



European Commission  
DG Employment  
Social Affairs and  
Equal Opportunities

# NOT ALONE

*A research on partnerships between  
private companies and citizen's organizations  
in Europe*

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## ***Foreword***

In the framework of their activities focused on the “citizens’ side” of corporate social responsibility and to those concerning the participation of citizens’ organizations in policy making, Active Citizenship Foundation (FONDACA) and Active Citizenship Network (ACN) have carried out a research project on partnerships between private companies and citizens’ organizations in 8 European Union countries. The project was supported by the European Commission, DG Employment and Social Affairs, and by Unicredit Group. It was aimed, on the one hand, at filling the existing knowledge gap on the cooperation between citizens’ organizations and companies in developing corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities; and, on the other, at identifying guidelines for the development of partnerships in Europe on the basis of existing good practices.

The project was conducted in Austria, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Poland, Slovenia, United Kingdom between July 2005 and June 2006. It consisted in the identification of successful partnerships and in the collection of information about them, by interviewing representatives of the private and civic sides of these partnerships. 36 partnerships were identified and, therefore, 72 key informants were interviewed.

The project was carried out by national-based citizens’ organizations participating in the ACN network: The World of NGOs (Austria), Cyprus Consumer Association (Cyprus), BBE Bundesnetzwerk, Bürgerschaftliches Engagement (Germany), National Association for Consumer Protection (Hungary), Ghaqd-tal-Konsumaturi (Malta), Association of Polish Consumers (Poland), Legal Information Center for NGOs (Slovenia), Rutland Citizens Advise Bureau (United Kingdom). In Italy it was implemented by Cittadinanzattiva. At the European level, the research was lead by a team composed by Barbara D’Alessio, Cecilia Fonseca, Antonio Gaudio, Giovanni Moro, Charlotte Roffiaen, Melody Ross (director of the project), Monica Ruffa, Ilaria Vannini.

This report was written by Giovanni Moro and Ilaria Vannini, both of FONDACA. The Guidelines for good CSR practices (Section C.3) were set up by Charlotte Roffiaen, Director of Active Citizenship Network.

This report is divided into three parts. The first deals with the framework of the project, the research design and the development of the project itself. The second part reports the main results of the analysis of the questionnaires. The third part includes conclusions, recommendations and a set of guidelines for the improvement of partnerships in Europe.

# ***A – THE PROJECT***

## ***1. Introduction***

In the field of Corporate Social Responsibility and not only, the issue of partnerships between actors originating from different sectors is one of the most discussed ones. A bibliographical research or an Internet query could easily confirm this. Partnerships are often set up to deal with a wide range of problems that range from the sustainability of welfare systems to the protection of the environment, from global issues to local development, from the reform of public administration to corporate citizenship. In this partnership debate, actors from the public, private, as well as the civic sectors are involved. Several norms and official documents at the local, national, regional and global level require or expect that these actors cooperate to confront common problems. Think tanks and research centers deliver policy papers and guidelines, aimed at clarifying what partnerships should be like and how they would work. A little bit less material, however, is available on the real functioning of existing partnerships.

Moreover, a wide range of definitions and concepts are used when discussing about partnerships, making things quite unclear: often the same name is used to mean different concepts, and vice versa. This is quite a serious problem, especially because of the widespread attitude of people and institutions involved in dealing with public problems, that call for partnerships to handle just about any kind of issue.

Bearing in mind these problems, the general aim of the project has been to contribute to a conceptual and empirical clarification and, above all, to improve the knowledge of the nature, main features, operational patterns and added value of partnerships between citizens' organizations and companies, as well as their impact on CSR. To this end, *partnerships* have been defined as those situations in which *actors coming from different sectors share objectives, resources, responsibilities and risks*. Partnerships are, therefore, different both from *dialogue* (situations in which actors exchange inputs and feedbacks as information, claims, proposals etc.) and from *collaboration* (situations in which actors have different but convergent objectives, reached through the support of one another or through the coordination of the activities of both).

### *The Governance Context*

Partnerships between private companies and citizens' organizations are part of a more general phenomenon, involving several actors and fields, which can be better understood in the framework of worldwide ongoing changes in roles, responsibilities and relations of actors of the public sphere, that can be defined in terms of a shift from government to governance approaches (Moro 2002).

According to this framework, national states and public administrations have lost their traditional monopoly in exercising government functions. This loss of power goes three different ways: *downward*, towards regional and local administrations; *upward*, towards global and supranational institutions (such as the European Union); and *outward*, towards private, civil society, non-profit, and civic organizations and networks.

This transformation is not a mere matter of a different kind of mix between state and non-state intervention in the public arena; it is rather a change of the very status of agents and of their relations; that is, it is not a difference of degree, but a difference of nature – something like a change of paradigm. With reference to the actors, the shift in their role means that *public* actors tend to become the enabler, networker, catalyzer rather than the “rower”; that *private* actors tend to become more socially responsible, and responsive and engaged in public policies; that *social/collective* actors are called to exercise their own powers and responsibilities, and not only to exercise consensus, voice or exit in respect of the power of others.

As a general frame, therefore, governance can be defined as *a process of transformation in the exercise of government functions from state-centered to multi-centered policy-making*.

When one shifts from a policy level to a constitutional one, it can be said that the general meaning of this new framework is well illustrated by the concept of horizontal (or circular) subsidiarity, as it is expressed both in the European Union debate (ACN 2003) and in the 2001 reform of Italian Constitution, which established the following norm:

*State, regions, cities, provinces and municipalities favor the autonomous initiative of citizens, as individuals and associations, in the exercise of activities of general interest, on the basis of the subsidiarity principle (art. 118.4).*

In both cases, partnerships involving various actors in the exercise of responsibilities for the management of public issues are of the utmost importance. According to the work of recent scholars, the principle of subsidiarity itself, rather than a tool for the “division of labor” between the state and civil society, is a principle of mutual relation, cooperation and support between public, private and civic actors (Cotturri 2001, Arena 2006).

In practice, forms of close cooperation between actors coming from different sectors do exist in several fields. A non-exhaustive list of these fields include:

- Plan and delivery of welfare services;
- Economic local development;
- Territorial planning;
- Public participation (ex. Charters of Services);
- Social dialogue and employment policies;
- Environmental policies (ex. Agenda 21 programs);
- Community-based programs;
- Corporate social responsibility.

## *Partnerships and Corporate Social Responsibility*

With respect to the Corporate Social Responsibility debate and practice, there is a general consensus that CSR is a new phenomenon, different from traditional business' charitable practices, if and only if there is interaction between companies and their stakeholders, communities and the surrounding environment. This interaction is a necessary requirement in the whole range of corporate citizenship activities.

On the side of *compliance* of companies with international and national standards and norms concerning human rights, environmental sustainability, employees' rights, etc., stakeholders have the crucial role of supporting and assessing the companies' efforts to be really accountable and transparent with respect to the impacts of their activities. A company which is not accountable towards its stakeholders cannot be a socially responsible enterprise.

On the side of *proactivity* - meaning companies' actions aimed at promoting or supporting social, economic and environmental sustainable development - it is common knowledge that they can be planned and implemented only in close relationship with communities or the concerned population. The more companies' engagement in public affairs is a governance matter, rather than a mere charity one, the more stakeholders' involvement is a must for companies. Again, no CSR efforts can be successful, without the contribution of stakeholders.

In this scenario, strictly linked to the governance framework, the existence and role of *Autonomous Citizens' Organizations* (ACOs) emerges as well. Following the European Charter of Active Citizenship (ACN and FONDACA 2006), we mean for ACOs *those organizations created and managed by citizens, which do not seek profit and operate in the general interest, protect citizens' rights and/or preserve common goods and act in public policy making, irrespective of their area of activity, size, juridical status, motivation or membership*. In other words, what identifies ACOs is their engagement in public policy making, from the definition to the implementation to the evaluation of public policies, in forms that go from advocacy to delivery of services to citizens' and communities' empowerment. The existing differences between, for example, voluntary and consumer organizations, though significant, are considered of secondary importance in this definition.

The active role of organized citizens, acting in policy making, is even considered on the one hand, a necessary condition to identify genuine CSR programs, and on the other, what makes the difference between CSR and traditional forms of "social dialogue", as stressed in the 2000 European Commission Green Paper on CSR.

Among these relations (including also dialogue and cooperation, up to inclusion in corporate governance), partnerships appear to be of the utmost importance. Following the work of The Copenhagen Centre, we can understand partnerships as "people and organizations from some combination of public, business and

civil constituencies, who engage in voluntary, mutually beneficial, innovative relationships to address common societal aims, by combining their resources and competencies” (Nelson and Zadek, 2000).

### *The European Union and CSR partnerships*

After setting up the Lisbon Agenda, and following the decisions taken by the European Summit in Nice, the European Union, especially through the European Commission, designed a policy on CSR, that, since its beginning, has been closely associated with partnerships. This emerges from all the European Commission documents (especially EC 2001, 2002, 2006) and is echoed in the debate of the European Multistakeholder Forum (EMF 2004).

The Commission states that partnerships are necessary to strengthen the social responsibility of companies. This means, first of all, that through partnerships, a new framework for the promotion of CSR, capable of taking into account businesses’ as well as stakeholders’ points of view, must be built. In this way, the EC hopes that a model of corporate social responsibility, based on European values, can be set up.

The Commission, in particular, considers partnership as tools to enhance CSR in the fields of company awareness-building, definition of codes of conduct, management of standards, accounting, auditing and reporting, labelling, as well as of socially responsible investment.

Moreover, the Commission’s more important documents express the firm belief that partnerships can be the most appropriate strategy to confront a number of significant social problems, such as life-long learning, the management of restructuring operations of industries, the promotion of local development and the support to community causes, the implementation of labour market strategies for employment and social inclusion, the making of effective social and eco labels, the implementation of socially responsible practices outside the EU.

The European Commission itself, on behalf of the whole European Union, intends to engage itself in promoting partnerships, especially multi-stakeholder ones, so to become an active facilitator of CSR practices. A partnership approach, according to the Commission, is necessary, especially to take into account the differences of contexts, as well as the different and divergent interests of stakeholders. Recently, this commitment has been translated in the initiative (EC 2006) for the establishment of a new European Alliance for CSR; that is, an alliance “for growth and jobs” and for sustainable development. This task, in the Commission’s vision, has to be pursued through a partnership, involving all the stakeholders together with companies, and vice versa; a tool capable of reinforcing such partnerships.

As one can understand, therefore, partnerships are, probably, the tool with the highest rank in EC policy. This is not only an explanation of the reason why this



project has been supported, but also an indicator of the significance of this research.

*The need for a strengthened empirical base*

Partnership studies, which have been increasingly conducted in recent years, have, however, focused more on public-private or tripartite partnerships, rather than on partnerships between corporations and citizens' organizations (see, for example, Kjaer 2000). Moreover, they have been grounded on relatively few experiences and little empirical data.

This lack of empirical information on civic-corporate partnerships reflects a general problem of CSR, i.e. the knowledge of concrete experiences is very limited, compared to the existing ones.

The rationale for this project, aimed at documenting and interpreting concrete experiences of partnerships between companies and citizens' organizations, attempts to satisfy the need to contribute to fill this gap, as well as to share findings with institutions, policy makers, citizens' organizations and scholars, both at the European and the national levels.

## **2. Research design and implementation**

The starting point of the research was the need to fill the information gap which exists about partnerships between Autonomous Civic Organizations<sup>1</sup> and businesses and their impact on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in general. As a matter of fact, the recent and growing number of studies on partnerships have focused mainly on public-private or tripartite partnerships. Therefore, the debate on partnerships involving citizens' organizations, as main actors, is grounded on few concrete experiences and with limited empirical data.

This project, which began on July 1<sup>st</sup> 2005 and ended on June 31<sup>st</sup> 2006 and which was carried out by Active Citizenship Network (ACN, the European policy program of the Italian Movement Cittadinanzattiva) and FONDACA (Active Citizenship Foundation), was intended to increase the empirical knowledge of these kinds of relationships and activities, by analysing in depth 45 successful experiences of partnerships between companies and citizens' organizations implemented in 9 old and new European Union countries<sup>2</sup>.

### **The research framework**

The research conducted on CSR partnerships is part of a general research program on partnerships, that FONDACA has been carrying out for the past three years. This program focuses on partnerships which involve citizens' organizations and is concerned with both theoretical aspects and empirical studies in a number of fields. It was also carried out in the framework of the activities of the Post-Graduate Degree Course on "Citizenship Policies and Local Welfare Systems", that FONDACA has been organizing since 2003 in partnership with the Faculty of Statistics of La Sapienza University of Rome, and, in particular, in the class on "Governance, Partnerships and Citizenship Policies", held by Giovanni Moro.

During this research and teaching activity, the pertinent literature was gathered and reviewed, and it was decided to take as a starting point the Copenhagen Centre<sup>3</sup> model. The main reasons for this choice are that the CC proposal is general in scope, but includes civil society actors; that it interprets partnerships

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<sup>1</sup> The term "*Autonomous Citizens' Organization*" or "citizens organization" refer to a non-governmental organization – whatever its scope, size, legal status, objectives and membership – which is autonomously organized by citizens in order to protect rights, promote public interests and care for common goods. This definition includes voluntary organizations, advocacy movements (in the areas, for example, of human rights, consumer issues, the environment, equal opportunities), advice services, social enterprises, grassroots and community organizations, self-help groups and international cooperation NGOs. Civic organizations are non profit seeking, and act for the general interest.

<sup>2</sup> The partnership experiences were collected by the partners involved in the project, who were based in the following countries: Austria; Cyprus; Germany; Hungary; Italy; Malta; Poland; Slovenia; United Kingdom.

<sup>3</sup> The Copenhagen Centre is an independent think tank established by the Danish Government in 1998 in response to growing international interest in new social partnerships and corporate social responsibility initiatives ([www.copenhagencentre.com](http://www.copenhagencentre.com)).

not as organizational entities but as processes; and that it can be used to study and not only to plan partnerships.

The CC definition of partnership is the following (Nelson J., Zadek S. 2003):

*People and organizations coming from some public, private and civic entities/bodies which are engaged in voluntary mutually beneficial and innovative relations with the aim of dealing/pursuing with social goals by putting together their own resources and competencies (skills/know-how).*

According to the Copenhagen Centre, partnerships have six main features, which are explicitly or implicitly contained in the above definition:

- They should pursue general interest goals through common actions (which does not preclude partners from pursuing their own interests).
- They should be innovative, in the sense that they should promote the exploration of new approaches to existing problems and opportunities, as well as new forms of relations.
- They should involve a range of different bodies/actors, coming from at least two of the following sectors: public, civil society, public sector.
- They should be voluntary, meaning that the collaboration should arise from a voluntary choice and not from a need to comply with laws or regulations, even if it is possible that a number of actors may wish to participate in order to avoid possible conflicts or because of external pressure.
- They should produce mutual benefits and joint investments, in which each partner contributes with its own resources to achieve common goals, supporting the costs and assuming the risks involved in this, and obtain benefits.
- They should have an “added-value” (alchemic) effect, in the sense that through their collaboration, the partners have to build something that is more than the sum of the parts and that none of them would have been able to obtain on their own.

According to the Copenhagen Centre scholars, a partnership can be divided into five main dimensions (context, purpose, organization, participants, outcomes), that in turn can be divided into single factors (for example, the dimension of organization can be divided in organizational and legal structures, governance and communication). The idea was, therefore, that this model could be modified and adapted to set up a tool for the specific analysis of partnerships.

During the activity, developed in the academic years 2003-2004 and 2004-2005, this model was discussed and applied to concrete cases of partnerships between citizens' organizations and the public and the private sectors, in particular, in planning and delivering welfare services at the local level. On the basis of this work, a number of changes and extensions were added to the model, thus generating the following analytical scheme:

**Table A.2.1 - Analytical scheme to analyze partnerships, based on the Copenhagen Centre model**

DIMENSIONS	FACTORS
<b>PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE</b>	
CONTEXT	a. Socio-economic cultural and political environment
	b. Drivers
	c. Triggers
PROJECT (OBJECT)	a. General aims
	b. Specific objectives
	c. Activities
	d. Level of activities and complexity
	e. kind of intervention
	f. kind of activity
	b. Expected results
COMPOSITION	c. Effects of the project
	a. kind of organization
PURPOSES AND AIMS	b. kind of composition
	a. Building and working with common agendas
PARTICIPANTS	b. Participants' expected benefits and results
	a. Leadership
	b. People and their organizations
ORGANISATION	c. Resources, skills and capacities
	a. Organizational and legal structure
	b. Governance
EVALUATION	c. Internal communication
	a. Measurement and evaluation
<b>PARTNERSHIP DYNAMICS</b>	
PARTNERS' RELATIONSHIP	b. Instruments and procedures
	a. Processes and ability to adapt
OBSTACLES	b. conflicts
	a. cognitive
CHANGES IN THE PARTNERSHIP	b. operational
	a. In the structure and form
	b. In participants
	c. In objectives
EFFECTS	d. In activities
	a. Outputs
	b. Outcomes
	c. Impacts
	d. Participants' benefits

The scheme was tested on 15 partnerships and perfected on the basis of the results. It became the foundation for setting up both the general design of this research, as well as the questionnaire for gathering the information on CSR partnerships<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> The whole process is described in the post-graduate degree thesis of Monica Ruffa (Ruffa 2006).

## Phases of the project

The project was implemented through 4 main phases that are summarized below.

### 1. *Research design and preparatory activities (July-November 2005).*

During the first phase of the project, apart from gathering additional material on partnerships between companies and citizens' organizations and on the European Union policy on CSR, the following activities were carried out.

#### *The questionnaire*

The analytical scheme set up by FONDACA was the starting point for building a questionnaire to conduct the planned analysis of the 45 experiences of partnerships between companies and citizens' organizations in the 9 European Union countries.

The questionnaire was divided into 3 sections, which included 72 questions (29 open, 18 close and 26 semi-open):

- Section A, about interviewees and the organizations or companies involved in the partnership;
- Section B, about the project;
- Section C, about the establishment and functioning of the partnership.

During this phase the questionnaire was tested through 4 interviews and perfected on the basis of the results.

#### *Choice of the countries and partners*

Apart from Italy, where the research was carried out by Cittadinanzattiva, other 8 EU countries were selected and the ACN partners in those countries were asked to take part in the project by identifying and collecting information on 5 partnerships their own country. The selected countries and partner organizations that accepted to carry out the project, were the following.

**Table A.2.2 – List of parnters**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Austria	The World of NGOs
Cyprus	Cyprus Consumer Association
Germany	BBE - Bundesnetzwerk, Bürgerschaftliches Engagement
Hungary	National Association for Consumer Protection
Malta	Ghaqd-tal-Konsumaturi
Poland	Association of Polish Consumers
Slovenia	Legal Information Center for NGOs
UK	Rutland Citizens Advise Bureau

## 2. Selection of the partnerships (December 2005-February 2006)

### *Methodological note*

A document, titled “Guidelines for selecting Partnerships to Study”, was conceived during this phase. It was then used to train partner organizations on the identification of the partnerships and on how to conduct the interviews with representatives of companies and ACOs. The Guidelines contained information on the theoretical framework, the criteria to use to select partnerships (composition, sectors in which the partnership is implemented, success level of the partnership, private companies, civic organizations, time of implementation of the partnership), as well as the sources to be used to achieve this objective.

A partners’ meeting was held in Rome, on 17 October 2005, for the presentation and discussion of the implementation of the project on the basis of these Guidelines and the questionnaire.

### *The selection of partnerships*

In this phase, each partner was requested to find and select 5 CSR partnership experiences involving companies and citizens’ organizations. When each partnership was identified, partners sent a brief description to the project staff, in order to verify whether it was consistent with the methodological requirements. After this verification, the partners were allowed to start gathering the information through the interviews.

## 3. Gathering of information (March-May 2006)

For each case, one representative of the company and one representative of the citizens’ organization, both in charge of managing the partnership, were interviewed with the aim of gathering information on both sides of the partnership.

During this phase, some partners met difficulties in finding the 5 cases of partnerships, mainly because of the peculiar context of their country. These difficulties resulted in the collection of 36 partnerships out of the planned 45, organized in the following manner:

**Table A.2.3 - Partnerships gathered by countries**

Country	Interviews	Partnerships	%
Hungary	10	5	13.9
United Kingdom	10	5	13.9
Germany	10	5	13.9
Austria	10	5	13.9
Italy	10	5	13.9
Malta	10	5	13.9
Slovenia	8	4	11.1
Poland	4	2	5.6
Cyprus	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100.0</b>

To fill the gap of information created by the absence of the Cyprus partnership experiences, the Cypriot partner wrote a brief report on the country's CSR situation (see annex 2). Polish and Slovenian partners, instead, prepared a brief report, in which they carefully described the reasons why it had not been possible for them to complete the number of partnership cases.

According to these reports, the most important reasons that lead to a lower number of partnerships than expected were:

- The questionnaire length: it was considered as very time-consuming by most business and ACO representatives, and they were not able to provide the necessary information in a given period of time;
- The long internal company/civic organization feedback procedures and the related difficulties in finding people responsible for filling the questionnaire;
- The willingness to participate expressed only by one side of the partnerships;
- The disregard of companies and civic organizations for the project partners' requests.

The partnerships that were gathered are listed below.

**Table A.2.4 - Partnerships collected by nation, title, companies and civic organisations involved**

<b>Nation</b>	<b>Title of the partnership</b>	<b>Companies</b>	<b>ACOs</b>
HUNGARY	Customers' household appliances	CECED-Hungary	National Association for Consumer Protection in Hungary (NAPCH)
	Customer service centres	E.ON Hungária GmbH (North-East Hungarian Electricity)	National Association for Consumer Protection in Hungary (NAPCH)
	Making a connection in Hungary	Nokia Hungary Ltd	Foundation for Democratic Youth (Demokratikus Ifjúságért Alapítvány - DIA)
	For better informing consumers	TESCO Global GmbH – Hungary	National Association for Consumer Protection in Hungary (NAPCH)
	Reviewing travel contracts	OTP Travel Ltd	National Federation of Associations for Consumer Protection in Hungary (NFACPH)
UK	Money Advice Training	Royal Bank of Scotland Group (RBS)	Citizens Advice
	2 nd Tier Money Advice	Barclays PLC	Citizens Advice
	Young Innovation	Fielden Clegg Bradley Architects LLP	Envolve Patnerships for Sustainability
	Get their Environmental Management Systems in place	Hobart Manufacturing UK	Envolve Patnerships for Sustainability (delivering EnVision)
	Worldmade by Motivation	Kingfisher Plc	Motivation
SLOVENIA	The Shelter House	Mercator, d.d.	Slovenian Association of friends of youth (SAFY)
	Developing Center for social and labour	Raiffeisen Krekova Banka	OZARA (National Life Quality Association)

	integration		
	Buying the mammography machine	Pristop d.o.o.	European Breast Cancer Coalition
	The week of a child, A wink to the sun, Sunny ŽIV ŽAV	Lek d.d.	Slovenian Association of friends of youth (SAFY)
GERMANY	Corporate Volunteering for Ford employees in Caritas' social services/facilities	Ford Europe GmbH	Diözesan-Caritasverband für das Erzbistum Koeln e.V.
	Promotion of community foundations	Bundesverband Volks- und Raiffeisenbanken (BVR)	Aktive Bürgerschaft e.V.
	Holistic health care services	Betapharm Arzneimittel GmbH	Bunter Kreis
	Civil Academy	BP Deutschland	BBE / Bundesnetzwerk, Bürgerschaftliches Engagement
	Bildungscent	Herlitz PBS AG	Bildungscent e.V
POLAND	Augustow Academy	British American Tobacco Poland	Enterprise Development Foundation in Suwalk
	Share Your Meal	Danone Poland	Federation of Polish food banks
AUSTRIA	Nivea family party	Beiersdorf GesmbH	SOS Kinderdorf Austria
	Reduction of pesticides	Rewe Group Austria, initiator of partnership was Billa AG	Global 2000
	Stop Domestic Violence	The Body Shop	Austrian Women's Shelter Network/Information Centre Against Violence
	Caritas Schülerfonds (Fund for pupils)	Philips Austria	Caritas
	Sponsorship	Mobilkom	Ärzte ohne Grenzen (Médecins sans Frontières =MSF)
ITALY	A meal for the needy	Unilever	Association "Opera di San Francesco per i Poveri"
	European charter of patients rights	Merck Sharp & Dohme	Cittadinanzattiva
	Obiettivo barriere (Eliminating barriers)	Fondazione J&J	Cittadinanzattiva
	Un mondo per tutti (A world for everyone)	TIM Italia S.p.A.	Médecins sans Frontières
	Meters replacement campaign	Enel s.p.a.	Unione Consumatori - Cittadinanzattiva
MALTA	Costal zone management	Bank of Valletta	GAIA Foundation
	Awareness about the environment amongst students	HSBC	Kunsill Studenti Universitarji (KSU) – University Students' Council
	Educate children through sports	Apostleship of Prayer Savings (APS)Bank.	Youth football Association
	Promote young entrepreneurship	APS Bank.	Startup Malta Foundation for Entrepreneurship



	Natural reserve for wild birds	APS Bank.	Birdlife (Malta)
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#### 4. Analysis of partnerships and final report (May-June 2006)

During the last phase of the project, questionnaires containing information on the 36 partnerships were analyzed both from a quantitative and qualitative point of view.

The main characteristics of the partnerships' participants resulting from the questionnaires are summarized below (see table).

**Table A.2.5 - Companies and civic organizations involved in partnerships by years of activities, number of members and employees and annual turnover**

Subject involved	Years of activity (median)	Number of members (median)	Number of employees (median)	Annual turnover (median)
Company	33	27.5	2,100	667 ml €
ACOs	24	180	28.5	1,23 ml €

Both companies and civic organizations involved in the best practices of partnerships, therefore, had been established for a long time.

Only 28% of the companies had members, with a median of 27,5 people, while 75% of civic organizations stated to have members, with a median of 180. Companies were big entities, with a median number of employees of 2,100 and an annual turnover equal to 667 million euro. The Civic organizations were relatively smaller than companies, with 28,5 employees in median, and an annual turnover of 1,23 million euro.

Differences among respondents were also reflected in the territorial focus. In fact, while companies were mainly national and international, civic organizations were primarily active at the national and local level.

The best practices of CSR partnerships that were gathered show that well-structured, stable and well-established entities were the main subjects of these kinds of relationships. However, some small companies and civic organisations were also involved in the project: respectively about 6.0% of the companies and 16% of civic organizations had less than 5 employess, an annual turnover of 150,000 euro for companies and of 120,000 euro for ACOs and were younger than the others.

At the end of the last phase of the project, the collected data were analyzed and this report was prepared. It is structured as follows:

- presentation of the main findings;
- research conclusions;
- final result guidelines on partnership building.

## Value and limits of the research

Before concluding this introductory section, it is necessary to briefly highlight the value and limits of this research.

As for the *limits*, it can be said that the partnerships that were gathered do not represent a statistically significant sample, and therefore cannot provide information on all of the partnership experiences which are ongoing in the European Union. This is not only a limit of this research, since, at the moment neither a shared definition of partnerships, nor a full picture of those that are ongoing, exist at the European level.

Another significant point is that the selected partnerships were studied only through interviews with key persons, and not through an in depth analysis of facts and documents. Though partner organizations did select the partnerships on the basis of appropriate external documentation, neither this documentation, nor other field research activities were used to analyze the partnerships. This was due both to time and money constraints, as well as to the well-known linguistic barriers that also characterize research in the EU.

The partnerships, moreover, were selected on the basis of their success. Though this choice had several advantages, it also had the negative effect of underestimating some important aspects, such as conflicts, obstacles and failure factors. All of them are of very important, not only in real terms, but also in terms of knowledge; and the research, because of the way it was designed, could not properly take them in account.

In some cases, the partnership actors were the same for different experiences. This could influence some results of the research, since the answers of the same actor were counted as different. This is, without a doubt, a limit of the research. On the other hand, however, the number of such cases was limited, and, since partnerships were a defined relational phenomenon, answers of the same actor who was engaged in different partnerships were, in general, different, depending on the concrete situation of the partnership being examined.

Despite these limits, the research had a significant *value*, which cannot be underestimated. The main reason for this value is that the research contributed to describe partnerships as a phenomenon, and not as an abstract model, focusing on what really happens and not on what should and often does not. The Guidelines that are published in the final section of this report draw precisely on these concrete experiences; and this is an added value that should be kept in mind.

The research, moreover, focused on the cognitive dimension of partnerships, a factor of the utmost importance, often not fully recognized, but capable of determining the success or failure of partnerships. Differences in information and interpretation among the two sides of the partnerships, are nothing but relevant pieces of information, that have been, and should always be carefully analyzed.

In general terms, this research can increase the empirical knowledge on partnerships and thus contribute to setting up an inventory of existing experiences in the territory of the European Union. This could then lead to the identification of something like a “European partnership style”, that all engaged actors should take into account and possibly even adopt.

## ***B – THE PARTNERSHIPS’ PROFILE***

In this section of the report we will be presenting the information on the partnerships which emerged from the analysis of the questionnaires filled by the company and citizens’ organization representatives involved in the partnerships selected for the study. This will, then, allow us to define a profile of the these partnerships. With the concept of *profile* we mean *a description of the essential characteristics and features of the partnerships between private companies and citizens’ organizations.*

### *Dissonance on facts and opinions*

Before presenting the information on the partnerships, it is necessary to introduce a general aspect that these partnerships have clearly revealed: the dissonance between partners in reporting the information and the evaluations. This phenomenon can be measured through two indexes, which have been created.

The first one is called the *factual dissonance index*. It measures the differences in the partners’ answers when one would instead expect them to be the same (as for example, project duration, budget invested, presence of an external investor, existence of a moment in which priorities were established, conflicts taking place during the setting of the common agenda, distribution of responsibilities, manner in which decisions were taken and changes in participants, structure, activities and objectives). 55.6% of the partnerships obtained a low factual dissonance index score, 41.7% obtained a medium score, while the remaining part (2.7%) a high score. Considering that the discrepancy concerned the reporting of facts, that 44.4% of the partnerships have a medium or high level of dissonance should lead us to seriously reflect on the matter.

The second is the *cognitive dissonance index*. It was built by grouping the questions for which one would expect that the partners’ answers should have been the same (questions about the person facilitating the partnership and who represented the organization, partnership’s structure, distribution of rights and responsibilities, partnership’s evolution, existence of in-kind or other resources invested into the partnership, as well as the presence of an external intermediary). This index aims to reveal the differences in perception rather than those due to the lack of information or knowledge. 38.9% of the partnerships obtained a low cognitive dissonance index, 50.0% a medium one and 11.1% a high score. In 61.1% of the partnerships, there was, therefore, a medium to high level of cognitive gap.

## 1. The projects carried out

As stated above, one of the most complex methodological problems the project had to face was the difficulty in distinguishing between the partnership itself and the project the partnership was committed to carry out. In order to deal with this problem, it was decided to ask information on the project promoted by the partnership in a separate section of the questionnaire, so to avoid, as much as possible, any confusion and overlapping. Nevertheless, the project itself is also a source of significant information on the partnership. Therefore, the first segment of information reported concerns the projects carried out by the partnerships.

### *Field of intervention*

The projects promoted by the partnerships cover a wide range of fields. These are listed in the table below.

**Table B.1.1 – Fields of the projects promoted by the partnerships**

<b>Partnership's object</b>	<b>%</b>
Welfare	30.6
Empowering young people	25.0
Environment	22.2
Consumers protection	13.9
Empowering civil society	8.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As one would expect, welfare and environmental protection are among the fields where most of the projects have been implemented. Noteworthy is also the focus placed on young people, which is a well-known specific area of intervention of CSR programs worldwide. Relatively few projects have been implemented on consumer protection – an issue where conflicts between companies and ACOs are more likely to exist.

### *Operational level*

The Projects carried out through the partnerships are mostly national in scope, sometimes regional or local, rarely international or European. This result is reported in the following table.

**Table B.1.2 – Operational level of the projects carried out by the partnerships**

<b>Level</b>	<b>%</b>
International	14.1
European	12.7
National	76.1
Regional	43.7
Local	47.9

Project are, however, often multi-level (most people interviewed gave, on average, two answers to this question); nevertheless, the national level is the preferred one for the development of partnerships (76.1%). It should be pointed out that, while one would think that it is at the local level that partnerships are more likely to be promoted, the available information on the 36 partnerships studied in the project does not, in fact, confirm this assumption (only 47.9% of the projects, according to the respondents, were developed at the local level as well).

The available data, moreover, confirms a situation which had already emerged recently<sup>5</sup>; that is, the weakness of the European dimension as being significant for corporate social responsibility. Only 12.7% of the projects have indeed a European dimension. This reflects the companies' attitudes and priorities which consider global and national/local dimensions as the best ones to develop corporate citizenship activities.

### *Length of projects*

The average length of the projects carried out through the partnerships is 3 years. The overall situation is outlined in the following table.

**Table B.1.3. - Length of the projects**

Length	%
1-2 years	37.3
3-5 years	38.8
6-9 years	19.4
>10 years	4.5
Total	100.0

Almost 60% of all of the implemented projects is either medium or long-term. However, a number of the current short-term projects are likely to become medium-term ones, as 52.7% of the respondents stated, since numerous projects are still ongoing.

### *Project Budget*

The projects implemented through the partnerships seem to be either quite small or very big. This is highlighted in the following table.

**Table B.1.4 – Budget of the projects**

VALUE (€)	%
< 50.000	33.9
50.000 – 200.000	21.0
200.000 – 500.000	16.1
> 500.000	29.0
Total	100.0

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<sup>5</sup> For example, in the 2005 edition of the Frascati international seminar on corporate citizenship.

Almost two thirds of the projects (62.9%) have a project value of either less than 50,000 €, or more than 500,000 €.

*Subjects responsible for the projects*

The people interviewed were asked to identify the unit, office or department of the company or civic organizations which was responsible for the project. The answers reveal, among other things, a significant difference between companies and civic organizations; differences which can be clearly seen in the following table.

**Table B.1.5 – Subjects responsible for the project in companies and citizens’ organizations**

	ALL	LEADER.	MARKT., FR	MANGM.	COMM., PR	CSR UNITY	PROJ. UNITY
<b>Companies</b>	4.8	2.4	23.8	4.8	26.2	19.0	16.7
<b>Organizations</b>	25.6	9.3	2.3	11.6	14.0	7.0	30.2

The table shows that, for companies, it is usually their marketing (+21.5%) and public relations (+12.2%) departments which are responsible for the projects carried out by the partnerships. In the case of citizens’ organizations, on the other hand, the whole organization (+20.8%) and the project units (+13.5%) are mainly responsible for carrying out the projects.

It should also be emphasized that, while the role of CSR units is significant in private companies, it is much less so in citizens’ organizations (-12%). As we will see, citizens’ organizations, though fully involved in companies’ CSR programs, are rarely fully aware of, nor equipped with, appropriate organizational structures to this end.

*Invested resources*

As for financial resources, companies have invested in the projects a median of 200,000 €, while citizens’ organizations have spent 17,500 €. This result is not surprising.

As for human resources, one can distinguish the situations of employees and of volunteers. While the median number of involved employees is quite similar for companies (3) and citizens’ organizations (2), the situation of volunteers being involved is much more unbalanced: the median number of volunteers is 6 for companies and 11 for citizens’ organizations. This result is also somewhat expected.

As for in kind resources, they were logistical (40.5% of responses), operational (27%), marketing and PR (21.6%), goods and products (10.8%).

According to 68.1% of the respondents, the project was also supported by other investors. They were identified as follows:

**Table B.1.6 - Other subjects investing in the project**

Subjects	%
Public	45.7
Other citizens' organizations	58.7
Other companies	39.1
Individual donors	6.5

Public investors played an important role as supporters , as it results from the answers to this question. Partnerships, therefore, seem somewhat supported (more than facilitated) by public institutions.



## ***2. The basis of the partnerships***

Let us move now to describe the main features of the 36 partnerships for which this project provided us with the opportunity to identify and analyze.

### *The partnerships and CSR strategy*

From the answers to the questionnaires, it results that 91.7% of the companies involved in partnerships have a CSR strategy, while this is the case for 61.1% of citizens' organizations. This data tells us something important: the explicit commitment to corporate social responsibility issues is much more significant for companies than for citizens' organizations. This means that often, at least in terms of awareness, while companies seek partners with the intention to implement their CSR strategy, ACOs do it for other purposes. Since partnerships have an important cognitive side, this matter should not be underestimated.

This information is confirmed by the answers to another question. It was asked if the partnership carried out was considered part of the CSR strategy of the actor. To this question, 94.4% of the company representatives and only 72.7% of ACO representatives answered "yes".

### *First-timers*

About one out of four respondents stated that it was the first time that their organization participated to a partnership. However, if one examines companies and citizens' organizations separately, a different situation emerges. In fact, 30.6% of the companies and only 19.4% of the civic organizations were first timers. Civic actors, then, seem to be more accustomed to partnering than private ones. However, this does not imply, as we will see later, that deciding to start a partnership with a private company is something easy to do for citizens' organizations: it simply means that they are actually more in the habit of building partnerships, but not with business.

### *The involvement of top management*

35 partnerships out of 36 were examined at the top management level. Other information which was collected will confirm that for both kinds of actors, partnerships are something that is considered part of the core business. Though the concrete management of the partnership can be (and usually is, especially for companies) devolved to specific units, both the decision to set it up and its steering is considered something too important to be left to anyone but the top management.

### *Other actors involved*

It was asked to interviewees to indicate what actors have been involved in the partnership. The information provided on this issue is summarized in the following table.

**Table B.2.1 – Other actors involved in the partnerships**

Actors	%	Number (median)
Enterprise	97.2	1
Business network	23.2	1
Civic organization	91.7	1
Civic Umbrella Organization	30.0	1

This information highlights at least three important points. The first is that the 36 partnerships usually involved only two actors.

The second aspect refers to the weakness of second-degree bodies, both belonging to the private and to the civic sectors. This data confirms the results of other researches and views dealing with corporate citizenship and not only.

The third point is that since the partnership seems to be something that is so close to the actors' identity, there is a reluctance to involve others (this can be explained also by taking into account the complexity of their establishment and management). This impression is confirmed by the fact that, according to 85.9% of the respondents, no intermediaries and external third parties intervened or played any role in the establishing the partnership.

### *Prior relations*

50.7% of the respondents stated that the two actors had already cooperated before initiating the partnership. The median number of years of prior cooperation was equal to 5. However, something interesting can be observed in the following table.

**Table B.2.2 – Number of years of previous collaboration between the actors**

Number of years	%
1-2	14.8
3-5	44.4
5-9	11.2
> 10	29.6
Total	100.0

Most of the actors had had medium- (44.4%) or long-term (40.7%) cooperation. This information tells us that partnerships are something definitely non-extemporary and are usually based on the dialogue and collaboration which already exists between the actors.

According to 90.3% of the people interviewed, no conflicts or difficulties in the relationship had taken place before the partnership. This data is, in a sense, obvious, yet it could also mean that there is a reluctance in recognizing the existence of conflicts between partners, as further information seems to suggest.

### *The reasons for the partnerships*

Almost all of the respondents (97.2%) stated that there were internal reasons for promoting the partnership; while just over half of them (56.5%) declared that there were external reasons as well. No substantial difference between private and civic actors has been registered on this point.

As for the *internal reasons*, the answers are summarized in the following table.

**Table B.2.3 – Internal reasons for the partnership**

<b>Internal reasons</b>	<b>All %</b>	<b>COM %</b>	<b>ACO %</b>
Solve community problems	38.8	37.2	40.4
Own CSR strategy	14.6	21.5	7.7
Funding	14.6	1.9	26.9
Reputation	11.6	19.6	3.9
Corresponding to own strategy	9.7	9.8	9.6
Requiring expertise	2.9	2.0	3.9
Other	7.8	8.0	7.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The answers of the people interviewed enable us to highlight both common and different elements.

As for the common points, two of them are quite significant:

- solving community problems, at the first place for both, and clearly identified as an “internal” reason as part of the mission of the actor;
- implementing own strategy.

As for the differences, while the possibility to raise funds is very important for ACOs, the enhancement of reputation and the opportunity to implement their own CSR strategy are of crucial importance for companies. On this latter point, the differences between the answers of company and citizens’ organization representatives could confirm, as already mentioned, the low awareness of ACOs about their role as CSR partners.

Also for the *external reasons*, there are both convergences and differences. They are reported in the following table.

**Table B.2.4 – External reasons for the partnership**

<b>External reasons</b>	<b>All %</b>	<b>COM %</b>	<b>ACO %</b>
Responding to public needs	25.5	18.2	32.0
Image	14.9	22.7	8.0
Year dedicated – award	14.9	18.2	12.0
Government + legislation	14.9	13.7	16.0

CSR	8.5	9.1	8.0
Request from stakeholders	8.5	4.6	12.0
Other	12.8	13.5	12.0
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0

As for the common reasons, they are: the occasion offered by an award or a special year, the opportunity to practice CSR, legislation and government regulations. As for the different ones, one can see that, while for citizens' organizations, responding to public needs is the main reason for the partnership, for companies, it is strengthening their own image; on the other hand, stakeholders' pressure seems to be more important for ACOs than for companies.

Two observations can be made on these results. The first is the relatively minor role played by politics as enabler or facilitator of CSR activities. The second observation is that the participants on the citizens' side seem to be more focused on the concrete impact of the partnership on society, rather than on the advantages for the organizations themselves, while companies seem to take more into account the opportunity to link facing problems of common concern to their own growth .

#### *Common agenda and priorities*

According to 92.9% of the respondents (with no significant differences between the two groups) an agenda of common priorities was defined during the planning phase.

Moreover, there were no significant differences on how these priorities were decided.

**Table B.2.5 – How priorities have been decided**

<b>Kind of decisions</b>	<b>All %</b>	<b>COM %</b>	<b>ACO %</b>
ACO proposal	23.4	25.8	21.2
COM proposal	3.1	3.2	3.0
Meetings. consultation. discussion + common identified needs + mutually	67.2	64.5	69.7
Other	6.3	6.5	6.1
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0

Essentially, respondents agreed that, in most cases, the choice of priorities had been made in common. When this did not happen, the initiative had been taken by citizens' organizations. This result is noteworthy because, in other similar cases (that we will be examining), the two groups tended to ascribe to themselves, rather than to their partners, a leading role.

As for conflicts regarding the definition of the common agenda, they did happen according to 29.4% of the company respondents and to 12.1% of the

citizens' organization ones. These situations were managed, according to all of the respondents, through:

- discussions, meetings, communication;
- improvement of mutual knowledge;
- definition of agreements.

To this common list, representatives of companies also added the redefinition of the partnership composition and the arrangement of internal solutions.

### *Expected results and benefits*

The people who were interviewed were asked to identify results and benefits that were expected at the moment the partnership was created. Their answers are summarized in the following table.

**Table B.2.6 – Expected results and benefits of the partnership**

<b>Kind of expected results and benefits</b>	<b>All %</b>	<b>COM %</b>	<b>ACO %</b>
Reach citizens' needs	32.0	37.5	27.5
Reputation – image	16.0	19.6	13.0
Funding	9.6	-	17.4
Increase competencies	9.6	8.9	10.1
Networking	8.8	3.6	13.0
Increase CSR awareness	6.4	8.9	4.4
Long-term cooperation	4.8	3.6	5.8
Support to partner	4.8	8.9	1.5
Other	8.0	9.0	7.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

The answers to this question, somehow, reflect the reasons why the partnership was started. For both groups the most important issue was to reach the citizens' needs, enhance their reputation and image, increase competencies (an issue that emerged as very important during the research), while the improvement of CSR awareness (another generally significant issue) was important for companies, and funding and the strengthening of networking opportunities were for citizens' organizations.

### *Facilitators of the partnerships and actors' representatives*

One of the most important matters regarding the start up of partnerships is the existence of an enabling role played by one or more *facilitators*. People were asked who really had such a responsibility. The answers are summarized in the following table.

**Table B.2.7 – Who really facilitated the partnership**

<b>Facilitators of the partnership</b>	<b>All %</b>	<b>COM %</b>	<b>ACO %</b>
Both	43.5	42.9	44.1
COM	21.7	37.1	5.9

ACO	20.3	8.6	32.3
External actor	8.7	5.7	11.8
No one	5.8	5.7	5.9
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0

One can see that more than 40% of all of the respondents reported that this responsibility was exercised by both actors, while the rest upheld their own enabling function to the detriment of the other. This is quite an obvious result, but it highlights, anyway, the “cognitive divide” that seems to characterize partnerships.

Moreover, the minor role played in partnerships by external actors is confirmed.

People were also asked , which role the facilitator person/office had in case their company/organization had facilitated the partnership. The answers are as follows.

**Table B.2.8 – Role of the facilitator inside the company/organization**

<b>Role of the facilitator</b>	<b>All %</b>	<b>COM %</b>	<b>ACO %</b>
Senior management	32.8	33.9	31.7
Communication – PR	21.6	25.8	17.5
Project manager + specific unit	15.2	11.3	19.1
Middle management	12.8	11.3	14.3
Marketing – FR	11.2	11.3	11.1
Local officer	4.0	4.8	3.2
Other	2.4	1.6	3.1
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0

The high rate of answers identifying senior management as facilitator for both actors, confirms the view that carrying out partnerships is something that necessarily requires the commitment of the top management. This seems supported by the minor role played by local officers. As expected, communication and PR units have also an important facilitating function, as well as the project units, in particular in citizens’ organizations.

Another information which can be useful to put together with the one on facilitating functions, is the one of representation of the actors inside the partnership. People interviewed were asked to say who represented their organization/company inside the partnership. Their answers are interesting, both on their own and in relation to the facilitating functions.

**Table B.2.9 – Who represented the company/organization inside the partnership**

<b>Role of partner’s representatives</b>	<b>All %</b>	<b>COM %</b>	<b>ACO %</b>
Senior management	36.6	31.0	41.2
Communication – pr	24.7	31.0	19.6
Project manager + specific unit	21.5	23.8	19.6
Middle management	11.8	9.5	13.7
Marketing – FR	4.3	4.8	3.9
Other (local office)	1.1	-	2.0
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0

From the table, one can see that senior management is definitely the most frequent representative in the partnership, both in companies and in ACOs, with communication and PR officers playing a major role, as well, just in companies. The data shows that the function of senior management is also very important in the implementation phase of the partnership, in particular for ACOs.

It is interesting to look at the differences between the facilitating and representation functions in partnerships. They are highlighted below.

**Table B.2.10 – Comparison of facilitation and representation functions**

Role	COM			ACO		
	Facil.	Rep.	Gap	Facil.	Rep.	Gap
Senior m.	33.9	31.0	- 2.9	31.7	41.2	+ 9.5
Comm.. PR	25.8	31.0	+ 5.2	17.5	19.6	+ 2.1
Mkt. – FR	11.3	4.8	- 6.5	11.1	3.9	- 7.4
Middle m.	11.3	9.5	- 1.8	14.3	13.7	- 0.6
Project m.	11.3	23.8	+ 12.5	19.1	19.6	+ 0.5

What happens when one shifts from facilitative to representation responsibilities and from the establishment to the implementation of partnerships? The following elements can be extrapolated:

- In the case of companies, there is an increase of the role of the project and communication units, while there is a significant decrease of this role by the marketing departments;
- In the case of citizens' organizations, there is an increase of the role of senior management and a decrease of that of the fund raising-marketing units;
- It seems that citizens' organizations tend to involve more their top level management in the concrete functioning of partnerships, even if in companies senior management involvement is also very important;
- A significant difference seems to be that ACOs tend to involve the whole organization, while companies tend to entrust specific units to carry out the partnership.

#### *Resources invested in the partnership*

Finally, people were asked what amount and types of resources (financial, human, and in-kind ones) had been invested in the partnership. The answers are illustrated in the following table.

**Table B.2.11 – Resources invested in the partnership**

Type of resources	Financial		Human		In kind	Other
	Yes %	Median	Yes %	Median	Yes %	Yes %
COM	58.3	150,000 €	83.3	1.50	38.9	19.4
ACO	24.2	17,500 €	88.6	2.00	28.6	25.7

The most important information emerging from this table seems to be that, while there is an obvious divide between companies and ACOs with reference to

financial resources (both in terms of the type of investment and of its amount), both parties have largely invested human resources into the partnership. This means that, at least with reference to the partnerships examined for this study, the investment of human resources is more indispensable than the financial ones.

It must be pointed out that a significant number of actors invested in in-kind resources (about one third of all of them) and in other resources.

As for the in-kind resources, respondents listed:

- Logistical;
- Operational;
- Products;
- Marketing, PR and advertising.

The “other resources” invested belong to the two categories of knowledge (mentioned more) and reputation; the two being the most important immaterial resources linked to corporate citizenship. Finally, it seems that, in general, financial resources are not as important, as one would imagine, for partnerships.



### 3. The management

Let us now move to the organizational and governance aspects of the partnerships. In this section we will deal with: structure of the partnership, rights and responsibilities of partners, distribution of roles, accountability between partners, decision making processes, involvement of beneficiaries, leading roles in partnerships, internal and external communication tools, instruments and procedures of evaluation.

#### *Structure of the partnership*

It was asked to the key informants, what had been the structure of the partnership. Over half of the answers identified “stable relationship” as the item that better described the partnership’s structure.

**Table B.3.1 – Structure of the partnership**

<b>Structure</b>	<b>All %</b>	<b>COM %</b>	<b>ACO %</b>
Stable relationship	52.8	55.5	50.0
Temporary association	25.0	25.0	25.0
Forum with a mission	16.7	11.1	22.2
Convergent separate identities	4.1	5.6	2.8
Other	1.4	2.8	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

It must be emphasized that partnerships are clearly perceived and organized as something capable of overcoming separate identities, building a relation that can be more or less stable and durable (we have already seen, though, that they usually imply a mid or long-term engagement), but they are nevertheless something new and additional.

As for the kind of structure of the partnership, its main feature is definitely “flexibility”.

**Table B.3.2 – Kind of structure of the partnership**

<b>Kind of structure</b>	<b>All %</b>	<b>COM %</b>	<b>ACO %</b>
Informal, flexible	34.7	36.1	33.3
Informal, non flexible	1.4	2.8	-
Formal, flexible	61.1	58.3	63.9
Formal, non flexible	1.4	-	2.8
Other	1.4	2.8	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

It is also worthwhile to point out the prevailing formal characteristic of the partnerships, which can be considered as an indicator, both of their complexity and of the strategic meaning for the actors which are involved.

### *Rights and responsibilities of the partners*

Most of the respondents (86.1%) stated that rights and responsibilities of partners had been defined. As for how these rights and responsibilities had been defined, the key informants mentioned two main approaches: one based on technical and juridical tools, the other on cultural and communicational processes.

**Table B.3.3 – Manner in which rights and responsibilities of partners are defined**

<b>Manner of definition of rights and responsibilities</b>	<b>All %</b>	<b>COM %</b>	<b>ACO %</b>
Technical and juridical tools and strategies (contract, reporting systems, steering committees, well defined roles)	70.9	71.4	70.3
Cultural and communicational processes (trust and openness, discussion, cooperation and communication, respect of purpose and independence of partners)	29.1	28.6	29.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The prevalence of juridical and technical tools is, in some ways, an obvious one; yet it can also be considered as another indicator of the soundness of the partnerships. However, it must be also stated that almost one third of the answers highlighted the importance of communication and cultural processes – something that we will come across again as a distinguishing characteristic of the partnerships.

### *Equality in distribution of roles*

Respondents were asked if roles had been equally distributed among the partners. Their answers were definitely positive.

**Table B.3.4 – Equality in distribution of roles among partners**

<b>Roles among partners are:</b>	<b>All %</b>	<b>COM %</b>	<b>ACO %</b>
Equally distributed	80.0	84.4	75.8
Non equally distributed	20.0	15.6	24.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The difference in opinions of the representatives of the two parties is not as significant as it is in other cases. Moreover, it must be pointed out that, in several cases, even those who had answered that roles were not equally distributed, explained that a greater management burden on the ACO's side was the result of its operational role in implementing the partnership's objective; it was, in other words, a matter of fact rather than a power imbalance.

### *Transparency and accountability within the partnership*

The issue of how transparency and accountability between the partners have been guaranteed gave results that are very similar to those regarding the manner in which rights and responsibilities have been defined.

**Table B.3.5 – Manner in which transparency and accountability are guaranteed within the partnership**

<b>Transparency and accountability are guaranteed with:</b>	<b>All %</b>	<b>COM %</b>	<b>ACO %</b>
Formal tools (reports, contract, meetings)	61.8	66.0	57.7
Informal tools (personal contacts, discussion, trust, object planned ahead)	38.2	34.0	42.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

It must be emphasized that there was agreement on which were the three most important individual tools : reports, contracts, communication.

In general, it could be inferred that cultural and communication informal links are a structural element of the partnerships. Later in the report, we will find other information supporting this hypothesis.

### *Decision making*

Another important element of the partnerships' governance system is the decision making process. The key informants were asked to take notice on how decisions within the partnership were taken. Their answers are summarized in the following table.

**Table B.3.6 – How the decisions are taken inside the partnership**

<b>Decisions are taken with:</b>	<b>All %</b>	<b>COM %</b>	<b>ACO %</b>
Discussion. consultation. meeting	54.5	53.5	55.6
Upon agreement + important issues together	18.1	25.6	11.1
ACO decides	8.0	4.6	11.1
Other (trust, creation of specific organism)	6.9	2.3	11.1
Who is in charge with operational issues at stake	6.8	7.0	6.7
Company decides + prevails	5.7	7.0	4.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

According to 79.1% of the company respondents and 66.7% of ACO respondents, decisions were taken together, in a more or less formal manner.

The difference in answers regarding the cases when decisions were taken by one of the two partners reflects the phenomenon of cognitive divergence already discussed above.

### *Participation of beneficiaries*

A very important point, which is related to the quality of partnership as a way to deal with public problems, is the degree of involvement of the intended beneficiaries of the partnership projects in the decisions regarding the partnership itself. On this point, 43.7% of the respondents (38.9% of the

companies, 48.6% of the ACOs) stated that they had been involved, while the rest said that they had not.

This information raises some concerns. Excluding the cases in which it is not easy to identify the beneficiaries of the partnership activity (for example, with respect to environmental protection), the fact that more than half of the partnerships did not involve the beneficiaries in the decision making process should be seen as something negative. It raises questions on the innovative characteristic that partnerships should promote. One hypothesis that could be made is that the presence of a citizen-based organization is considered by both partners as an indirect element of representation of the voice and needs of the intended beneficiaries. Whatever the reason, this is an element that may involve a risk of partnerships being self-referential, which should be carefully considered.

When beneficiaries were actually involved, the manner in which this involvement occurred has been summarized below.

**Table B.3.7 – Manner in which beneficiaries are involved in decision making**

<b>Kind of involvement of beneficiaries</b>	<b>All %</b>	<b>COM %</b>	<b>ACO %</b>
Asking needs	33.4	30.0	35.7
Giving feedback	25.0	20.0	28.6
Involvement in project	20.8	20.0	21.4
Indirectly	20.8	30.0	14.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The data reported in this table confirms the concerns mentioned above. Even when beneficiaries were involved in the decision making, it happened in minimal forms, such as asking them about their needs or giving them feedback, and only in a very few cases, through a direct involvement in the project.

*Responsibility for the success or failure of the partnership*

The key informants were asked who was really responsible for the success or failure of the partnership that their organization/company carried out.

**Table B.3.8 – Who is really responsible for the success or failure of the partnership**

<b>People responsible</b>	<b>All %</b>	<b>COM %</b>	<b>ACO %</b>
Both	84.6	85.3	83.9
ACO	10.8	5.9	16.1
Company	3.1	5.9	-
No one	1.5	2.9	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

People interviewed clearly stated that such responsibility was shared. It could be more a matter of principle than of fact, but it should nevertheless be recorded as an important issue.

When requested to also identify the role of those in charge of this responsibility, the key informants gave the following answers.

**Table B.3.9 – Role of people really responsible for partnership**

<b>Role of people responsible</b>	<b>All %</b>	<b>COM %</b>	<b>ACO %</b>
Senior management	34.9	35.0	34.8
Communication – PR	32.6	35.0	30.4
Project management + specific unit	16.2	15.0	17.3
Middle management	9.3	10.0	8.7
Marketing, fund raising	7.0	5.0	8.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The answer to this question allows us to further emphasize the “core business” characteristic that the partnerships seem to have. Apart from the communication and PR officers – something quite obvious in the context of what is a public relation between the company/organization and another actor – the senior management people are indeed those who are directly responsible for the success of the partnership.

### *Communication*

Both internal and external communication is an activity of the utmost importance for partnerships. Let us check what key informants reported on this issue.

As for *internal communication*, it was asked what were the tools used by partners. The answers of people interviewed are reported in the following table.

**Table B.3.10 – Tools of internal communication**

<b>Tools of internal communication</b>	<b>All %</b>	<b>COM %</b>	<b>ACO %</b>
Phone calls	22.6	22.3	22.9
E-mail	21.9	20.4	23.5
Meetings	21.9	21.7	22.2
Written reports	15.5	15.3	15.7
Letters	10.6	12.1	9.1
Conference calls	3.3	3.2	3.3
Other	4.2	5.0	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The table shows a widespread use of several tools, both formal (written reports, letters, meetings) and informal (e-mail, phone calls). Only conference calls seem not to be used much.

Moreover, it can be useful to identify two categories of such tools, on the basis of the personal or inter-personal nature of the communication relations. This can provide information on the importance of personal relations for the partnership’s success. The results of this operation are reported below.

**Table B.3.11 –Types of communication relations between partners**

Types of communication relations	COM %	ACO %
Personal relations	54.8	55.6
Interpersonal relations	40.2	41.2

The answers of the two groups, which are homogeneous, highlight the prevalence of personal relations. This is important, especially if one considers what was observed above about the formal, though flexible, nature of partnerships. This aspect appears to be – other elements supporting this will be examined below – another structural characteristic of partnerships.

People interviewed were also asked to evaluate what had been the most useful communication tools and why. The following table reports the available data on this matter.

**Table B.3.12 –Most useful communication tools and reason why they are considered so**

Most useful tools	All %	COM %	ACO %
Meetings	33.0	38.2	27.4
Phone calls	20.8	20.0	21.6
e-mail	20.7	16.4	25.5
Written reports	13.2	12.7	13.7
All	8.5	7.3	9.8
Participation to partners' activities	3.8	5.4	2.0
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0
Why they are most useful			
Quick and direct communication	34.7	26.8	44.2
Clear information	14.7	9.8	20.6
More personal	13.3	19.5	5.9
Facilitate discussion	10.7	12.2	8.8
Overview situation	8.0	12.2	2.9
Facilitate evaluation	5.3	4.9	5.9
Better involvement	5.3	4.9	5.9
Feeling of concrete situation	5.3	7.3	2.9
Create mutual trust	2.7	2.4	2.9
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0

As for the tools, written reports, e-mails and phone calls were considered the most useful. As for the reason of their usefulness, the main ones, mentioned by all of the respondents, were:

- Quick and direct communication (37.4%);
- Clear information (15.5%);
- Facilitation of discussion (11.6%);
- Give an overview of the situation (11.6%).

Efficiency and effectiveness in the management of partnerships and improvement of relations seem to be the two general reasons supporting this evaluation.

As for *external communication*, the tools that were identified by respondents were the following.

**Table B.3.13 – External communication tools**

<b>External communication tools</b>	<b>All %</b>	<b>COM %</b>	<b>ACO %</b>
Web page	29.5	31.2	28.0
Press conference	24.4	23.7	25.0
Specific event	14.5	15.0	14.0
Social and sustainability reports	11.4	12.9	10.0
Other (newsletters, annual reports, brochures, specific events or communication campaigns ecc.)	20.2	17.2	23.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In this case, the differences can be explained with the fact that the communication activities were probably never shared, with each actor conducting their own activities. Nevertheless, it is clear that for both actors the main tools were the web page and the press conference.

It must be pointed out that social and sustainability reports were at the bottom of the ranking. This seems to be a warning about the real effectiveness of these tools, which are generally considered a distinguishing element of a good CSR strategy.

Another element worthwhile focusing on, is the distinction between tools that are general in scope and those that are ad hoc, specifically created for the partnership. This can prove to be useful in order to check how partnerships are managed as a “normal” activity of companies/ACOs. The result shows that the external communication on partnership used general tools according to 39.1% of the respondents and specific tools according to 60.9%.

“Other” external communication tools include, for example, newsletters and mailings, annual reports, journals, catalogues, project reports, workshops, communication campaigns.

### *Partnership evaluation*

Several questions which were asked regarded evaluation, an issue of the utmost importance for checking how partnerships have been planned and managed.

First of all, it was asked if specific indicators for the evaluation of the partnership had been defined. 62% of the respondents stated that they had not. When they had been, these indicators were:

- The success of the project carried out (62.5%);
- The quality of the partnership, the achievement of its goals and the effectiveness of partners (50.1%);
- The impact on each partner (25.0%);
- The cost-benefit relation (16.7%).

Key informants were also asked to indicate if an evaluation of the partnership had been carried out. To this question, 27.8% of the company respondents and 44.4% of ACO representatives said that no evaluation had been done. In a

general situation of low attention towards evaluation (only one third of the respondents reported the existence of evaluation indicators), this gap between the answers of the two groups could have two different meanings. The first is that people in ACOs do not have a strong awareness of the importance of evaluations, nor are they accustomed to conducting them, and therefore they may not have perceived the existence of an evaluation process. The second meaning could be that companies evaluated the partnership by themselves and ACOs didn't.

In any case, 63.9% of the respondents stated that an evaluation of the partnership had been implemented or at least planned. More precisely, the situation is as follows:

- Planned, ongoing (30.6%);
- Planned, finished (16.7%);
- Planned, to be done (4.2%);
- Not planned, to be done (1.4%);
- Not planned, ongoing (1.4%);
- Not planned, finished (2.8%).

As for the type of evaluation carried out, according to the aggregate answers, it was ongoing for 81.6% and ex post for 18.4% of the respondents. Moreover, it was internal to the partnership in 44.1% of the cases, external in 20.3% and internal to each participant in 35.6% of the cases. It must be pointed out that there have been very few external evaluations. This could be linked to that "centralized" characteristic of the partnerships examined, already mentioned above. As we have said, it may imply a risk of closeness and self-sufficiency, in contradiction both with the spirit of the partnerships themselves and, in general, with the essence of corporate social responsibility.



## **4. Evolution of partnerships**

The following section deals with the possible hesitations in getting involved in partnerships, the obstacles faced in the beginning, the evolution and changes, as well as the conflicts occurred during the partnerships.

### *Preliminary worries*

Two thirds of the partnerships started without hesitations or worries of the involved subjects, while the other third, according to the interviewees, started off with some resistances (see table below).

**Table B.4.1 - Resistances that companies and civic organizations had before entering into the partnership**

Types of resistances	% of responses		
	All %	COM %	ACO %
Right partner	32.3	23.1	38.9
Right competences	16.1	23.1	11.1
Internal	12.9	15.4	11.1
Loss of control	12.9	7.7	16.7
Economic dependence of civic organization	9.7	7.7	11.1
Problems of trust	9.7	15.4	5.6
Different aims	6.5	7.7	16.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In general, according to 34.7% of the interviewees who answered the question, the subjects involved were afraid that the partner would not have been adequate for the project (32.2%) or that they themselves did not have the right competencies to carry it out (16.1%). Some worries were inside the companies or the organizations (12.9%) and thus were not linked to the partner, while some others concerned the possible development of the relationship between partners – the fear to lose the control of the partnership (12.9%) or that civic organizations would become financially dependent on companies (9.7%).

In particular, while civic organizations hesitated to go into the partnership because of their different (possibly divergent) aims from that of business – social aims versus economic ones – (16.7%), companies mistrusted civic organizations (15.4%).

All these worries were dealt with, first of all, by developing a more informal relationship between the partners (60.0% of the interviewees who answered the question), such as opportunities for dialogue, meetings, discussions between partners, communication, mutual trust, working closely together, transparency and openness; and secondly with solutions linked to a more formal type of relationship (40% of the interviewees who answered the question), such as refining partnerships' rules, internal solutions, creation of a specific team, etc.

**Table B.4.2 - Solutions to initial resistances that companies and civic organizations faced before entering to the partnerships**

Types of solutions	% of responses		
	All %	COM %	ACO %
Refining rules (A)	22.9	11.7	33.3
Support to the partner for further funds (B)	5.7	5.9	5.6
Internal solution (C)	2.9	-	5.5
Creating specific team (D)	2.9	5.9	-
Run limited risk (E)	2.9	5.9	-
<b>Total linked to formal relationship/management (A+B+C+D+E)</b>	<b>37.3</b>	<b>29.4</b>	<b>44.4</b>
Meeting/communication (F)	34.3	41.2	27.8
Mutual trust (G)	14.3	11.7	16.7
Openness (H)	5.6	11.8	-
Working closely (I)	5.6	-	11.1
Networking (J)	2.9	5.9	-
<b>Total linked to informal relationship (F+G+H+I+J)</b>	<b>62.7</b>	<b>70.6</b>	<b>55.6</b>
<b>Total (A+B+C+D+E+ F+G+H+I+J)</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

While companies seemed to be more interested in solutions linked to dialogue and informal relationships, civic organizations had a more practical and managerial approach to the initial problems, as a result of the greater number of partnership relations they had been involved in.

### *Early problems*

In the beginning of the partnerships, less than one third of the partners (29.2%) had some difficulties in understanding each other. This difficulties can be grouped in two main clusters: one linked to differences in culture, languages and focus (77,3% of the interviewees who answered the question); the other one linked to divergences in methods and managerial patterns (31.8% of the interviewees who answered the question).

**Table B.4.3 - Difficulties that companies and civic organizations met in the beginning of the partnership**

Types of difficulties	% of responses		
	All %	COM %	ACO %
Different culture (A)	36.4	28.6	50.0
Different languages (B)	18.2	28.6	-
Different focus (C)	13.6	14.3	12.5
Poor contact (D)	9.1	7.1	12.5
<b>Total linked to the relationship (A+B+C+D)</b>	<b>77.3</b>	<b>78.6</b>	<b>75.0</b>
Technical problems (E)	9.1	14.3	-
New area of work (F)	9.1	7.1	12.5
In the organization (G)	4.5	-	12.5
<b>Linked to internal problems</b>	<b>22.7</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>25.0</b>

<b>(E+F+G)</b>			
<b>Total (A+B+C+D+E+F+G)</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

It must be highlighted that managing the differences was the greatest challenge that both partners had to face, when starting to work together.

All these problems were dealt with by both parties by increasing dialogue, information, knowledge and respect of diversity (see table below).

**Table B.4.4 - Solutions to difficulties that companies and civic organizations had in the beginning of the partnership**

<b>Solutions to initial difficulties</b>	<b>% of responses</b>		
	<b>All %</b>	<b>COM %</b>	<b>ACO %</b>
Discussion/meeting	21.2	26.3	14.3
Communication/open dialogue	39.4	31.6	50.0
Pragmatic adaptation	6.1	-	14.3
Recognition of partner's merits	3.0	5.3	-
Information	15.2	21.0	7.1
Respect	3.0	5.3	-
Trying to understand	12.1	10.5	14.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

#### *The evolution of the partnerships*

In general, civic organizations and businesses described the evolution of their partnerships in a positive manner: the relationships expanded and improved over the time. Only for a minority of the involved subjects, relations remained stable or got worse (see table below).

**Table B.4.5 - Evolution of the partnerships**

<b>Type of evolution</b>	<b>% of responses</b>		
	<b>All %</b>	<b>COM %</b>	<b>ACO %</b>
Stronger-closer-strengthened (A)	22.2	10.9	13.6
Developed in positive way (B)	20.0	8.7	4.5
Developed mutual trust (C)	14.5	15.2	25.0
More involved (D)	12.2	23.9	20.5
Consolidated (E)	6.7	4.3	4.5
More transparent and sincere (F)	4.5	10.9	18.1
Dynamically evolved (G)	1.1	6.5	2.3
<b>Total positive evolution (A+B+C+D+E+F+G)</b>	<b>81.2</b>	<b>80.4</b>	<b>88.5</b>
No change (H)	3.3	4.3	2.3
<b>Total stable evolution (H)</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>2.3</b>
Started in difficulties (I)	4.5	2.2	2.3
Getting worse (J)	4.4	6.5	2.3
For informal to formal (K)	2.2	-	2.3
Some problems during (L)	2.2	2.2	-

Decrease in the involvement (M)	1.1	2.3	2.3
Relation ended (N)	1.1	2.1	-
<b>Total negative evolution (I+J+K+L+M+N)</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>15.3</b>	<b>9.2</b>
<b>Total (A+B+C+D+E+F+G+H+I+J+K+L+M+N)</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### *Ongoing changes*

The principal changes took place during the activities of the partnerships; 47.2% of the interviewees maintained that the activities had been expanded (73.2% of them) or had been adapted to changes in the context (17,6% of them). A small number of interviewees who answered the question (8.8%) stated that the initial activities had been developed in new projects or that new modalities of work had been found.

According to 36.1% of the interviewees, some changes occurred in the participants too. However, they primarily concerned those actors not directly involved in the partnership or newcomers to the partnerships.

18.1% and 11.1% of the interviewees maintained that some changes concerned respectively partnerships' structure and objectives. The smaller number of changes in the structures and objectives could mean, however, that the trend in the partnerships was aimed at their strengthening.

### *Obstacles during the partnership*

In analyzing in depth the relationship between partners, there is confirmation in the data presented before. In fact, 40.3% of the interviewees stated that some obstacles had been faced during the partnership. Only a few of them were directly linked to the partnership, such as:

- partner behavior;
- different culture and languages;
- different expectations;
- lack of prompt communication.

Another series of problems concerned those aspects which were not part of the direct relationship between partners and were linked, for example, to other partners, internal managerial gaps, limited resources and time, insufficient competencies.

Once again, partners dealt with these problems through a direct and open approach; on one hand (13 answers), they improved their relationship with the partner, by trying to:

- improve communication and discussion;
- explain differences to the other partner;
- develop mutual trust;

- have an open mind;
- press the partner;

on the other hand (14 answers) they focused on internal management and competencies. In 2 cases, the relationship ended because of problems which had existed from the very beginning of the partnership.

While the initial difficulties were handled exclusively by focusing on the relationship with the partner, during the partnership, actors had a more operational and practical approach towards problems. However, all the solutions adopted aimed at strengthening the partners' relationship.

### *Conflicts*

The obstacles faced in the beginning and during the partnership rarely created conflicts (it was so according to 8.3% of the interviewees), while 13.9% of the interviewees revealed that there were other conflicts inside the partnership, as well as outside; this latter type of conflict mainly concerned the public administration and other companies linked to the project.

In general, conflicts concerned:

- external or bureaucratic problems;
- disappointment in members;
- competition between partners;
- different vision;
- non respectful partner' behavior.

Conflicts were resolved mainly thanks to discussions, communication, common sense behavior between partners and an increased commitment towards the goal.

## ***5. Partnerships' effects***

The following chapter deals with the effects of the partnerships. We shall examine: attainment of initial expectations, outputs and benefits created by the partnerships, unexpected results. Subsequently, we will analyze the partners' way of thinking about the effectiveness of partnerships in tackling certain issues and in developing their CSR strategies.

### *Attainment of expectations*

Despite the presence of a range of problems which emerged from the moment in which the partners first met until the end of the project, 30.6% of the interviewees felt that their initial expectations had been attained to a greater degree than they had expected, and 62.5% that their expectations had been just attained. Only 5.6% stated that their expectations had been attained to a lesser degree than they had expected, while 1.4% stated that their expectations had not been attained.

The general consensus about the positive results of partnerships could be explained in two ways, not necessarily one exclusive of the other:

- The degree of initial expectations was low;
- Partnership in itself was able to create an added value and an unexpected impact (see below).

### *Results*

The partnerships' results can be divided into two different clusters.

The first cluster concerns the outputs: 25.2% of the interviewees stated that a lot of the materials (reports, press articles) and events, such as press conferences, were delivered to communicate the partnership's and the project's results, with the aim of attracting much media attention.

Another cluster refers to the benefits that were produced from the partnerships. They can be divided into two groups. The first one (40.8% of the answers) refers to the mutual benefits (development of mutual trust, enhanced reputation and credibility, improvement of relations); the second one (59.0% of the answers) concerns the internal benefits (improvement of efficiency and effectiveness of products and services, organizational innovation, increased access to resources and better access to information). 9.2% of the interviewees stated that partnerships generated other kinds of benefits, such as allowing them to carry out their mission, winning an award, acquiring knowledge, increasing public relations and benefits for employees (see table below).

**Table B.5.1 - Benefits coming from partnerships**

Kinds of positive impacts	% of responses		
	All%	COM %	ACO %
Development mutual trust (A)	15.5	15.9	15.2
Enhanced reputation and credibility (B)	14.4	19.5	9.8
Improvement in the relations among organizations (C)	10.9	9.8	12.0
<b>Total mutual benefits (A+B+C)</b>	<b>40.8</b>	<b>45.2</b>	<b>37.0</b>
Better access to information (D)	13.2	13.4	13.0
Increased access to resources (E)	10.9	8.5	13.0
Improved operational efficiency (F)	9.2	8.5	9.8
Organizational innovation (G)	8.6	7.3	9.8
More effective products and services (H)	8.1	7.3	8.7
<b>Total internal benefits (D+E+F+G+H)</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>45.0</b>	<b>54.3</b>
Other benefits (I)	9.2	9.8	8.7
<b>Total (A+B+C+ D+E+F+G+H+I)</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

While the same percent of answers coming from company representatives highlighted both the mutual and internal benefits resulting from the partnerships, most of the civic organizations' answers made reference to the internal benefits (primarily better access to resources and information).

The third cluster concerns the gains in competencies, as 47.2% of the interviewees stated. This data refers to 44.4% of the civic organizations and 50% of businesses. New competencies were linked to partnerships (44.5% of the interviewees who answered the question) or were operational (55.5% of those who answered question) (see table below).

**Table B.5.2 - New competencies coming form partnerships**

Types of new competencies	% of responses		
	All %	COM %	ACO %
Partner's language (A)	27.8	23.5	31.6
Work in partnership (B)	13.9	11.7	15.8
Trust (C)	2.8	5.9	-
<b>Total linked to the partnership (A+B+C)</b>	<b>44.5</b>	<b>41.1</b>	<b>47.4</b>
Professional (D)	8.3	5.9	10.5
Linked to the project (E)	36.1	47.1	26.3
Operational skills (F)	11.1	5.9	15.8
<b>Total operative (D+E+F)</b>	<b>55.5</b>	<b>58.9</b>	<b>52.6</b>
<b>Total (A+B+C+ D+E+F)</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Civic organizations mostly declared that partnering needs were the ability to understand the partners' language (31.6%), while companies stressed, in particular, that partnerships increased competencies linked to the specific field of the project (47.1%). It seems that companies recognized the civic organizations' capacities in the project area, and that civic organizations

appreciated the greater know-how they could acquire from companies. It is possible, in other words, to speak of an exchange of competencies, which represents a significant component of the added value of the partnerships.

Moreover, it is clear that partnerships between companies and civic organizations teach both of them how to work closely with other types of organizations.

### *Impacts*

Partnerships, furthermore, give rise to different kinds of impacts, often generating results that are unexpected and greater than those which the partnership had foreseen. According to 72.2% of the people interviewed these impacts were positive, while for only 8.3% of them, they were negative.

Regarding the positive impacts, 69.4% of the respondents described them in the following manner (see the table below).

**Table B.5.3 - Positive impacts coming from partnerships**

Kinds of positive impacts	% of responses		
	All %	COM %	ACO %
Long-term relationship	25.4	17.2	33.4
Networking	16.9	13.8	20.0
Project extension or continuation	13.6	20.7	6.6
Reputation-image	13.5	17.2	10.0
Gain for community	8.5	3.4	13.4
Know-how	6.8	3.5	10.0
Better internal climate	6.8	10.3	3.3
Capacity building	3.4	6.9	-
Other impacts (innovation, building awareness, CSR strategy)	5.1	7.0	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In general, the principal unexpected impacts concerned the creation of a stable relationship between partners and the promotion of networking, which were seen as an extension or continuation of the project (linked to the stable relationship). Companies, more than civic organizations mentioned a positive gain in reputation, while ACOs referred more to the actual gains for the community resulting from partnerships, as well as to the networking opportunities.

The reported negative effects of partnerships were very few and can be listed below:

- Partnership didn't achieve its objectives;
- Civic organization lost credibility;
- Erosion of the mutual trust;
- Lack of support.



Interviewees were asked to suggest how these kinds of negative impacts could be overcome. Their answers were:

- Honest behavior, close management and dialogue;
- No future collaboration;
- Independent actions to solve the problem created by the other partner;
- Better selection criteria.

As mentioned above, the fact that partnerships naturally created both an added value and unexpected impacts, can be derived, on one hand, from all the positive results that the interviewees mentioned, and, on the other, by examining the answers about the positive impacts and about the improvement of competencies, as well as the perception that the results obtained were more than those expected.

### *The value of partnerships*

All the interviewees, except one, thought that partnerships were valid tools to tackle certain issues. In particular, 82.0% of them declared that they generated relational advantages (35.8%), primarily the reaching of objectives that companies/civic organizations would otherwise not be able to on their own, or operational ones, such as increasing their own effectiveness (25.0%) and resources (9.5%), as well as improving their own know-how and expertise (11.9%) (see table below).

**Table B.5.4 - Reason why partners consider partnerships a valid tool to tackle certain issues**

Motivation	% of responses		
	All %	COM %	ACO %
Impossible to do on your own (A)	27.4	29.7	25.5
Mutual advantages (B)	4.8	5.4	4.3
Access to partners' thinking (C)	2.4	-	4.3
Increase motivation (D)	1.2	2.7	-
<b>Total relational (A+B+C+D)</b>	<b>35.8</b>	<b>37.8</b>	<b>34.1</b>
Effectiveness (E)	25.0	21.6	27.6
Expertise and know-how (F)	11.9	18.9	6.4
Greater resources (G)	9.5	-	17.0
Create innovation (H)	7.1	8.2	6.4
Public consensus and visibility (I)	3.5	5.4	2.1
Elimination of barriers (J)	2.4	-	4.3
Improve CSR (K)	2.4	5.4	-
Independence (L)	1.2	2.7	-
Sharing responsibility and costs (M)	1.2	-	2.1
<b>Total operational (E+F+G+H+I+J+K+L+M)</b>	<b>64.2</b>	<b>62.2</b>	<b>65.9</b>
<b>Total (A+B+C+D+E+F+G+H+I+J+K+L+M)</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Partnerships, moreover, were considered by 65.2% of the interviewees as tools that influenced or contributed to improving Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives of the actors involved. In fact, more than half of them maintained that the partnerships they carried out contributed to or influenced their company/organization strategies (16.0%) or helped them to implement a CSR strategy (22.0%). Through them, furthermore, the actors learned how to practically manage these kinds of relationships and understood the potential they represented for their own CSR strategy (24.0%) (see table below).

**Table B.5.5 - Reason why partnerships influenced CSR strategies**

Linkages to CSR strategy	% of responses		
	All %	COM %	ACO %
Internal influence	32.0	29.7	34.8
Learning partnership management	24.0	18.5	30.5
Put CSR in practice	22.0	22.2	21.7
Contributed	16.0	25.9	4.3
External influence	4.0	-	8.7
Innovation	2.0	3.7	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

# **C – CONCLUSIONS AND GUIDELINES**

## **1. Summary of results**

### *The research*

The project– implemented from July 2005 to June 2006 by Active Citizenship Network and FONDACA, with the support of 8 ACN partner organizations - was aimed at analyzing 36 successful partnerships between ACOs (Autonomous Citizens Organizations) and private companies in 9 European Union countries (Austria, Cyprus, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Poland, Slovenia, United Kingdom), with a view to enriching the knowledge on this tool, of great importance for promoting CSR. The research was conducted through a questionnaire filled by one company (COM) and one autonomous citizens organization (ACO) representative for each partnership. For this research, partnerships have been defined as “situations in which civic organizations and companies share objectives, resources, responsibilities and risks, to achieve public interest goals”.

### *Dissonance on facts and opinions*

According to the factual dissonance index (concerning differences in the partners’ answers when it was implicit that they should have been the same), the fact that 44.4% of the partnerships had a medium or high level of dissonance must be seriously considered. According to the cognitive dissonance index (regarding questions for which one would expect that partners’ answers should have been similar), it results that in 61.1% of the partnerships there was a medium or high level of cognitive gap.

### *The projects promoted*

As for the projects and activities carried out by the partnerships, more than 50% of them concerned welfare and the environment, while one out of four addressed the empowerment of young people. Though the projects were usually multi-level, the national level was the preferred one (76.1% of the partnerships), while less than half of the partnership also involved regional and local levels. Worth mentioning was the minor involvement of the European level in partnerships (12.7%), confirming the lack of a CSR dimension. Almost 60% of all the implemented projects was medium or long-term. As for the budget, about two thirds of them had either a very small budget (< 50,000 €, 33.9%) or a very big one (> 500,000 €, 29.0%). As for the actors responsible for the project, they were, above all, the marketing (23.8%) and communication (26.2%) units for companies, while in ACOs they were the entire organization (25.6%) and the project unit (30.2%); in companies, CSR units were involved as well (19% of the partnerships), while in ACOs, only in 7% of the cases. As for the resources, companies invested in the projects a median of 200,000 €, while citizens’ organizations spent 17,500€; both parties invested a similar number of employees (3 is the median for companies, 2 for ACOs), but ACOs engaged a median of 11 volunteers and companies 6; invested in kind resources were primarily logistical (40.5% of the responses), operational (27%), marketing and PR (21.6%), goods and products (10.8%). In more than two thirds of the cases,

there were other investors: among them there were other citizens' organizations (58.7%), public bodies (45.7%), other companies (39.1%) and individual donors (6.5%).

### *The basis of partnerships*

91.7% of the companies involved in the partnerships had a CSR strategy, while only 61.1% of ACOs had one. Similarly, 94.4% of the company respondents stated that the partnership carried out was part of their CSR strategy, and only 72.7% of ACO representatives stated this.

30.6% of the companies and only 19.4% of civic organizations were first-timers in partnering.

35 partnerships out of 36 were examined at top management level.

As for the actors involved, they were usually only two. Civic umbrella organizations (30% of the cases) and business networks (23.2%) were mentioned as well. According to 85.9% of the respondents, no intermediaries and external third parties intervened or played any role in establishing partnerships.

50.7% of the respondents stated that the two actors had cooperated before initiating the partnership. The prior cooperation was primarily medium (44.4%) or long-term (40.7%). According to 90.3% of the people interviewed, there had been no conflict or difficult relations before the partnership.

The reasons for partnering were mainly internal (97.2% of the respondents) and then external (56.5%). As for the main internal reasons, for both parties, the most important one was solving community problems as part of their mission (37.3% of the companies, 40.4% of ACOs); while for citizens' organizations funding was very important (26.9% of the respondents), for companies, implementing a CSR strategy (21.6%) and reputation (19.6%) were important. As for the main external reasons, they were image (22.7% of the respondents) and meeting public needs (18.2%) for companies, while for ACOs they were public needs (32%) and government regulations and legal requirements (16% and 13.6% for companies); for both actors the occasion of dedicated years and awards (18.2% for companies, 12% for citizens' organizations) were quite important.

According to 92.9% of the respondents (with no difference between the two groups) an agenda of common priorities had been defined during the planning phase. Around two thirds of the respondents stated that this agenda had been jointly decided, while for 25.8% of the company respondents and 21.2% of ACO respondents it had been the outcome of an ACO proposal.

Conflicts regarding the definition of the common agenda took place according to 29.4% of the company respondents and 12.1% of citizens' organization respondents. These situations were managed through discussions, meetings, communication, improvement of mutual knowledge, definition of agreements.

As for the expected results and benefits of partnerships, for both groups the most important issue was to meet citizens' needs (37.5% COM, 27.5% ACO), enhance reputation and image (19.6% COM, 13% ACO) and increase competencies (8.9% COM, 10.1% ACO); while the improvement of CSR awareness (8.9%) was important for companies and the strengthening of networking opportunities (13%) was for citizens' organizations.

More than 40% of all of the respondents reported that the partnerships were facilitated by both actors. For the rest, each actor upheld its own enabling function to the detriment of the other, as an element of the cognitive dissonance recurrent in partnerships. About one third of the respondents identified senior management as the facilitator for both actors. Communication and PR units had a significant facilitating function as well, while project units had one, especially in citizens' organizations.

Even for the representative role in partnerships, senior management was at the top, both for companies (31% of the respondents) and citizens' organizations (41.2%). PR and communication units (31% for COM, 19.6% for ACO) and project managers and units (23.8% for COM, 19.6% for ACO) were important as well.

As for the resource investment made by partners, more than 80% of the actors invested human resources (a median of 1.50 for companies and 2.00 for ACOs); while 58.3% of the companies and 24.2% of citizens' organizations invested financial resources (a median of 150,000 € and 17,500 € respectively), 38.9% COM and 28.6% ACO invested in kind resources, and 19.4% of the companies and 25.7% of citizens' organizations other resources. In kind resources were primarily logistical, operational, products, marketing, PR and advertising, while the "other" resources were knowledge and reputation.

### *The management of partnerships*

As for the structure of the partnership, the most mentioned form was stable relationship (55.6% for COM, 50% for ACO), then came temporary association (25% for both), forum with a mission (11.1% for COM, 22.2% for ACO) and, finally, convergent separate identities (5.6% and 2.6% respectively), thus highlighting a structure which reflected the nature of partnerships as something that went beyond the actors, and which was aimed at being a stable relationship. The kind of structure was characterized by flexibility, either informal (36.1% for companies, 33.3% for citizens' organizations) or formal (58.3% and 63.9% respectively).

Most of the respondents (86.1%) stated that the rights and responsibilities of partners had been defined. Their definition followed two main methods: one based on technical and juridical tools, such as contracts, reporting systems, steering committees (71.4% for companies, 70.3% for ACOs); the other on cultural and communicational processes, such as discussion, trust and openness, recognition of purpose and partner's independence (28.6% and 29.6% respectively).

84.4% of the company and 75.8% of citizens' organization respondents stated that there was equality in the distribution of roles. The difference between the two groups was linked to the stress of the greater management burden on citizens' organizations, that ACO respondents highlighted.

Transparency and accountability within the partnership were guaranteed through both formal tools, as reports, contracts, meetings (66% of the companies, 57.7% of citizens' organizations) and informal tools (34% and 42.3% respectively). The two parties agreed on the three single most important tools: reports, contracts, communication.

According to 79.1% of the company respondents and 66.7% of ACO respondents, the decisions regarding the partnership were taken together, in a more or less formal manner.

As for the participation of the intended beneficiaries in the partnership decision making process, 43.7% of the respondents (38.9% of the companies, 48.6% of ACOs) stated that they were involved, while the rest said that they were not. However, even when beneficiaries were involved in decision making, it was minimal, such as asking them about their needs or giving them feedback, and only in a very few cases through a direct involvement in the project (20% and 21.4% of company and ACO respondents stated that beneficiaries were involved).

Almost 85% of all of the respondents declared that the real responsibility for the success or failure of the partnership was shared. Besides the communication and PR officers it was the people from senior management who were directly in charge with the success of the partnership.

Questions were also asked on both internal and external communication aspects. As for internal communication, there emerged a widespread use of several tools, both formal (written reports, letters, meetings) and informal (e-mails, phone calls). Tools involving personal relations (54.8% for companies, 55.6% for citizens' organizations) were more used than those related to interpersonal relations (40.2% and 41.2% respectively). According to the respondents, meetings, phone calls and emails were the most useful tools. The reasons mentioned for this were: quick and direct communication (37.4%), clear information (15.5%), facilitation of discussion (11.6%), overview of the situation (11.6%). The main external communication tools were press conferences, web pages, specific events and social and sustainability reports, which, incidentally, were at the bottom of the ranking, despite their recognized importance for CSR. 60.9% of the mentioned tools were specific ones, and only 39.1% were general external communication tools.

As for the evaluation of partnerships, 62% of the respondents declared that no indicators had been defined. When they had, the main contents of the indicators were: success of the project carried out (62.5%); quality of the partnership, achievement of its goals and effectiveness of partners (50.1%); impact on each partner (25.0%); cost-benefit relation (16.7%). 27.8% of the company respondents and 44.4% of ACO representatives said that no evaluation had been done (the gap in answers is probably linked to the fact that some companies conducted the evaluation on their own). In any case, 63.9% of the respondents stated that an evaluation of the partnership had been implemented or at least planned (ongoing for 81.6% and ex-post for 18.4% of the respondents; internal to the partnership in 44.1% of the cases, external in 20.3% and internal to each participant in 35.6%).

### *Evolution of partnerships*

Two thirds of the partnerships started without hesitations or worries of the subjects involved in them. The remaining one third had worries about choosing the right partner, fear of not having the right competencies, internal resistances, fear of losing control, possible economic dependence of civic organization, distrust, difference of aims. In particular, ACOs hesitated because of the

possible divergent aims with business (social vs. economic), while businesses mistrusted civic organizations. These worries were handled, in two thirds of the cases, through informal relationships (meetings, communication, building trust, openness, working closely together, networking) and in one third, through formal tools (improving rules, supporting the partners' fund raising, internal solutions, creating specific teams, etc.). Companies tended to prefer informal tools (70.6% vs. 55.6% of ACOs), while citizens' organizations preferred to adopt a practical approach (44.4% vs. 29.4% of companies).

In the beginning of partnerships, less than one third of the partners had some difficulties in understanding each other. These difficulties could be grouped in two main clusters: managing differences in culture, languages and focus (77,3% of the interviewees who answered the question) and divergences in methods and managerial aspects (31.8% of the interviewees who answered the question). These difficulties were dealt with through discussion, open dialogue, pragmatic adaptation, recognition of partners' identity.

Civic organisations and business described the evolution of partnerships in a positive manner: the relationships expanded and became better over time. Only for a minority of them were relations stable or got worse (positive evolution: 80.4% for companies and 88.5% for ACOs; stable evolution: 4.3% and 2.3%; negative evolution: 15.3% and 9.2%).

In the course of the partnerships, the main changes occurred during the activities: 47.2% of the interviewees mentioned that activities had expanded (73.2% of them) or had been adapted to changes in the context (17,6% of them). 18.1% and 11.1% of the interviewees stated that some changes concerned, respectively, partnerships' structure and objectives. The smaller number of changes in the structures and objectives could mean however that the partnerships' trend was aimed at their strengthening.

As for the obstacles during the partnership, 40.3% of the interviewees stated that some obstacles had been faced during the partnership, but only few of them were directly linked to the partnership, such as partner behavior; different culture and languages; different expectations; lack of prompt communication. Once again, partners dealt with these problems through a direct and open approach, by both improving the relationship and by strengthening internal management and competencies. In 2 cases, the relationship ended because of problems which had existed from the very beginning.

It seems that obstacles faced in the beginning and during the partnership rarely created conflicts (8.3% of the interviewees). 13.9% of the interviewees declared that there were other conflicts inside the partnership (concerning disappointment in members, competition between partners, conflicting visions, lack of respect), as well as outside (primarily with public administrations and other private companies).

### *Partnerships' effects*

30.6% of the interviewees felt that their initial expectations had been attained to a greater degree than they had expected, and 62.5% said that they had been just attained. Only 5.6% stated that their expectations had been attained to lesser degree than they had expected, while 1.4% declared that they had not been attained. The Results of the partnerships can be divided in three groups:

- **Outputs:** 25.2% of the interviewees stated that materials (reports, press articles) and events (press conferences) were delivered, attracting much media attention.
- **Benefits:** according to 40.8% of the people interviewed, there were mutual benefits (development of mutual trust, enhanced reputation and credibility, improvement of relations), 59.0% stated that there were internal benefits (improvement of efficiency and effectiveness of products and services, organizational innovation, increased access to resources and better access to information), while 9.2% of the interviewees referred to other kinds of benefits (carrying out their mission , winning an award, acquiring knowledge, increasing public relations, benefits for employees).
- **Competencies:** 47.2% of the interviewees. New competencies were linked to partnerships (44.5% of the interviewees who answered the question) or to operational skills (55.5% of the interviewees who answered the question).

As for the impacts (unexpected and greater results), they were positive, according to 72.2% of the people interviewed. These impacts were identified as long-term relations, networking, project extension or continuation, reputation and image, gains for the community, know-how, better internal climate, capacity building. In other words, the main unexpected impacts concerned the creation of a stable relationship between partners and networking. Companies, more than civic organizations, noticed a positive gain in reputation, while civic organizations, more than business, observed the actual gain for the community as a result of partnerships and networking. As for the (few) negative impacts, these were that partnerships didn't achieve their objectives; that civic organizations lost credibility; erosion of mutual trust; lack of support.

All the interviewees, except one, thought that partnerships were valid tools to tackle certain issues and, in particular, 82.0% of them declared that they created relational advantages (35.8%), which made it possible to reach objectives that companies/civic organisations would not have been able to do on their own, or operational ones, such as increasing their own effectiveness (25.0) and resources (9.5%) or improving their own know-how and expertise (11.9). Partnerships, moreover, were considered by 65.2% of the interviewees as tools that influenced or contributed to promoting the Corporate Social Responsibility of the different actors that were involved. In particular, through partnerships, they learned how to practically manage these kinds of relationships and understand the potential for their own CSR strategy (24.0%).

### *Partnerships' Profile*

Projects developed through partnerships are primarily:

- aimed at tackling welfare and environmental concerns, as well as promoting the empowerment of young people;
- developed at the national, less at the local, and not at the European level;
- medium or long term;
- managed by marketing departments or public relations offices (for companies) and by the entire organization (for ACOs);
- either of a value of less than 50,000 or more than 500,000 €
- supported by other investors.



In general, partnerships are:

- between companies that have a CSR strategy and ACOs that are more focused on promoting concrete gains for communities, and which have the main common goal to resolving societal problems;
- stable and flexible relationships between one company and one organization, that have already been involved in prior collaborations and which have been started with neither the participation of second-degree structures, nor the support of external intermediaries;
- equal relationships, where rights and responsibilities are defined and decision making process, as well as responsibilities are shared, but where ACOs face more internal resistances in partnering with business;
- relations guaranteed by formal technical and juridical tools and managed with a high level of personal relations;
- characterized, on the one hand by internal communication tools which imply more personal rather than interpersonal relations and, on the other, by external tools, which are primarily specific rather than general (as social reports);
- with a minor involvement of the intended beneficiaries in the decision making process;
- more about human than financial resources involved by both sides;
- decided and represented by senior management;
- facilitated by both partners' communication or public relations departments;
- evaluated more by companies, often separately;
- positively evolving relationships - with no significant obstacles or conflicts - which are managed through communication and mutual recognition;

relationships that create more internal and less mutual benefits, increase competencies (relational and operational) and generate many unexpected positive impacts, primarily linked to strengthening partners' cooperation.

## ***2. Conclusions***

The research conducted for this study allows us to make some general conclusive remarks. Naturally, these remarks can be applied only to the partnerships examined for this work and their reliability rests upon the value and limits of this research, as it have been defined in the introductory part of this report.

The conclusions address the following five points: the study of the partnerships, the essential features of the 36 analyzed partnerships, the actors' participation in the partnerships, the role of the partnerships as a corporate social responsibility "technology", the ambiguous and risky elements which emerged from the analysis.

### *The Study of the Partnerships*

The partnerships proved to have a rich empirical content, which was hardly in correspondence with the modeling exercises that are usually carried out on this matter. One example of this is the negligible role that social and sustainability reports have shown to have as accountability tools of partnerships. This research can, therefore, also have implications for developing further research activities on partnerships between citizens' organizations and private companies. From this work it could derive a gain for existing models as well, enabling them to be more realistic and thus effective.

With reference to the starting points of the research, the analyzed partnerships emerged as a phenomenon clearly different from other forms of relations which exist between ACOs and private companies, such as dialogue and collaboration. The main difference resides in the fact that partnerships imply the sharing of resources and risks in carrying out the same programs and activities together. This was clearly expressed by the most part of the key informants, who stated that it was thanks to partnerships that they were enabled to do something that they would not be able to on their own. The title of this report, "Not Alone", reflects this very important result.

On the other side, the study of the 36 partnerships also revealed a number of significant difficulties and obstacles as well. Two of them can be considered the most important.

The first problem concerned the existence of divergent perceptions and assessments of the facts between the two groups of actors, which meant that it was not easy to precisely find out what really happened. This specific problem was handled by making itself a matter of research, highlighting the actors' divergent or convergent information and visions, and then measuring their divergences. This type of focus allowed us to enrich the amount of gathered information on the partnerships; and it could also represent a warning for practitioners and policy makers, when promoting or dealing with partnerships.

The second problem referred to the overlapping and confusion that existed between the projects or activities carried out by the partnerships and the partnerships themselves. Also in this case, as well, it was decided to make the problem visible, by gathering information both on the projects and on the partnerships, thus making it possible to conduct a separate analysis of the two elements. It must be pointed out, however, that the interviewees showed a sufficient degree of perception of the difference, though some confusions occasionally emerged as well. Also in this case, the matter should be taken into account not only when studying, but also when planning and implementing partnerships.

### *The Essentials of Partnerships*

Some significant and recurrent elements allow us to identify some characterizing (or structural) features of the 36 studied partnerships which were examined. Let us summarize them in the following points:

- *At the core business.* Partnerships are understood and managed as something that is related to the core business of the actors' organizations and not as something marginal or of secondary importance. It means that partnerships seem to be perceived as something linked to the very identity of the actors, capable of adding or subtracting value to it. This is the reason why, in our opinion, the top management was fully involved, both in starting and facilitating the partnership; the evaluation of the partnership was usually not devolved to external actors; there was a reluctance to expand the relationship to other actors (though this can happen).
- *Coming from prior relations.* Partnerships were borne from of a framework of mutual knowledge that preceded the decision to partnering.
- *Not yet an ordinary activity.* Despite their significance for the actors, it seems that partnerships were not yet considered a normal and common operational pattern for the actors. This is suggested both by the prevailing use of ad hoc communication tools, and by the existing internal problems.
- *Flexibility, formality and personal relations.* Flexibility seemed to be the main feature of the management of partnerships. It is linked to the prevailing formal technical and juridical tools, which confirm the strategic value that partnerships have. At the same time, however, communication and cultural processes, as well as personal relations, were also very important.
- *Trend to equality.* The partnerships were jointly designed and managed, thus guaranteeing equality between partners. ACOs had a leadership role in defining the priorities of the common activities.
- *Investment of human rather financial resources.* Partnerships seemed to require a significant investment, but above all (and in all cases) in human, rather than in financial resources. As it is well known, this kind of investment is, in a sense, much more strategic both for companies and citizens' organizations.
- *Long-term, stable relationship.* The partnerships tended to evolve in stable relationships, changing rather in actors and in activities than in structure

and objectives. In other words, they overcame the actors' separate identities, producing what has been defined as an "Alchemy Effect".

- *Added value and incremental character.* Almost all of the partnerships were evaluated as capable of adding value to the actors' activity, image and identity, as well as generating unexpected results, with reference both to partners and their activity. It can be stated that partnerships had an incremental character, thus tending to grow thanks to their own development.

### *Actors of the partnership*

Citizens' organizations seemed to be more accustomed in partnering with companies, but were more cautious in deciding to partner with companies than companies were with them: in other words, they were more used to participating in partnerships, but not with companies. They seemed to be more satisfied by the partnering experience, probably because of the low degree of expectations and initial concerns, such as loss of identity, risk of becoming dependent and contrast with company objectives.

Partners revealed different intentions and expectations, though within a framework of clear and common general aims. Companies tended to partner with the goal to practice corporate social responsibility and enhance their reputation, while citizens' organizations were more focused on the possibility to increase their resources and achieve concrete results in the field they were engaged in. ACOs showed also a low awareness of what were the corporate social responsibility implications of the partnership.

As for the management of the partnership, ACOs tended to engage, besides its top management, their entire organization, while businesses tended to primarily involve specific units (such as communication).

During the partnership, a process of mutual learning tended to take place. It concerned management skills for ACOs and skills linked to the project for companies. Therefore, both were involved in learning about each other's about differences in terms of culture, language, etc.

The research seemed also to confirm the marginal role played by second-degree structures, whether they be of companies or of citizens' organizations. Again, it can be said that partnerships emerged as something too important to be left to anyone else.

The government and public administration seemed to play a marginal role, one rather of financial support than of facilitation or enablement.

### *Partnerships as CSR “technologies”*

It would seem appropriate to identify partnerships as specific “technologies” capable of helping to implement corporate social responsibility objectives of both companies and their civic stakeholders. It should be pointed out that, from this point of view, partnerships emerged as capable of linking companies and stakeholders in a framework of common rights and duties, powers and responsibilities, leadership and management roles, as well as experiences which are able to generate a significant impact inside companies and in their reputation, and to enrich their identity as a result of implemented social objectives, thus increasing their value.

On the stakeholders’ side, as well, partnerships seemed to be tools which allowed them to enhance the awareness of their role, their ability to interact with companies, and their general attitude towards businesses, thus overcoming prejudices as well as “standard views” and constructively challenging companies to take corporate social responsibility seriously.

### *Ambiguities and risks*

Last but not least, very little information was gathered about conflicts inside the actors’ organizations, as well between them and outside the partnership themselves. Despite the fact that the partnerships had been selected on the basis of their success, key informants may have been reluctant on this point. The collection of direct information would have probably allowed us to either confirm or refute this matter, which would be something of great importance.

People interviewed have definitely stated that there was full equality of partners. Apart from some exceptions, they have recognized the existence of unbalanced responsibilities and powers only when ACOs had a major role in the implementation of common activities. Further situations of power divide could have been checked through a more in depth research.

The situation which raised the most concern was, probably, the lack of involvement of the intended beneficiaries in the decision making process of the partnerships. Apart from specific cases (for example, a program on wildlife), the fact that most of the partnerships did not involve the beneficiaries of their activity in the decision making, or did it in a very limited way, had a definite negative implications. This is something that could, indeed, raise serious questions about the innovative character that partnerships should have. One hypothesis that could be made is that the presence of a citizen based organization was considered by both partners as an indirect element of representation of the voice and needs of the intended beneficiaries. Whatever the reason, this is an element that may contain a risk of partnerships being self-serving.

The risk of a prevailing of self-sufficiency and, therefore, a self-referential attitude of partnerships, has to be examined. It seems to be a risk which is

intrinsic to the “core business” character that studied partnerships have; therefore, something that cannot be avoided, but that has to be dealt with during the partnership activity. It is, thus, something that, especially partnering actors must carefully take into consideration, in order not to contradict the very reason why partnerships themselves are established and carried out.

### **3. Guidelines for good CSR partnerships in Europe**

The present guidelines draw on the analysis of the answers that the interviewed private companies and civic organizations representatives, gave to the last question of the questionnaire: “*From your experience, taking into account the potential factors that may enhance or impede partnerships, what recommendations would you give for building future partnerships?*”. The objective of these guidelines is to highlight what partnerships’ actors consider as keys for success in a partnership, based on their concrete experience of the partnership building and management difficulties, as well as the ways to overcome them.

The first noticeable result is the large convergence of private companies and civic organizations on some fundamental recommendations, such as:

- The need to dialogue and communicate (30 mentions);
- The setting of clear and shared objectives from the beginning of the partnership building (22 mentions);
- Transparency and integrity, especially on every partner’s interests and expectations (20 mentions);
- The mutual trust and respect (18 mentions);
- The establishing of clear rules concerning the development and the management of the partnership (10 mentions);
- The compatibility between the “visions” and philosophy of the partners, as well as the importance of shared values (9 mentions).

With respect to the whole framework of the recommendations, the guidelines concern 3 phases of the partnership:

- the bases or pre-conditions for the establishing of a partnership;
- the building of the partnership;
- the management of the partnership.

#### **1. The partnership bases**

In order to make a partnership work, two kinds of pre-conditions must be fulfilled: relational and operational ones.

##### *1.1. The relational bases*

The relational bases of the partnership refer to the knowledge / awareness that future partners have of themselves, of their future partner(s), as well as of their approach to a possible partnership. It emerges as one of the main concerns of both companies and civic organizations, since 56 of the 204 recommendations concern this aspect of the partnership, and more specifically they are:

- transparency and honesty, especially with respect to all the partner’s interests and expectations (20 mentions);
- mutual trust and respect (18 mentions);
- The compatibility between the partners’ visions and values (9 mentions);

- enthusiasm and trust in achieving the goals (5 mentions);
- awareness of the partners regarding their own profile (2 mentions);
- not too high expectations (1 mention);
- reliability (1 mention).

First of all, one can notice the concentration of the interviewees' mentions on a limited number of items, which indicates a strong agreement on the key pre-conditions for the success of the partnership.

*Transparency and honesty integrity* appear to be the most essential relational prerequisite, especially for civic organizations, given that 15 out of the 20 mentions came from this side. It is, therefore, essential that both partners clearly state what they expect from the partnership, and what are their specific interests (which may correspond only in part with the common partners' interests) before starting the building of the relation. In this way, the parties will have all the elements to decide whether their agreement is sufficiently strong to go on, and they will be able to clearly define the common objectives of the partnership. At this stage, it is certainly an important element to avoid misunderstandings and disappointments during the development of the partnership.

*Mutual trust and respect* are another key principles, while the prejudices and distrust civic organizations and private companies often have vis-à-vis each other are one of the main obstacles to the building of partnerships. It is interesting to highlight the fact that 13 out of the 18 mentions have been made by private companies. It may indicate that businesses suffer from a lack of trust and respect more than civic organizations do.

*Compatibility between the partners' visions and values* is also mentioned by both categories as an important element. It will enable the partners to establish shared objectives, which are part of the partnership's definition, as well as to agree on the means used to reach these objectives. It is clearly linked to the *awareness of the partners regarding their own profile*, which is necessary to evaluate the partners' compatibility.

Finally, *enthusiasm and trust in the achieving of the goals* is an attitude of the participants which does certainly facilitate the development of the partnership.

## 1.2. *The operational bases*

Contrarily to the relational bases, the operational ones seem to be quite marginal in the interviewees' opinion, since they only gathered 6 rather disparate mentions:

- fair selection and evaluation of the potential partners (3 mentions);
- tax incentives (1 mention);
- projects responding to a real societal demand (1 mention);
- partnerships should not be selective (1 mention).



This situation reveals that the operational pre-requisites for the establishing of the partnerships are pretty limited with respect to the relational ones. Only the *fair selection and evaluation of partners*, which is a borderline item between operational and relational aspects, has more than 1 mention.

## **2. The building of the partnership**

The concrete building of the partnership requires both relational and managerial qualities from the partners. However, the ratio between relational (16 mentions) and managerial (55 mentions) aspects is inverted with respect to the bases for the establishing of the partnership. This situation is consistent with the fact that the building of a partnership is an operational phase of the relation, while the first one is rather cognitive.

### *2.1. Relational aspects of the partnership building*

The recommendations of the interviewees on the relational aspects of the partnership building are as follows:

- understanding of the partners' differences and specific needs (6 mentions);
- engagement / commitment of both partners (3 mentions);
- co-operation of people with different characteristics (generation, gender, profile) (3 mentions);
- building of the relationships (2 mentions);
- compatibility of the personalities of the people in charge (1 mention);
- expectations' of the partners' employees (1 mention).

The main suggestion has to do with the *understanding of the partners' differences and specific needs*. This is certainly an important point, since private companies and civic organizations have diverse structures, working methods, interests, aims, etc., which often are sources of misunderstandings. Each partner should not expect the other one to behave like it would, but try to understand why it behaves in a different way. Long term relations, as well as transparency and communication, are certainly key factors to reach this objective.

The *commitment of both partners* was also mentioned as an important aspect, which is actually part of the partnership definition itself.

### *2.2. Managerial aspects of the partnership building*

The recommendations of the interviewees on the managerial aspects of the partnership building are as follows:

- definition of clear and shared objectives from the beginning (22 mentions);
- establishment of clear rules concerning the development and management of the partnership (10 mentions);
- clear definition of shared responsibilities and workload (4 mentions);

- shared planning (3 mentions);
- time necessary to build the partnership (2 mentions);
- not too much bureaucracy (2 mentions);
- balance between the commercial, economic and social purposes (1 mention);
- investment in the relationship (1 mention);
- agreement on time frame (1 mention);
- agreement on the necessary resources (1 mention);
- not only financial resources, but also competencies, skills, etc. (1 mention);
- inclusion of the partnership in the actors' agenda (1 mention);
- selection of a person in charge of the partnership (1 mention);
- identification of equal benefits (1 mention);
- identification of expertise on both sides (1 mention);
- commitment of the management department (1 mention);
- innovation (1 mention);
- development of own idea and realize them with common forces (1 mention).

The managerial aspects of the partnership building are interesting, since they present few recommendations mentioned by a large number of interviewees and many other isolated items, which are not less interesting, but are less crucial to reach the objective.

The *definition of clear and shared objectives from the beginning of the partnership* (22 mentions) is the main recommendation of this section. As already mentioned, the objectives are an essential element in the definition of the partnership itself and in the parties' decision to participate. Therefore, any misunderstanding at this stage could provoke the breakup of the partnership and the failure of the activities it plans to carry out.

The *establishment of clear rules concerning the development and the management of the partnership* is another item often mentioned by the interviewees (10 mentions). Some of them especially recommended, in particular, the drafting of a written agreement or a code of co-operation; the definition of clear guidelines and common rules regarding participation, decision-making, sanctions, etc. The aim is, again, to clarify from the beginning all the aspects of the partnership, in order to eliminate, as much as possible, the conflict sources. It can thus also be linked to the *clear definition of shared responsibilities and workload* (4 mentions), the *establishment of a shared planning* (3 mentions), the *agreement on the time frame* (1 mention), as well as the *agreement on the necessary resources* (1 mention).

On the other hand, it must be balanced by the request to *avoid too much bureaucracy* (2 mentions), so that partners do not spend most of their time, resources and energy in dealing with administrative matters.

### **3. The management of the partnership**

We have included in this section both the management and the evaluation of the partnership, since this last aspect was only mentioned once. Contrarily to the

other two phases, there is a balance between the relational (36 mentions) and the operational aspects (35 mentions) of the management, which may indicate that they have an equivalent weight.

### *3.1. Relational aspects of the partnership management*

The recommendations of the interviewees on the relational aspects of the partnership management are the as following:

- dialogue and communication (31 mentions);
- cooperation (2 mentions);
- empathy among the team (1 mention);
- capacity to say NO (1 mention);
- problem-solving attitude (1 mention).

The fact that most interviewees quoted the *dialogue and communication* (31 mentions) as a crucial factor for success, reveals that this it is one of the pillars of the partnerships. The specific indications regarded the quality of the communication (straightforward, continual, open and clear, learn to listen to each other), its modalities (open discussions, consultations, meetings, ad hoc structures) and its content (possible obstacles and problems).

The other mentions remained pretty isolated, even if they constitute hold interesting indications.

### *3.2. Operational aspects of the partnership management*

The recommendations of the interviewees on the operational aspects of the partnership management are clearly less focused as in the case of the relational aspects, since they encompass 19 entries instead of 5:

- professional behavior / competencies to achieve the targets (6 mentions);
- long term partnerships (5 mentions);
- redefine rules /the details during the partnership, if necessary (3 mentions);
- accountability (3 mentions);
- effective delivery of results (3 mentions);
- use examples as a lead (2 mentions);
- coherence (1 mention);
- control the consistency of the company behavior with its “vision” (1 mention);
- active participation of both partners (1 mention);
- public communication on the partnership (1 mention);
- expert management (1 mention);
- celebration of achievements (1 mention);
- coordination between the management and the operational level of the partnership (1 mention);
- respect the agreement (1 mention);
- stick to the objectives and resist external pressure (1 mention);
- concreteness (1 mention);
- consistency and continuity (1 mention);

- constant involvement of all partners in virtuous contaminating experiences (1 mention);
- clear evaluation of the partnership (1 mention).

The two main recommendations are the *professional behavior and competencies of the partners* (6 mentions), as well as the importance of *long term partnerships* (5 mentions). The first one was primarily mentioned by private companies (4 out of 6), which could indicate their concern regarding the professional performances of citizens' organizations composed primarily of volunteers. The second one refers to the question of time, which does also appear in the building of the partnership. As a matter of fact, most partnerships do not produce results immediately. They require endurance and need to be viewed in a long-term perspective. Partnerships strengthen themselves with the passing of time, which is the reason why long-term ones are so valuable.

The *redefinition of rules during the partnership* (3 mentions) indicates a necessary flexibility, which balances the establishment of written rules at the beginning of the relation, but questions neither the *respect of the agreements* (1 mention), nor the *attachment to the objectives* (1 mention).

Lastly, the *accountability* (3 mentions) shall be applied to the relationship between the partners together with the transparency.

# ***ANNEXES***

**Annex 1- Partnerships' summaries**

**Annex 2- Cyprus relation on CSR**

**Annex 3- References**

## ANNEX 1

### *Partnerships' summaries*

<b>Nation</b>	<b>Title of the partnership</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Company</b>	<b>ACO</b>
HUNGARY	Customers' household appliances	CECED gives hints and tips on how to get better use out of customers' household appliances from an economic, safety and environmental perspective. NACPH runs a monthly magazine on a wide range of consumer issues, in which useful information is published regularly. The editorial staff of this magazine also creates comparative surveys on prices, which help the consumer to decide and compare different consumer goods. CECED financially supports this activity. This good practice has been going on for a year.	CECED-Hungary	National Association for Consumer Protection in Hungary (NAPCH)
	Customer service centres	E.ON Hungária closed some customer service centres in two counties of Hungary. The customers' interests were fundamentally affected by this action. It caused a lot of protests from consumers. A trilateral roundtable was formed last year. The local mayors were responsible for ensuring the premises for customer service centres. E.ON Hungária was responsible for covering expenses, training an employee for handling and solving consumer complaints, and also equipping these offices. NACPH undertook the task of helping the employee in solving complaints, discussing problems with the service provider, and each year conducting a research and publishing an analysis, comparing the localisation of customer service centres, the expedition, methods and procedures of handling complaints, etc. in each of the counties in Hungary.	E.ON Hungária GmbH (North-East Hungarian Electricity)	National Association for Consumer Protection in Hungary (NAPCH)
	Making a connection in Hungary	The International Youth Foundation (IYF) and Nokia formed a partnership to translate their shared values into a youth program that would truly make a difference. The two partners decided on a project, which would help young people around the world, by giving them opportunities to connect to their communities, their families and peers, and to themselves. At the national level, this program, called Make a Connection, started in 2002, when 13 training courses were provided by DIA, and 174 young people received intensive training on topics such as conflict resolution, project management, environment protection. Nokia, in turn, offers strong financial support and participates actively in program implementation. In the near future, DIA plans to scale up these training programs to involve even more local youth groups and community members.	Nokia Hungary Ltd	Foundation for Democratic Youth (Demokratikus Ifjúságért Alapítvány - DIA)
	For better informing consumers	Tesco and NACPH formed a partnership for better informing consumers through information campaigns, leaflets. The partners organise contests for consumers, and CORA also supports and takes part in the education of consumers. The program is designed not only for average consumers (who are reasonably well informed and observant and circumspect), but also for vulnerable categories, such as children and elderly people. This partnership has been going on for three years.	TESCO Global GmbH - Hungary	National Association for Consumer Protection in Hungary (NAPCH)
	Reviewing travel contracts	NFACPH and OTP Travel Agency have a partnership which has been going on for two years, while previously they cooperated within the framework of the arbitration board. Together they formed a partnership for reviewing travel contracts and discussing the practice of imposing an extra service charge for issuing tickets on the part of airline companies and travel agencies. Following the initiative of NFACPH, positive changes are expected in the current year. As a result of the initiative, the contracts will be in line with the national and the EU regulations.	OTP Travel Ltd	National Federation of Associations for Consumer Protection in Hungary (NFACPH)
UK	Money Advice Training	NatWest, owned by the Royal Bank of Scotland Group (RBS), is the biggest supporter of not for profit money advice in the UK, mainly through the Money Advice Trust with particular emphasis on money advice training. Following an earlier funding package through the Money Advice Trust, in 2004 RBS approved a further three-year, £1.84 million donation towards debt advice and a coordinated a training programme for money advisers, called wiseradviser.	Royal Bank of Scotland Group (RBS)	Citizens Advice
	2 nd Tier Money Advice	The CAB service enjoys a long standing strong multi-faceted partnership with Barclays that can be split four ways: Money Advice, Rural Regeneration, Financial Skills and Volunteering. Since 2001, the bank has provided or pledged over £1.5 million by way of funding a number of projects/initiatives to the benefit of Citizens Advice and its clients. Barclays has been supporting Money Advice second tier support (specialist advisers, advising front line money advice advisers) since 1999, and is the largest funder for this type of support. Barclays has also promoted volunteering at CAB by their staff.	Barclays PLC	Citizens Advice
	Young Innovation	Envolve's project, Young Innovation, ran from spring 2004 to summer 2005 and brought businesses and young people together. One of the most successful partnerships was between Envolve and City Academy Bristol and FCBA. Around 200 students at Key Stage 3 (aged between 12 and 15) attended active-learning workshops on sustainability and sustainable business. The students then visited FCBA to gain first-hand experience of how they operated and to identify specific business problems. The students then worked with architects at FCBA to build a useable pavilion out of sustainable materials which they	Fielden Clegg Bradley Architects LLP	Envolve Partnerships for Sustainability

		built in their school grounds.		
	Get their Environmental Management Systems in place	Envolv has been working with Hobart Manufacturing Ltd to help them get their Environmental Management Systems (EMS) together and in place. This helps them conform to UK and European environmental standards and to control their utility costs. Envolv gains a subsidised amount for providing the support (from European Funds), as well as invaluable experience working with large businesses.	Hobart Manufacturing UK	Envolv Patnerships for Sustainability (delivering EnVision)
	Worldmade by Motivation	In 2004 Kingfisher helped Motivation to launch the 'Worldmade' wheelchair which is specifically designed for use in rural areas of developing countries. Kingfisher and B & Q, support the charity, not only through funding for product development and production, but also through advice on many aspects of the project, from product design to production, logistics and marketing. The Worldmade project is part of Kingfisher's CSR programme, supporting the long-term sustainability of its partners and projects, taking into account the needs of local and global communities.	Kingfisher Plc	Motivation
SLOVENIA	The Shelter House	After a successful cooperation, Mercator and SAFY established the shelter house in November 2004. It's a house (new home) for children, who because of physical and psychological domestic violence can no longer live at home. Children can eat and sleep there, with experts (social workers, pedagogues, etc.) helping them regain their trust and self-esteem through different groups and activities. SAFY and Center for social work offer expert advice and guidance.	Mercator, d.d.	Slovenian Association of friends of youth (SAFY)
	Developing Center for social and labour integration	OZARA started to develop the Centre for Social and labour integration which offers training and possibilities for long-term employment of the disabled. There are many different workshops in the centre (sewing, cleaning, gardening, joinery, etc.). Raiffeisen Krekova Banka helps the centre with financial support, promotion and buying the products.	Raiffeisen Krekova Banka	OZARA (National Life Quality Association)
	Buying the mammography machine	In 2004 Europa Donna Slovenia started a huge fundraising campaign for the new mammography machine. Many companies and individuals contributed, but their partnership with PRISTOP is deeper. The partnership started to developed more than three years ago. PRISTOP offers to Europa Donna communication support (PR activities: media coverage, advertisement, etc.) for ED's programmes and projects.	Pristop d.o.o.	European Breast Cancer Coalition
	The week of a child, A wink to the sun, Sunny ŽIV ŽAV	SAFY and LEK have cooperated for many of years now. LEK helped to organise the 41st Week of a child (theme of the year 2005: every child has a right to non-discrimination). The week of a child is the special programme of SAFY dedicated to the World child's day, which was acknowledged by UN in 1956. SAFY started with this programme in 1961. The event takes place every first week of October. The action A wink to the Sun helps children with less opportunities to go to the seaside and enjoy their holidays. LEK also helps to organise Sunny ŽIV ŽAV, which is a special event, where children gather together, have fun, play games, get gifts provided by LEK, etc.	Lek d.d.	Slovenian Association of friends of youth (SAFY)
GERMANY	Corporate Volunteering for Ford employees in Caritas' social services/facilities	Ford and Caritas partner in the implementation of a corporate volunteering programme for Ford. Caritas provides volunteering opportunities for Ford employees in their local member organisations' facilities, ensures certain quality standards for the voluntary services, as well as a reliable risk management and legal/insurance framework for the volunteers; Ford brings the volunteers on a 16 hours paid-time-off per year basis, and provides their know-how, their networks and their management skills.	Ford Europe GmbH	Diözesan-Caritasverband für das Erzbistum Koeln e.V.
	Promotion of community foundations	BVR and Aktive Bürgerschaft are close partners. One of their major fields of collaboration is the promotion of community foundations in Germany. The BVR member banks are motivated to engage in their communities by initiating community foundations, Aktive Bürgerschaft offers training, tools, knowhow etc., and offers a yearly award for the best community foundations, etc.	Bundesverband Volks- und Raiffeisenbanken (BVR)	Aktive Bürgerschaft e.V.
	Holistic health care services	Long standing partnership dedicated to the improvement of health care for children by various means, e.g. the cooperation of Betapharm's research institute and Bunter Kreis in developing training courses suitable for chronically ill children and teenagers, in order to provide them with information about their condition and enable them to cope as well as possible with it on a day-to-day basis. Training courses have already been introduced for children with diabetes, asthma, adipositas and neurodermitis.	Betapharm Arzneimittel GmbH	Bunter Kreis
	Civil Academy	The Civil Academy offers support to young people developing and implementing their particular ideas of civic engagement. Training courses provide them with skills that have been proved to be helpful in civil society organizations and/or in business and to enable them to design and implement sustainable projects. Trainings are designed and organized in a joint effort of both partners, thus combining civil society and business skills, as well as ways of thinking and establishing resp. deepening cross-sectoral understanding between civil society and business.	BP Deutschland	BBE / Bundesnetzwerk, Bürgerschaftliches Engagement
	Bildungscnt	Bildungscnt's mission is to enable children to learn by supporting schools in modernizing their organization and agenda, aiming at structural reforms and sustainable impact. They do the fundraising, they develop and offer training programs for schools, they give a yearly award etc. Herlitz was the founding member of this initiative and is now the leader of several corporate members, contributing money, people and know-how.	Herlitz PBS AG	Bildungscnt e.V
POLAND	Augustow Academy	The Augustowska Academy is aimed at increasing the job opportunities for the youth and unemployed in the Podlasie region. This is an initiative of BAT Poland, which is being implemented by the Enterprise Development Foundation in cooperation with	British American Tobacco Poland	Enterprise Development

		This is an initiative of BAT Poland, which is being implemented by the Enterprise Development Foundation in cooperation with local authorities, schools and entrepreneurs. The programme has four thematic segments: a) Academy of Entrepreneurship – addressed to secondary school students; b) Academy of Skills – addressed to unemployed young people; c) Academy of Knowledge – addressed to students; d) Academy of Work, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development – addressed to local entrepreneurs and employers. The tasks carried out within the programme include organisation of trainings, practices in companies, competitions and grant programmes.	Tobacco Poland	Development Foundation in Suwalk
	Share Your Meal	The programme is aimed at fighting with the problem of malnutrition among children. It was a Danone initiative, it started in 2003 and it's been going on ever since. The following actions are being organised within the programme: 1) consumers are supporting the programme by buying Danone products with the "Share your meal" logo. Part of the profit from the sale of those products is being donated for meals for children; 2) Danone is financing programme of grants for projects aimed at reducing the problem of malnutrition ; 3) Thousands of volunteers take part in the collection of food (flour, sugar, juices, jams, cornflakes etc) - this campaign is coordinated by the Federation of Polish Food Banks; 4) Charity events, for example a friendly football match between TV Polsat celebrities and Polish artists. The profit from the tickets sale was also donated to the programme.	Danone poland	Federation of polish food banks
AUSTRIA	Nivea family party	Since 1997 each year in the month of July and August the "NIVEA family party" is organised by the pharmaceutical industry company Beiersdorf to support orphans of the SOS Kinderdorf. Beiersdorf is taking over the whole organisation itself and the staff members are included in the organisational work and in the party, and not only in financing the initiative. It became a great joy for everyone and an integral aspect of the company's work.	Beiersdorf GesmbH	SOS Kinderdorf Austria
	Reduction of pesticides	The Austrian food company Billa decided to work together with an opposing NGO and developed a pesticide reduction program, when in 2002, the fruits and vegetables were found in the stores of Billa contained high amounts of pesticides. This brought a big loss of trust, as Billa supplied 40 % of the fruit in Austria. Global 2000, who had conducted the tests and publicised the results, offered to cooperate with a reduction program and a control system. In August 2003, the program was presented for the first time. The real novelty was the indirect education of the farmers which was took place at the production level. Neither one of the two partners would have been able to reach such a comprehensive result(at the producers' level and in public) on their own.	Rewe Group Austria, initiator of partnership was Billa AG	Global 2000
	Stop Domestic Violence	For more than a year, the international cosmetic company, The Body Shop has been conducting the worldwide campaign "Stop domestic violence!" in 30 countries. In Austria, this cooperation is conducted with the NGO "Platform against domestic violence". In June 2005 The Body Shop and the Platform created an additional "Alliance of Austrian companies against domestic violence", and got the Social Minister Ursula Haubner on board. This alliance is aimed at proving that domestic violence has human and economic consequences at the work place and has to be stopped.	The Body Shop	Austrian Women's Shelter Network/Information Centre Against Violence
	Caritas Schülerfonds (Fund for pupils)	Philips Austria offers poor families a financial support to pupils to support their school fees. CARITAS is executing the fund, using its social and family counselling system around Austria. Poor children get school materials, clothes and learning aids, as well as a special 'voucher', which provides support when the child has left elementary school (apprenticeship training places, work placements or help with a diploma thesis).	Philips Austria	Caritas
	Sponsorship	The partnership was launched to help MSF to increase its funds and obtain public recognition. Mobilkom committed itself to help MSF, by making advertising campaigns and taking decisions about the matter together; the presentation of MSF aims/projects to employees of the company. Mobilkom uses client database to promote fundraising for MSF via SMS and provides satellite phones to MSF.	Mobilkom	Ärzte ohne Grenzen (Médecins sans Frontières =MSF)
ITALY	A meal for the needy	The partnership aimed at supporting the canteens for the needy in Milan (Opera di San Francesco) and Rome (Comunità di Sant'Egidio), as well as at the national level. The partnership between Unilever and Opera di San Francesco developed as follows: 1) a cause related marketing program and brand charity to donate free meals to 20 NGOs, covering all the Country's regions; 2) a basic needs research was conducted in order to better understand the needs for free meals around Italy and the concrete needs of individual NGOs committed to the cause; 3) an informal NGO network was created and every year the funds which have been raised are donated to the network; 4) communication plan with advertising + special initiatives were carried out every year in order to involve users and non users of Svelto brand and to raise citizens' awareness on the social problem	Unilever	Association "Opera di San Francesco per i Poveri"
	European charter of patients rights	ACN and Merck cooperated to recognize and assert patient's rights in Europe, by drafting a European Charter of Patients' Rights, disseminating it and promoting the implementation of these rights at the European and national level. The activities carried out were: drafting of the Charter in collaboration with other citizens' organizations; disseminating the Charter through participation in conferences, ACN website, meetings with government and EU institution representatives, etc.; creating a methodology for monitoring the rights' implementation by citizens and training of the partner organizations; monitoring the rights' implementation in the old 15 EU countries; reporting on the monitoring results and presenting these results in a European conference.	Merck Sharp & Dohme	Cittadinanzattiva



	Obiettivo barriere (Eliminating barriers)	The partnership between J&J Foundation and Cittadinanzattiva aimed at awakening the activism of citizens, especially the disabled, to fight against the barriers that deny access to physically challenged persons (2003 was in fact the year of disability) and eliminate more than 100 of these barriers. The project, launched in March 2003, consisted in: a communication campaign; the collection of "bad and best practices", the assessment of architectural barriers (in partnership with local civic and handicapped civic organisations; the initiative " I eliminate a barrier"; educational activities in schools; a camper tour through 24 cities to raise awareness of the projects and involve local public administrations; the IV week of active citizenship	Fondazione J&J	Cittadinanzattiva
	Un mondo per tutti (A world for everyone)	The project is one of the first programmes conducted by Medecins Sans Frontiers (MSF) in Italy. It was carried out to address the critical living and health conditions of irregular immigrants in Southern Italy, in particular in Campania, with the aim of also promoting their integration. The project included the setting up of medical centres in local public health offices (ASL), as well as increasing awareness of TIM employees.	TIM Italia S.p.A.	Medecins Sans Frontieres
	Meters replacement campaign	As part of its information campaign to replace old meters, selected two consumers associations, Cittadinanzattiva and UNC (Unione Nazionale Consumatori), as its partner, with the aim to guarantee a much more effective and capillary customer's action and support. Several activities were carried out: customer's information and support; advocacy about communication tools; central call center for the customers; 2 national Focus groups (in Milan and Rome); 10 local workshops; information and cooperation among local authorities; involvement of the Authority for the Energy	Enel s.p.a.	Cittadinanzattiva-onlus
MALTA	Costal zone managment	Since Gaia Foundation is the NGO responsible of undertaking the work of integrated coastal management at Ramla l-Hamra, a bay in Gozo, it asked the support of Bank of Valletta. It is a 3 year project, and during the first year the following activities had been done: financial support, research, management reports of the work to be undertaken, preparation and research to ensure that the environment is conserved well by understanding the ecological balance and finding volunteers to help undertake the work needed in the whole project	Bank of Valletta	GALA Foundation
	Awareness about the environment amongst students	KSU organizes a big fair on the University campus spread over three large areas and the theme is decided based on the the NGOs that participate. In collaboration with KSU, HSBC plc. launched an acquisition campaign to attract more students to open student accounts. In return the Bank embarked on a scheme of rewarding students with life-long gift – a tree for every student who opened an account	HSBC	Kunsill Studenti Universitarji (KSU) – University Students' Council
	Educate children through sports	The partnership between APS and Youth Football association aimed at educating children through sports. Activities developed were the training of youth by nurseries, organisation of football tournaments among nurseries on professional grounds	Apostleship of Prayer Savings (APS)Bank.	Youth football Association
	Promote young entrepreneurship	The general aim of the project that involved APS Bank and Startup was to instil a spirit of entrepreneurship among the Maltese population, emphasising its focus on students and youth. They created a closer cooperation between the academic and business, focusing, in particular, on equipping students with the necessary skills for effective participation in and contribution to commercial activities in Malta	APS Bank.	Startup Malta Foundation for Entrepreneurship
	Natural reserve for wild birds	APS Bank and Birdlife started a partnership for setting up a natural reserve for wild birds at is-Simar. This initiative expanded to other educational programmes	APS Bank.	Birdlife (Malta)

## ANNEX 2

### ***Cyprus relation on CSR Corporate Social Responsibility and the NGO sector: The Case of Cyprus<sup>6</sup>***

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is becoming increasingly important for the competitiveness and sustainable success in every branch and every size of European enterprises (one need only refer to the European Community "Green Paper 2001"<sup>7</sup> to understand the magnitude and the importance given to the CSR concept at the EU level). They are becoming increasingly aware that above average social and environmentally friendly business practices result in direct economic value and play an active role in shaping social, economic and ecological change. The same argument however cannot be said for Cyprus where the notion/development of CSR is at best at an embryonic stage.

The local private business sector's contribution in Cyprus in CSR projects/initiatives tends, more often than not, to be very limited, because of the scattering of funds over many organizations and the emphasis on one-off activities rather than on strengthening the organizations that offer them. We have yet to see any real strategic cross-sector collaborations initiated by big companies (i.e., viewing partnerships as initiatives that if properly constructed, will provide a return on their investment). While some important work on Corporate Social Responsibility has been done by the major private financial institutions, specifically banks, almost all has originated from the banks by setting up their own non-profit foundations and by encouraging and supporting their employees in volunteering to help these entities to pursue their social activities.

For example, while the Bank of Cyprus Oncology Centre regularly cooperates with Europa Donna, the Pancyprian Association of Cancer Patients and Friends (PASYKAF) and the Make a Wish Foundation, a more careful examination of their cooperation will show that it mainly concerns one-off events rather than a more permanent alliance/coalition.

As second example is that of the Cyprus Popular Bank which sponsors as well as organises events which address the needs of various social groups. During the

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<sup>6</sup> This short report aims to fill the gap created by the inability of identifying any true and reliable Corporate Social Responsibility partnerships between NGOs and private businesses in Cyprus that would fit the criteria of the study/research initiated in the framework of the project *CITIZENS AS CSR PARTNERS: Building CSR partnerships between companies and citizens' organizations*.

<sup>7</sup> CSR is defined as a concept that serves as a basis for enterprises in voluntarily integrating social issues and environmental responsibilities into their company activities and in the interaction with their stakeholders (e.g. employees, shareholders, investors, consumers, public authorities, non-governmental organisations, etc.). Being socially responsible means not only meeting legal requirements, but going one step further and investing in human capital, the environment, and in relationships with other stakeholders.

past few years, special attention was paid to activities that contribute to children's welfare, particularly the welfare of children with special needs. The most important event is the RADIOMARATHON which it jointly organised with the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation. Radiomarathon which is by far the biggest charity event in Cyprus has raised about CYP 14.000.000 during the past 14 years, for the benefit of needy children every year through a series of fund-raising events that begin a month prior to the two - day celebrations.

Another example has to do with our research conducted in many websites of big companies. While many companies had a separate section on Corporate Social Responsibility on their websites, there was hardly any information presented there regarding CSR nor was there any evidence of any CSR partnerships or projects implemented in cooperation with groupings of Civil Society.

Notwithstanding the slow introduction/development of the notion of Corporate Social Responsibility in the private business sector there is also the absence of a legal structure that offers incentives for individuals or corporations to support non-profit and charitable organizations<sup>8</sup>. Except for a few large, well-established organizations, NGOs tend to be small, fragile, and dependent on volunteers and in-kind donations from members.

As a result, while the NGO<sup>9</sup> sector appears to be flourishing in Cyprus, it has never gained the level of visibility and focus it deserves and is not sustainable without significant foreign funding. It has also inhibited the development of CSR since only lately Cypriot NGOs begin to understand that their goals and those of the private business sector need not be perceived as diametrically opposite on a spectrum of values and motivation. However, much time, education (capacity building<sup>10</sup>) and money is still needed for Cypriot NGOs to understand that their unique qualities of creativity, commitment, and

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<sup>8</sup> This has also resulted to an absence of a social dialogue/debate on CSR. Although very specific in nature, lately, there has been an initiative by British American Tobacco (BAT) - Cyprus to institutionalize a debate on CSR with a couple of meetings taking place between the company, local stakeholders, a few NGOs and governmental agencies (i.e., Ministry of Health etc). Although, BAT Cyprus suspended its operations in Cyprus since 2005 it aims to continue the CSR dialogue in the future.

<sup>9</sup> It is important to stress the absence of a legal framework for the recognition of the legal personality of Non-Governmental Organisations in Cyprus. Currently, all NGOs, private companies, and even football and athletic clubs alike can be registered, with much bureaucratic difficulties at times, under a very general law (i.e., The Law on Charity and Foundation Organizations).

<sup>10</sup> The lack of NGO Resource centers in Cyprus has largely inhibited any attempts to build and develop and a strong non-profit sector in Cyprus in this context important issues such as management training, access to information on funding from foundations and corporations, building a positive legal and fiscal environment of the sector, promoting of self-awareness of the sector, assisting with the professional development of staff and volunteers, developing efficient information flow mechanisms, building local infrastructure to service local non-profit organisations, providing information on possibilities of participating in the activities of NGOs networks, facilitating the learning process and exchange of know-how between similar organisations operating in Europe and by this way benefiting from the expertise already existing in the region relies heavily, and at a great cost, to the efforts of the local NGOs alone!

enthusiasm can work easily well in delivering sustainable development solutions in a variety of local settings and cultures. It is important to note that in the framework of the rather extensive and detailed CIVICUS: Civil Society Index Report for Cyprus for 2005 there was no mention of Corporate Social Responsibility as a strategic priority/orientation for Cyprus NGOs.

## **ANNEX 3**

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