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Webinar 6. Strengthening cooperation with international partners and local stakeholders.

Checking homework. Discussion on the possibilities of cooperation with international partners and local stakeholders.

1. Importance of partnerships.
2. Public-Private partnership - examples of good practices.
3. International cooperation (benefits, opportunities and threats).
4. External communication and cooperation with the media.
5. Summary.

1. Importance of Partnerships

A partnership is an agreement to do something together that will benefit all involved, bringing results that could not be achieved by a single partner operating alone, and reducing duplication of efforts. Partnerships operate under different conditions, depending on the detailed nature of the problems that they address and factors such as the environment, political factors, culture and geographic focus. Area based partnerships for example are agreements of institutions of various kinds in a local or regional setting. There are several types of partnerships involving public, private and nonprofit partners, such as policy partnerships, partnerships for delivery of public services, capacity building partnerships, economic development partnerships.

The international community has progressively recognized the important role of partnerships in development stressing the significance of participation of all actors. Partnerships can be highly valuable for improving policy performance and contribute to local governance as they can allow local authorities to adapt their policies to better reflect and respond to the needs at the local level.

Motives behind partnerships

Partnerships are formed for diverse reasons, and each has a “life” of its own. There are a variety of motives for starting a partnership, and therefore also a number of different ways to start. The initial impetus can be:

- Locally driven, or bottom-up, meaning from the region itself where the need for better co-operation and co-ordination of activities is recognised.



- **Armenian Economic Report** is an annual analytical periodical which aims to support accountability and evidence-based decision making culture in Armenia. It particularly sets out to analyse and interpret economic policies and developments, raise awareness, and create a base for enhanced policy discussions and development. Programme was developed by the EDRC, who was cooperated with various state bodies (depending the theme of the year) and with the financial support of the GIZ.
- Policy driven, or top-down, when someone at the central level considers the partnership approach to be the right one for the solution to a certain type of problem;
 - **EU4Sevan** - to protect the largest freshwater lake in the Caucasus region and the most significant source of freshwater, irrigation water, aquaculture, as well as hydropower source in Armenia. The project is implemented by the GIZ and by UNDP under the coordination of the Ministry of Environment of RA.
 - **The Covenant of Mayors** - is the world's largest movement for local climate and energy actions. The EU Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy brings together thousands of local governments voluntarily committed to implementing EU climate and energy objectives.
- Incentive driven, in that money is offered for a certain type of activity (as was the case with the European Commission programme on partnerships).
 - **Rural Tourism Development** – to promote the development of tourism in rural communities, giving new opportunities to locals to create or develop their ideas in that field. The project is implemented by the Branch of German Nature Protection Union (NABU) in the RA and ACBA Federation.
 - **Community Poverty Reduction “Know How”** - to reduce multidimensional poverty in Armenia. In particular, the Project aims at enhancing public discussions on inequality and poverty and implement social initiatives aimed at poverty reduction. The project is implemented jointly by the Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC), Economic Development and Research Center (EDRC), Eurasia Partnership Foundation (EPF) and Hrant Matevosyan Foundation.

Three main types of partnerships exist in terms of the applied **management structure**. These involve:

- Partnerships establish their management externally.
- The co-ordination is settled through an intermediary body; and
- Co-ordination units are built up as part of a partner’s institutional structure.

In terms of **time and liabilities** the following types of partnerships are defined:

Types of partnership



Partnership at Will (no fixed Duration), Particular partnership (only for a specific undertaking); General partnership (beyond a specific undertaking) and Limited partnerships. In a limited liability, the partners are only liable for the liabilities arising out of the particular business venture for which the partnership was formed.

Partnerships Success

Yet implementing a partnership is a very delicate and requires the ability to work with different organisations and their specificities. Successful partnerships enhance the impact and effectiveness of a project or activities through combined and more efficient use of resources; and are often distinguished by a strong commitment from each partner. To achieve sustained success, it is essential that basic local parameters be created and agreed upon; equally essential are political will, resourcing, and the appropriation of funds. Having a collaborative operation contributes drastically to partnership success. A shared strategic vision, pursue of compatible targets, equality in a predetermined organizational structure are import in this regard.

In addition has to be strong communication, among the partners – so that there is maximum transparency both within and outside of the partnership. It is also important to review lines of communication to ensure that all partners are kept informed and involved.

To be efficient, a partnership should have **recognisable and autonomous structure** to help establish its identity. The structure should have stability and permanence as well as flexibility, and it is helpful if it has a certain degree of autonomy, i.e. freedom from political influence.

Partnerships need to develop a **long-term strategy** of what? if they are to work effectively and have a lasting effect. For area-based partnerships, this strategy must include a vision for the region focusing on the outcome to be achieved, an action plan identifying shorter-term priorities, and a co-ordinated working programme including activities and measures that will contribute to the achievement of long-term outcomes. Also necessary are a shared commitment to implement the programme and arrangements for monitoring and reporting progress.

Partnership Failure Factors

- Partners do not share the same values and interests. This can make agreements on partnership goals difficult.
- There is no sharing of risk, responsibility, accountability or benefits.



- The inequalities in partners' resources and expertise determine their relative influence in the partnership's decision making.
- One person or partner has all the power and/or drives the process.
- There is a hidden motivation of one/some partners? which is not declared to all partners.
- The partnership was established just to "keep up appearances".
- Partnership members do not have the training to identify issues or resolve internal conflicts.
- Partners are not chosen carefully, particularly if it is difficult to "cease the partnership".

Partnerships with Non-state Actors

2. Public Private Partnerships

Public-private partnership (PPP) is a long-term contract between the private sector and a body of a public administration system/local self-government body (public partner), for provision of public services, as well as for development of public infrastructure. The Government of the RA emphasizes the importance of the policy development for the PPP and efficient implementation of PPP projects. This is aimed to enhance the ability of public bodies to manage the risks, contribute to building and development of infrastructure in the country within the framework of PPP projects, as well as ensure positive outcomes based on the quality and value of services rendered to the public.

The first PPP model was applied in Yerevan Water and Wastewater Company through a Management Contract. Currently, the following main PPPs operate:

- Veolia Jur/water supply and wastewater,
 - Veolia Jur (founded by Veolia french Group) has assumed the responsibilities of the Unified Operator for 15 years starting from 1 January 2017.
- Armenian Railways,
 - The "South Caucasian Railway" CJSC has been the operator of the Armenian railways since 2008.
- Yerevan Zvartnots Airport,
- Shirak Airport
 - The "Armenia International Airports" CJSC has been the operator of Zvartnots and Shirak Airports (30 year concession management contract with Argentine «Corporacion America» Company).

There are certain gaps in the legislation, such as details of the selection process for the Private Operator, as well as some other procedures and rules applicable to Private Operators, definition of PPP sectors/areas etc. The expansion of PPP sectors is currently being discussed.

Partnerships with other non-state actors

Other non-state actors next to private entities can also be valuable partners. Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) are often experts in the fields in which they operate. Next to interventions that



can benefit from NGOs technical inputs, partnerships with NGOs can also help improve information campaigns, consultations, and co-decision-making activities.

- EDRC provided advisory services to the Ministry of Finance to Introduce the Programme Budgeting Reform in Armenia. The project was supported by the GiZ “Public Financial Management in the South Caucasus” programme. EDRC provided guidance and support in: revision and adjustment of all budget programmes, development of programme goals, objectives and KPIs, conduction of trainings, etc.

3. International Cooperation (benefits, opportunities and threats)

There are growing opportunities for expanding the boundaries of partnership beyond regional or country boundaries. Today local-international partnerships have a more critical and growing role in aid delivery. A growing portion of international humanitarian aid and development funding is delivered through partnerships with national and local entities. International donors such as the EU collaborate with a wide range of actors including local authorities and NGOs to draw on their expertise and support them to reach development goals and desired targets with the necessary support, while boosting the efficiency and effectiveness of development aid. There are various online platforms that facilitate partnerships such as the EU **partner search tool**.¹

Yet, while such international cooperation creates opportunities for expanding their horizons in terms of access to resources and expertise, local-international partnerships are not without risks. Risk that may exist in national-international partnerships can involve fiduciary risks (centering on financial management and compliance issues) and other risk areas that could bear on partnerships, such as security, informational and reputational risk.²

4. External communication and cooperation with the media

Effective communication is an essential component of successful development cooperation. External Communication is the transfer or exchange of information with external audiences. It often is to build awareness and create a favourable image of the organisation or community in the eyes of the target audiences and society at large. Various mediums are used for external communication, such as print/broadcast media, face-to-face meetings, electronic communication.

Effective communication helps raise awareness of the policies and actions of the organizations and their its role in society, and provides accountability and transparency on the use of donor and public funds to taxpayers and the citizens. Partners must plan communication activities from the start of their actions. Many donor organisations have very specific Communication and Visibility Requirements that need to be adhered and implemented during all stages of project implementation. A wide range of

¹ The EU partnership tool is available at <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/partner-search>

² Interaction, NGOs and Risk: Managing Uncertainty in Local-International Partnerships. 2019 link <https://www.interaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Risk-Global-Study.pdf>

communication and visibility channels, tools, activities and products can be used and this range continues to evolve dynamically. Some of the useful external communications channels are:

- Internet; Websites, social media, Electronic newsletters, online articles and blogs
- Information campaigns, events, visits, stakeholder meetings
- Press and media, Press releases, Press conferences, Press visits
- Audio-visual material, photography and other productions
- Communication and visibility in print, including newsletters, leaflets, brochures and other printed materials and Displays



Foto: Covenant of Mayors Yerevan

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