deliver and to be innovative in contributing to local development.

A national support framework for local partnerships should assess and apply experiences from elsewhere and adapt them to the country context. While the preparation of training manuals can be useful, they need to be supplemented by action learning through the **exchange of experience among partnerships** within the country and **also** by study visits and exchange with partnerships in **other countries**.

involved in this process of multi-level governance.

accommodate between government and local partnerships and what can be very different interests, expectations and demands.

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## 2. Joining up efforts at the local level

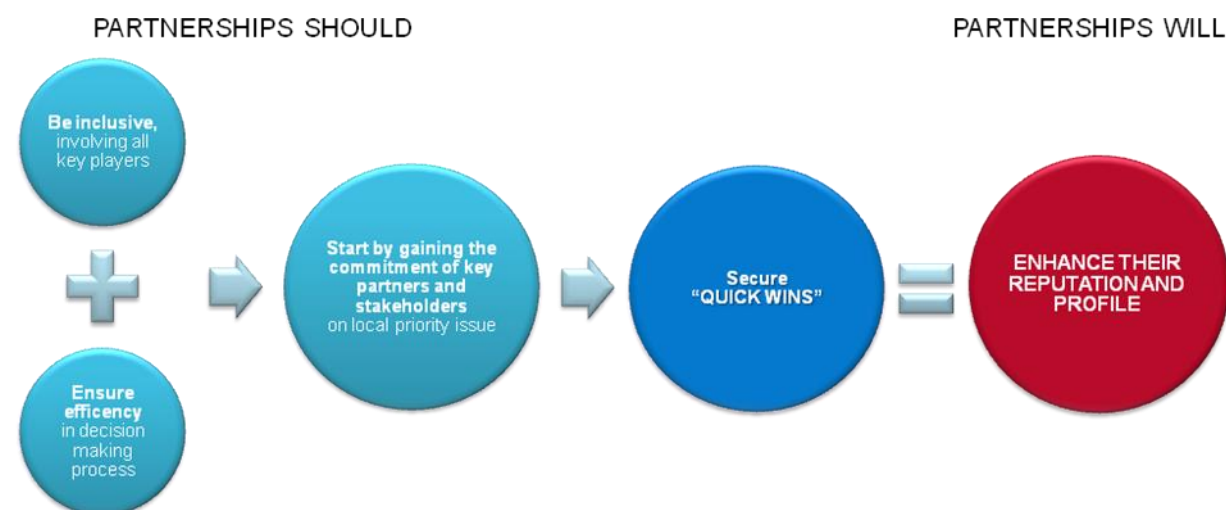
**Local partnerships should be strategic** and at the same time **in close contact with beneficiaries and the wider community** to contribute effectively to the local development agenda. Finding the **right level for their operations** tends to be difficult for local partnerships, especially when local government consists of two tiers. In OECD countries with two tier local government systems, local partnerships are often being established at both levels. This can create uncertainty about respective roles and responsibilities, which bare risks of overlap, duplication or competition.

**Effective partnership depends on robust democratic institutions and practices at both local and national levels.** However, **political tensions** both within and between local authorities can inhibit local partnerships and **lead to a blockage of activities** or a **doubling of efforts** through the establishment of parallel bodies assigned with a similar repertoire of tasks. Where such problems exist, it may be valuable to draw on objective external advice and facilitation to resolve them.

**The OECD/USAID Review recommended the establishment of an overarching, umbrella partnership** that can be tasked with a greater role in the design and implementation of the local development strategy.

One umbrella local strategic partnership could:

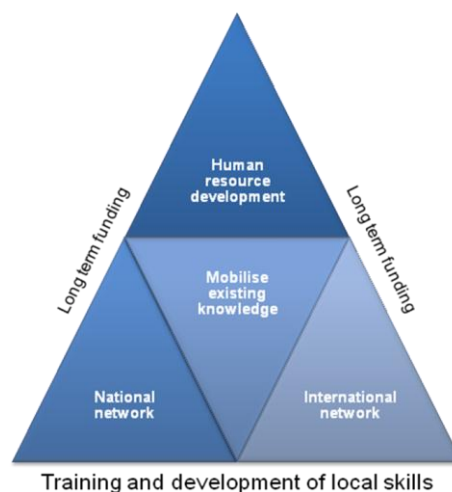
- **Maximise the use of available foundlings** by pooling existing sources and attracting new ones ;
- **Help to secure synergies** between a wider strategy and single development projects and initiatives.



**Civil society organisations and NGOs should be equal partners to public agencies and businesses** to strengthen civil society participation. Local governments and their agencies are bound to play a major role in partnerships – but local government and local politicians must be careful to lead but not dominate unduly. It needs to be recognised by all concerned that building local partnership takes time.

**Training and development programmes to enhance local skills and capacity for partnership working should include a number of elements:**

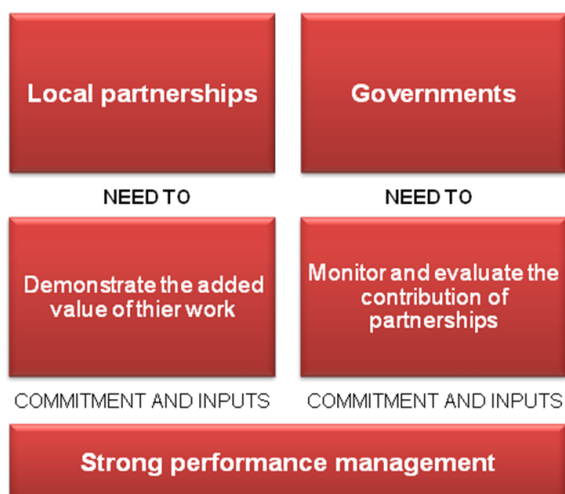
- 1. Human resource development.** Critical issues where local capacity needs to be enhanced include strategy making; performance management; data analysis, and leadership in a partnership context. Local development agencies can contribute in this area.
- 2. Support for a national network of local partnerships** to exchange experience and good practice, support peer review programmes, and also develop a dialogue with national government.
- 3. Learning from abroad,** through twinning and mentoring arrangements and institutions such as the OECD Partnership Forum.
- 4. Some of the skills and expert knowledge** which partnerships need 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.



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## 3. Performance management, monitoring and evaluation

**Government assistance is needed for the establishment of strong performance management**, monitoring and evaluation systems that will 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.



National government, and - if established - an intermediary organisation, should establish **guidelines** that local partnerships can follow in managing performance, monitoring and evaluating their work. The provision of **adequate financial and human resources** will also be necessary.

A **prerequisite** for performance management and evaluation is a robust and **trustworthy evidence base**, locally, regionally and nationally.

Government needs to take the lead on data availability, but in so doing can draw on EU technical assistance and the experience of recent EU accession states. There are many techniques of evaluation and performance review and there needs to be a body of expertise within Croatia to ensure that both ministries and local partnerships are able to make **informed decisions** about undertaking and commissioning work.

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#### 4. Coming next



#### [ATTEND A VIRTUAL CAPACITY BUILDING SEMINAR AT THE OECD LEED TRENTO CENTRE!](#)

**SHORT VIDEOS** (5 minutes maximum) summarise the key concepts of the issues addressed in the Capacity Building Seminar for Partnerships on "[Designing and Delivering Skills Strategies for Cities](#)", Trento, Italy, 11-13 June 2008. You can also listen to the contributors' **SPEECHES** (25 minutes maximum) or download their **PRESENTATIONS**.



#### [Cross-country comparative review on Local development governance \(2009-2010\)](#)

This policy development project will provide national and local governments in participating countries with the opportunity to review and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of current forms of governance in local development and will build the capacity of local development actors to design and deliver integrated place-specific strategies. The focus will be on area-based or local partnerships and other new forms of local governance, such as business alliances with public sector facilitation, alliances between civil society organisations and the private sector, with and without public sector facilitation, and public-public partnerships between national and sub-national governments and their agencies. Impact analysis and assessment will be directed towards issues of local economic regeneration, entrepreneurship and local business development and innovation. Data will be collected through surveys at national and local levels in all relevant policy areas and study visits to participating countries and selected localities. A capacity-building component will allow reviewed countries and localities to develop appropriate approaches to improving governance structures.

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**9-10 FEBRUARY 2009, Vienna, Austria**

#### [5th Annual Meeting of the OECD LEED Forum on Partnerships and Local Governance](#)

##### **'Building Strong Partnerships with the Private Sector for Better Jobs and Inclusion'**

The meeting will focus on Building Strong Partnerships with the Private Sector for Better Jobs and Inclusion. Public sector institutions increasingly understand that working with business at the local level is crucial for promoting quality jobs and social inclusion. Localities are gearing education and training to business needs. Some regions are upgrading local skills demand, working with business to improve productivity thus increasing the availability of good quality jobs. A collective response is required from industry, government, educational institutions, trade unions and community.

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