



Partnerships: a “black box” in the process of improving governance or a tool for influencing public policy?

Foreword from the Deputy Head of LEED Programme, OECD

A simple answer to this question would be that partnerships can be both. Partnerships are often perceived as “black boxes” with visible inputs and outputs, but no clear mechanism for transforming the former into the latter. However, they increasingly aim to play a more transparent role in both the delivery and design of policy. Partnerships often attempt to tailor policies to local needs and help ensure effective delivery against given policy goals and objectives. In addition, more and more partnerships across the OECD member countries are becoming interested in influencing the establishment of policy goals. Partnerships are thus endeavouring to become an integral part of both policy design and delivery processes at local, but also at national levels.

Previous OECD LEED research has identified a series of mechanisms through which partnerships can impact on the design and delivery of public policy, including: fostering co-operation across organisations, assessing the coherence of the various actions conducted and proposing ways to improve this, conducting strategic planning exercises aimed at setting common objectives in order to better achieve policy goals, and implementing local strategies

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through for example, proposing or appraising projects, designing specific measures and delivering services. With its new series of capacity building activities, the Forum on Partnerships and Local Governance has opened a discussion on such mechanisms for influencing public policy, looking at the principle interests of partnerships and their rationales, the underlying policy framework for their actions and the potential added value resulting from the way in which partnerships feed into the policy design process.



The seminar on 5 - 7 December 2006 in Vienna, Austria on “Enhancing the Capacity of Partnerships to Influence Policy” launched this new field of work. The event was an important stock-taking exercise highlighting previous experiences, and future ambitions, in relation to the influence of public policy. Over two and a half days, twelve partnership managers from eight different OECD Member countries engaged in a lively debate and intensive exchange of experience around the “Why”, the “What” and the “How” of influencing public policy. The seminar emphasised that for partnerships feeding into the policy design process must be established as a long-term objective. Achieving such an objective requires the ability to outreach to different levels of governance, and to build legitimacy and relations of trust with other actors. Securing the latter may require achieving and maintaining a “critical mass” through ensuring the commitment of the main public services and government agencies concerned; a strong participation from business; and an unchallenged representation from civil society. In addition, the partnership’s public accountability and transparency must be exemplary, and its performance properly assessed and monitored. Partnerships must build a strong analytical capacity and have access to critical information.

A number of issues need to be taken into consideration by partnerships when building their capacity. Looking at how partnerships in other places handle such issues provides useful information and inspiration for changing and improving one’s own approach. Previous international events organised within the framework of the Forum have demonstrated the growing interest of partnerships in capacity building activities offering participants a possibility to share and acquire new experiences and know-how. The new series of capacity building activities is a direct response to this demand, and includes seminars, workshops and study visits to participating countries.

In this issue of the Forum’s newsletter you will find a summary highlighting the main findings of the Vienna seminar with the intention of offering you a “first glance” inside a capacity building event and inviting you to actively participate in and perhaps even become a host of such an event in the near future.



Sylvain Giguère
Deputy Head of LEED Programme, OECD

Partnerships Making Policy – Highlights from the Capacity Building Seminar, Vienna, December 2006



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Local partnerships influencing policy development Two contrasting perspectives exist on the potential role of local partnerships in policy development and implementation. Traditionally, local partnerships have often been seen as a delivery mechanism for national and international policy programmes in a hierarchical, top down model of policy. The alternative perspective, however, is of multi-level governance arrangements in which local partnerships contribute to both delivery and policy development in a process which is bottom up as much as top down.

A workshop organised by the OECD LEED Forum on Partnerships and Local Governance at the Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI) in Vienna on 5 - 7 December 2006 demonstrated that local partnerships are now not only delivery vehicles for European and national policies, but are also increasingly making valuable contributions to the policy development process.

The Vienna workshop explored the scope for partnerships to enhance their contribution to this 'multi-level governance', model, looking at "Why local partnerships may want to influence policy", "What dimensions of policy it may be important to influence", and "How influence can be exerted effectively".

>> Why do local partnerships want to influence policy? Local partnerships may want to influence policy for several reasons:

- _ Because current policies – of national government for example – appear to prevent or constrain local partnerships from achieving their objectives and targets;*
- _ Because policies pay insufficient recognition to variations in local circumstances, needs and opportunities; and*
- _ Because local partnerships have developed good practice, which has been tested on the ground, and can offer know-how from practical experience on what works and what does not.*

During the workshop several partnerships gave examples of their reasons for wanting to influence policy. The **Vibrant Communities Calgary, Canada** is concerned with poverty alleviation, and sees influencing policy as a major objective because existing policies of government agencies are neither systematic nor systemic. Existing policies do not address the root causes of poverty, and a more holistic policy approach is needed. The **Territorial Employment Pact Berlin-Neukölln, Germany**, as a local alliance for economic development and employment, recognises that acting locally has to be supported by all levels of governance, and this can require policy change. The **Styrian Territorial Employment Pact, Austria** sees the need to 'anchor' employment policy in other policy areas at provincial level, in order to mainstream employment objectives across a number of policy domains. The Ballyhoura partnership (**Ballyhoura Development Ltd, Ireland**), operating in a rural area, seeks to influence policy to ensure that national policies have rural issues on the agenda and that such policies are 'rural proofed' at the development stage. In **England**, some **Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs)** aim to influence the policies of the UK government which set the parameters for their remits, responsibilities and resources, and have contributed to a recent consultation exercise organised by government prior to the publication of new guidelines for LSPs.

A further issue for discussion is whether partnerships have a specific role in influencing policy, as distinct from other local agencies and interests. In this respect, it is clear that local partnerships do consider that they have a unique contribution to make to policy because they bring together a number of local partners and so can speak more authoritatively on local issues and on wider policies affecting their area. In this sense, they have a legitimacy which other actors in the public policy field do not.

It should be noted however that not all local partnerships appear to want to influence policy – some appear content with a ‘delivery’ role, or at least have not found the time to think about a wider role. Moreover, it may take time for a partnership to be well established and ‘mature’ enough to take on the task of seeking to influence policy. <<

>> **What aspects of policies do local partnerships want to influence?** There are a number of possible dimensions to “influencing policy”. The first of these is the governance level which a partnership may want to influence:

Influencing the policies of local partners/agencies For many local partnerships this is more important than influencing national policy, as the partnerships’ success is likely to depend primarily on the extent to which local actors are willing to support the priorities of the partnership. Depending on the remit of the partnership, it may be more or less important to influence the policies of public agencies or private sector partners (as opposed to funding them to deliver specific outcomes).

The **Central Uusimaa Partnership, Finland**, aims to create joint responsibility and more positive attitudes among local partners to support employment. This means influencing the policies of both public agencies and businesses. In **Italy**, the **Territorial Employment Pact Nord Baresse/Ofantino** has sought to influence local institutions and policies because of the perceived need for a new approach to local governance to ensure a more strategic focus on local development and employment.

Influencing regional and national policies There are at least two kinds of regional and national policy which local partnerships may want to influence:

- _ Policies of “parent” departments which set the rules by which a local partnership operates;
- _ Policies of agencies which are important to the outcomes which a local partnership is trying to achieve.

Evidence in the past has suggested that local partnerships often influence national policies at the margins, and in specific details of policy implementation, but there are fewer examples of broader or more systemic influence on policy development. National and regional government departments can often seem to give more priority to meeting their own targets than to representations from the local level. As one participant in the workshop said, national governments may not see the added value of engaging with local partnerships on policy issues, while provincial or regional governments and agencies may be afraid of losing power. However, the workshop provided evidence that examples are now emerging of significant interventions by local partnerships.

The **Territorial Employment Pact Lower Austria** focuses on encouraging regional partners to pool resources and work together on projects to get better value for money from partners' policies by joining them up more effectively. All **nine Austrian TEPs** have joined together in a highly innovative way to develop a Green Paper proposing new policies for the elderly, with implications for national as well as provincial and regional tiers of government. They saw the need to take co-ordinated action because of the need to review policies for the elderly in a way which cut across traditional policy making processes. The **Dublin Inner City Partnership, Ireland** takes the view that the voices of the communities it represents should be heard by both national politicians and civil servants on policy issues such as local development and inner city regeneration. The partnership has adopted an innovative dual strategy of lobbying policy makers and organising in the public domain to achieve this.



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Influencing EU policies Local partnerships have also had a relatively marginal influence on EU policies. One major reason for this may be that many local partnerships have a lifespan limited by a particular programme, and are oriented entirely towards that programme, with relatively few mechanisms for real influence and learning across programmes. So partnerships which have succeeded in accessing support from several programmes and extending their life beyond the programme within which they originated may be of particular interest.

Partnerships participating in the workshop recognised the importance of influencing EU policies. The **Berlin Neukölln TEP, Germany** argues that it is extremely important for local partnerships to exert influence on the EU to ensure that new policies continue to recognise the importance of local partnership working to their implementation and delivery.

At the same time, there can be different aspects of policy which partnerships want to influence:

- *the delivery of **existing policy**;*
- *the development of **new policy/programmes**;*
- *the **content of policy**;*
- ***resource allocation**, especially public expenditure; or*
- *the **process** through which policy is made, i.e. the relationships between partnerships and policy makers. <<*

The **Ballyhoura partnership** in Ireland is concerned to influence both existing and new policies in diverse ways. The partnership's goals include securing specific rural-oriented policies whilst also influencing more mainstream policies to ensure that they can be flexibly implemented to meet the needs of rural areas. They are also concerned to influence resource allocation, for example to improve rural infrastructure. The intervention of **the Austrian TEPs** on policies for the elderly has seen partnerships lead the development of new policy. The **Vibrant Communities Calgary, Canada** has worked with local and provincial government on the development and implementation of a range of policies, from discounted transport and employment standards to policies for a living wage and assured income for the severely handicapped. Similarly the **Central Uusimaa Partnership** in Finland seeks to act as an 'umbrella' to co-ordinate and add value to the delivery of a range of policies by developing new models of co-operation among local partners to support employment and the fight against exclusion. The **Dublin Inner City Partnership, Ireland** takes the view that influencing the content of policy to better meet the needs of local residents may mean conflict with government over certain issues.



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>> **How can local partnerships exert influence on policy?** There would appear to be a number of options open to local partnerships wanting to exert influence on policy makers.

Perhaps the principal means of exerting influence is by means of effective networking and exploitation of the channels of communication which already exist within the national governance systems (consultation, budget setting etc). However, to exploit these channels effectively, local partnerships need to be able to be sure about their local legitimacy, and also need sufficient capacity/capability. This means that partnerships may need to develop their organisational capacity to ensure that they can call on staff with sufficient skills and experience to engage effectively with policy makers.

Other mechanisms may also be important, including:

- _ *Mechanisms for horizontal collaboration between local partnerships to ensure that there is broad support for policy proposals;*
- _ *Possibilities for exchange of staff between partnerships and policy units in regional/national governments;*
- _ *Regular informal meetings between partnerships and policy makers in which the two meet as equals, outside of the formal programme delivery and policy implementation system; and*
- _ *Development of protocols to govern partnerships' relationships with external bodies to improve their ability to influence their policies. <<*

In developing the Green Paper for the Elderly, the **Austrian TEPs** were able to draw on the strength that came from the participation of all the TEPs in the country – but it was necessary to continually work to maintain this unity (horizontal partnership). The **Central Uusimaa Partnership, Finland** has developed a number of innovative modes of networking. These include the presence on the local partnership board of several individuals with national reputations and connections, who can act on behalf of the partnership if need be. The partnership also recognises the time and effort which needs to be given to networking, and the skills and organisational culture within the partnership which are important in promoting effective networking. The **Styrian TEP, Austria** has developed the partnership at two levels – provincial and regional – in order to exert influence more effectively on both the development and delivery of employment policies. The **Dublin Inner City Partnership, Ireland** sees its role as one of advocacy on behalf of its local community, a function which ranges from lobbying prominent politicians to mobilising the community. One aspect of its work has been to draw up a protocol to help manage the sometimes conflictual relationship between the local authority and community groups represented in the partnership. A group of **LSPs in England** similarly developed a protocol to help ensure that Regional Development Agencies and other regional agencies worked more closely with them. The **TEP Berlin Neukölln, Germany** emphasises the importance of networking across the tiers of multi-level governance, from the European to the local level, and the importance of the multi-level brokering role which this implies. The **TEP Nord Barese/Ofantino, Italy** has established a group of new agencies at local level with the aim of stimulating existing local institutions to recognise the new approach to local development necessary in the current context of globalisation and intensified competition between countries, regions and localities.

>> Conclusions, general findings



Local partnerships have demonstrated the contribution they can make to developing as well as delivering economic and social policies. In so doing, they are strengthening the policy process. They are revealing how, without having to resort to expensive and wholesale restructuring of institutions, policy can become more responsive to the needs of users and communities. Local partnerships can bring a bottom-up dimension to the policy process, helping to widen the influence of policies through "reaching the parts that other mechanisms cannot reach". Because partnerships engage many stakeholders, they can facilitate cross-cutting perspectives, and thus help bridge gaps which can exist between the policies of individual agencies.

Nonetheless, the impact of local partnerships on policy is still fragile and far from universal. The workshop showed that it is the more mature partnerships, and especially those which have been able to extend their lifespan beyond specific programme funding, which have been making the running. It will be important to extend the experience accumulated by relatively few partnerships to many more. This raises questions which will need to be addressed about the transferability and 'scaling up' of good practice.

Secondly, influencing policy still often happens in an ad hoc way. It may be valuable to understand what more considered strategies for policy influence might look like, drawing on the experience of those partnerships which have attempted this.

Need for the policy process to recognise local diversity and the value of evidence from practice.

Thirdly, it is clearly much easier for local partnerships to influence policy if there is a receptive culture among policy makers in regional, national and supra-national government institutions. Putting it slightly differently, if the value of local partnerships' input to policy making is accepted, there are implications for government as well as for partnerships themselves.

These include:

– *the need for government to ensure that the channels of communication within multi-level governance arrangements are open to inputs from the bottom up;*

– *the need for a recognition within the policy process of local diversity and the value of evidence from practice; and*

– *the importance of units within government which promote two-way dialogue between partnerships and government.*

Thus the issues discussed in the workshop need to be the subject of ongoing dialogue, not only among local partnerships but between partnerships and policy makers in government. <<

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Thanks to all partnerships for valuable contributions: Ballyhoura Development Ltd (Ireland); Central Uusimaa Partnership (Finland); Dacorum Borough Council - CEMENT Project (United Kingdom); Dublin Inner City Partnership (Ireland); "Health Region Barnim" Brandenburg (Germany); Inter-Regional Territorial Pact for Employment "Central Apennine" (Italy); Styrian TEP (Austria); TEP Berlin-Neukölln (Germany), TEP Lower Austria (Austria); TEP Nord Barese/Ofantino (Italy); Vibrant Communities Calgary (Canada).

For contacts of participating partnerships please send email to office@forum.zsi.at.

Partnerships' voices



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Interviews with partnerships' experts Four specific questions were asked to partnership managers attending the seminar – How can partnerships add value in influencing policy? Which policy means have, in their experience, been successful and/or innovative? What are the major barriers to effectively influencing policy, and how have they tried to overcome those barriers? Finally, what recommendations could they offer to newly established partnerships on how to truly influence policy?

>> Importance for partnerships to influence policy and added value National policy often does not sufficiently reflect local problems. Partnerships integrate different perspectives and the experiences of various actors and their interests into action plans, and develop strategies and measures that are more co-ordinated and efficient. Partnerships have the capacity to learn, analyse and solve local “conflicts” thus assuring that common views are put forward to policy makers. They have the power to heighten the awareness of those concerned.

“The most effective way to achieve a significant and sustained reduction in poverty is through positive changes to public and private policies”, said Ramona Johnston, Director of Vibrant Communities Calgary, Canada. “Our central strategy is to shift this ‘pull yourself up by your bootstraps’ ideology by facilitating a healthy dialogue about the depth, breadth and root causes of poverty, based on the belief that an informed community will take action. We believe the entire community needs to take ownership for poverty and poverty reduction. We work from an understanding of community and individual asset building, engage community leaders in discussions about poverty, and facilitate public dialogue. Through this, we are creating the conditions for structural change”. <<

>> Successful and innovative ways to influence policy Successful mechanisms include the national co-ordination of partnerships; regular meetings between local partnerships and national and regional policy makers; participation in steering committees; research and evaluation of pilot programmes; participation in national or regional networks; and seminars/workshops.

The Dublin Inner City Partnership in Ireland, for example, successfully invested in new initiatives that have become national programmes. Through various measures, including a street protest and the use of the national and local media, the partnership also led negotiations with relevant departments in response to cutbacks in resources or attempts to close employment programmes.

“Over the fifteen years that the Dublin Inner City Partnership has been active we have used a wide variety of means to influence policy and advocate change, and many of these have been innovative. The instruments used include: policy proposals endorsed by the Partnership Board; direct liaison with ministers and senior officials in the relevant government departments; supporting and investing in new initiatives, which have become national programmes; research and evaluation of pilot programmes; participation in national or regional networks; and establishment of protocols of engagement with the key statutory agencies in relation to improving working relationships and ensuring more effective targeting of persistent poverty in the inner city, most notably with the City Council”, explained David Connolly, Director of the Dublin Inner City Partnership. <<

>> Major barriers influencing policy effectively and possibilities for overcoming them Among the barriers cited by partnership managers are: unclear conditions and expectations; lack of competence; imbalance in the political and personal interests of partners; difficulties in defining and strengthening regular relationships between partnerships and policy makers; little or no interest in government engagement at a local level with independent structures; lack of trust; and inability to see the added value of influencing policy.

Solutions to such problems are mainly seen in enhanced communication among a wide range of partners, closer co-operation with elected representatives, periodic adjustment and development of partnerships' policy and strategy, and the use of local media for lobbying purposes.

Each partnership needs to find its own solutions: *"Partnership sometimes considers it has a unique contribution to make to policy creation and should speak more authoritatively on local issues. Organising meetings to share the project approach and evaluate results and new proposals jointly, inviting local stakeholders and national policy makers to one round table, can solve this obstacle"*, indicated Ilias Tasiias from the Inter-Regional Territorial Pact for Employment "Central Apennine", Italy. <<

>> Recommendations to newly established partnerships on how to truly influence policy

New partnerships could learn from long-term partnership structures in OECD countries. Managers experienced in this field recommended the following:

- _ *Define clear commitments, co-operation and lines of communication when setting up a partnership;*
- _ *Employ a professional partnership manager (a co-operation broker) to ensure harmony between all actors and levels;*
- _ *Guarantee a stable financial structure for the partnership;*
- _ *Clarify expectations with partners and make sure everyone understands that policy change takes time;*
- _ *Develop an overarching theory of change, in which the ideas and assumptions guiding a partnership are presented as well as the intended pathway to achieving results, allowing for the identification of lessons learned and progress made;*
- _ *Be flexible and not afraid to change tactics midway;*
- _ *Disseminate and promote activities at the right time; and*
- _ ***Celebrate small successes along the way and recognise all contributions to the process, be they large or small.***

Partnerships involving different stakeholders from various levels and sectors play an important role in the delivery and design of policy, and have varying degrees of success. The variety of cases presented at the seminar showed that there are many ways in which partnerships can influence policy, but there is no one single, common way that can be applied by every partnership. What proved efficient for one partnership might not be helpful for another.

If partnerships wish to influence policy in an effective and efficient way, they must address the right people within government and make them aware of local problems. Partnerships should use their potential to achieve a better balance between local and national priorities. The broad involvement of important stakeholders builds a space for mutual learning and growth: this requires open and regular communication with all partners, gaining confidence and respect, and allowing adequate time for a trust building process and a high level of information exchange. <<



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News & Events

On-line Annual Brochure “forumpartnerships2006”

In November 2006, an updated edition of the Annual Brochure “forumpartnerships2006” of the OECD LEED Forum on Partnerships and Local Governance was issued. The Brochure presents a variety of area-based partnership models from a wide range of countries, illustrating methods, tools and results achieved. The examples demonstrate the importance of the establishment of robust partnership structures in order to stimulate economic development, social cohesion and enhance people’s quality of life.

For further information, please visit

<http://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/forum/partnerships/>

7th Forum Newsletter The 7th Forum Newsletter will be published in April 2007. If you did not receive this 6th Newsletter directly from us, please send an email to rubik@forum.zsi.at indicating “Add to mailing list for Forum Newsletters”.

3rd Forum Meeting: Improving cross-sector and multi-level collaboration 1 - 2 March 2007, Vienna, Austria

The 3rd Meeting of the OECD LEED Forum on Partnerships and Local Governance will focus on cross-sectoral and multi-level collaboration, supporting the exchange of experience and practice between partnerships and exploring ways to overcome common obstacles. The Forum meeting will provide a unique occasion for such an exchange, providing opportunities for in-depth discussion within a series of interactive working sessions: ‘Cross-sectoral collaboration’ and ‘Multi-level collaboration’.

The meeting will

_ explore the factors that hinder partnerships in creatively influencing local policy and highlight approaches which have maximised the potential contribution of all the various partners involved;

_ explore the extent to which partnerships currently involve co-operation across different governance levels and highlight examples of partnerships which have managed to effectively influence the design and implementation of policies, thereby improving the local appropriateness of policies and policy integration.

In order to deepen common understanding within the Forum and its members, the Forum Meeting will build on the outcomes of the interactive workshops to develop a “Vienna Declaration of Forum Partnerships” incorporating recommendations on how to improve governance for local, regional and national government and other policy actors.

For more information, please contact rubik@forum.zsi.at or consult <http://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/forum/partnerships>.

Capacity Building Seminar: “Enhancing the Capacity of Partnerships to Influence Policy” 2 - 4 April 2007, Dublin, Ireland

This two-day seminar is the second stage of a capacity building programme designed for experienced partnerships from OECD member countries. After a lively first seminar in Vienna, this second meeting will allow a more in-depth discussion on how partnerships can enhance their capacity to influence policy at the local, national and international levels.

The participating partnership managers will have the opportunity to engage in discussion with local community representatives and other stakeholders, national level policy-makers and OECD experts. The programme will include case study presentations and panel discussions. The debate will also be enhanced by study visits to selected local Irish partnerships.

The seminar is organised within the framework of the OECD LEED Forum on Partnership and Local Governance in co-operation with Pobal, a not-for-profit company with charitable status that manages programmes on behalf of the Irish Government and the EU. For more information, please contact Elisa.Campestrin@oecd.org at the OECD LEED Trento Centre for Local Development.

First Capacity Building Seminar for newly established partnerships in CEE and SEE Countries May 2007, Trento, Italy

This three-day OECD LEED Trento Centre seminar is designed to help the managers of newly established partnerships in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern European countries to improve their effectiveness in partnership implementation.

Drawing on the experience of partnerships in OECD member countries the seminar will address the organisational and substantive issues connected with the creation and management of partnerships. The most useful tools for building, financing and running partnerships will be presented together with a consideration of the wider policy environment in which partnerships operate.

Up to 30 participants will be selected from policy makers and practitioners involved in partnership projects all over Central East and South East Europe (target countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia and Slovak Republic).

For more information, please contact andrea-rosalinde.hofer@oecd.org at the OECD LEED Trento Centre for Local Development.

Employment Week, 14th Annual Conference&Exhibition 5 - 6 June 2007, Brussels, Belgium

The two-day conference and exhibition offers a valuable opportunity for practitioners and European decision-makers to connect and discuss the latest policies and trends in European employment. Focusing on ‘Working Europe – creating more and better jobs’, the conference programme has something for everyone including two main streams: in the workplace, in the labour market.

To register your interest in attending the Employment Week conference and exhibition or simply to receive the conference programme, please contact spothier@tarsus.co.uk

Further information can be downloaded at: <http://www.employmentweek.com/>.



Forum in brief



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The partnership network The OECD LEED Forum on Partnerships and Local Governance is a network for the exchange of information and experiences between partnerships. Since September 2004, it has promoted an integrated approach to local development, helping area-based partnerships to maximise their contribution to local governance and the effectiveness of policies.

>> **Forum mission** The mission of the OECD LEED Forum on Partnerships and Local Governance is to enhance the contribution of partnership structures to local development and local governance and the effectiveness of policies.

>> **Forum partnerships** Area-based partnerships are tools to improve governance. They seek to improve policy co-ordination and adaptation to local conditions, lead to the better utilisation and targeting of programmes, integrate civil society's concerns into strategic planning exercises, stimulate corporate involvement in local projects, and promote greater satisfaction with public policy (**OECD, Local Partnerships for Better Governance, 2001**).

Forum partnerships are primarily focused on employment and social issues and economic development and are characterised by a multi-level, multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional approach.

The Forum is
a network of
partnerships in order
to exchange
information and
experiences between
partnerships

>> **Objectives of the Forum** The objectives of the Forum are:

- _ to improve dissemination, stimulate learning between partnerships and facilitate the transfer of expertise and exchange of experiences;
- _ to create synergies between partnership programmes;
- _ to assess and develop co-operation models; and
- _ to advise and support partnership organisations on ways to promote an integrated approach and improve the co-ordination between policies.

>> **Forum Structure** All institutions and organisations involved in the management of area-based partnerships may become members of the Forum. Delegates and national partnership co-ordinators interested in providing further advice on the implementation of tasks participate in the Forum Board. The Forum Co-ordination is the support structure which builds up the network.

All co-ordination tasks are carried out by the Forum Office Vienna at the ZSI (Centre for Social Innovation) and the OECD LEED Trento Centre for Local Development, under the supervision of the OECD LEED Programme (Paris).

>> **Tasks of the Forum**

- _ Further developing the network (identification and networking of institutions);
- _ Building the data base (Documentary base);
- _ Forum meetings, Forum Board meetings;
- _ Policy advice (study visits, capacity building seminar); and
- _ Information exchange (Annual Brochure, Electronic newsletters, Forum Websites). <<



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