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Organisational challenges in building local partnerships

Preliminary findings and
recommendations for
Varazdin and Vukovar

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Strengths and weaknesses in current approaches towards local partnership building

Strengths and weaknesses (1/2)

- Broad recognition of need for local partnerships (LPE and County Partnerships) to:
 - cope with EU accession challenges
 - maximize use of EU funding opportunities
 - support reconstruction process to overcome negative regional disparities
 - etc
- Multiple sources of financial support available through national, county and city programmes
- Overall structure of local partnerships more project-based; less driven by overarching and shared strategic goals
- Scarcity of resources and capacities to sustain partnerships, especially monitoring, evaluation and performance management

Strengths and weaknesses (2/2)

- Partnerships enjoy political support, but reduced role of non-governmental partners/civil society organisations
- Unclear definition and assignment of roles and responsibilities among partners (overlap may lead to duplication)
- Suboptimal credibility and political support for partnerships: local ownership and leadership not clear
- Suboptimal communication within partnership and towards outsiders: work and contribution of partnership/s to local development is not yet well known to wider audience
- Initiatives like E-Vukovar: potential tool for networking and information exchange (monitoring, evaluation, performance management)



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Recommendations to improve current approaches towards local partnership building



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Recommendations (1/4)

WHAT

Join up national level support for local partnerships: horizontal and vertical communication and co-ordination

Establish one 'umbrella' local strategic partnership and one joined up local development strategy with one co-ordination unit/technical secretariat/management body and different thematic working groups

WHO

National government offices and ministry departments

Local govts (county and cities), RDA, Chambers, HZZ, VET, HEI, NGOs, etc.



Recommendations (2/4)

WHAT

Willingness of partners to provide and maintain adequately resourced support structures (capacity, skills, knowledge) requires :

- Contribution to support infrastructure (financing, staff placements, ect.)
- Alignment of single strategic plans and ensure consistency with local strategic priorities

WHO

National government offices and ministry departments, local govts (county and cities), RDA, Chambers, HZZ, VET, HEI, NGOs, etc.



Recommendations (3/4)

WHAT

Instigate an interactive process of regular public consultations and engagement to enhance:

- ✓ Transparency and accountability
- ✓ Public acceptance and credibility

Finding the right operational level (county or municipal level):
protocols for effective collaboration, clear definition of respective remits

WHO

National government offices and ministry departments, local govts (county and cities), RDA, Chambers, HZZ, VET, HEI, NGOs, etc.

County and city administration, Nat govt, RDA, Chambers, HZZ, VET, HEI, NGOs, etc.



Recommendations (4/4)

WHAT

Ensure and maintain ownership assumption by local actors over partnership agenda

Increase awareness for monitoring and evaluation exercises and train partners in developing these skills, or in managing external support

WHO

Local govts (county and cities), RDA, Chambers, HZZ, VET, HEI, NGOs, etc.

National government offices and ministry departments, County and city administration, RDA, Chambers, HZZ, VET, HEI, NGOs, etc.



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Implications for local and national government arising from local partnership building



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Implications for local government

- Building local government capacity
- Support for leadership within partnerships:
 - ✓ Leadership in a partnership context poses specific challenges compared to traditional autocratic type leadership
- Technical support for partnerships and assist in the improvement of performance management, monitoring and evaluation:
 - ✓ Ensured access to skills and knowledge for partners and partnership
 - ✓ Functioning communication channels
- Organizational and cultural change: reconciling local development priorities and institutional responsibilities, given mandate of elected local authorities might be challenged
 - ✓ Protocols and agreements between local govts and partnership



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Implications for national government

- Need for government policies which are flexible and adaptable to change
 - Co-ordination between different policy areas
- Need for communication channels within multi-level governance arrangements that are open to inputs from the bottom up; and
 - Role of an intermediary agency
- Need for a recognition within the policy process of local diversity and the value of evidence from practice
 - Provision of clear guidance and support from central government for local partnership work
 - Guidelines for performance management, monitoring and evaluation
- Facilitation of good practice exchange and inter-partnership learning



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Implications for local partnerships

- Ensure transparency and accountability of partnership structures
- Work on the basis of sound local knowledge and expertise, making reference to local data and indicators
- Demonstrate capacity to enhance policy outcomes through appropriate monitoring and evaluation
- Network partnerships at the national level and learn lessons from international experience to ensure efficient dialogue with government; and
- Demonstrate a strategic approach which goes beyond the delivery of projects and programmes and can adapt to changes in a globalised economy

Points for discussion



- Your reactions to the findings
- Where you agree and disagree
- How to make a recommendation happen?
- Who could deliver the recommendations?