



EUROPEAN COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE ON PARTNERSHIP



stimulate *exchange*
review *disseminate*

CPR Dialogue with EU-level Partners, 15 June 2023

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REGIO DDG.02 / Coordination of programmes

Partnership Principle
& Code of Conduct
on Partnership
(ECCP)

European
Community of
Practice on
Partnership (ECoPP)

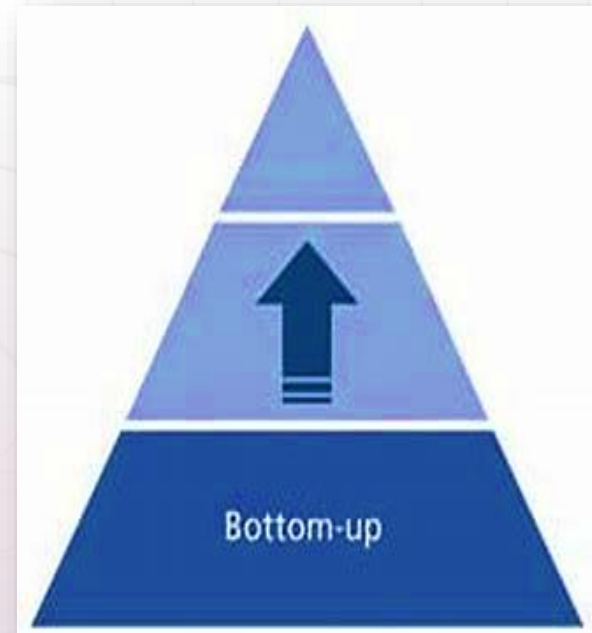
Reflections
on ECCP

Work in
groups

Partnership
principle in
Article 8 of the
CPR



Multi-level
governance



Bottom-up
approach

Partnership principle in Article 8 of the CPR:

Partnership and multi-level governance

For the Partnership Agreement and each programme, each Member State shall organise and implement **a comprehensive partnership** in accordance with:

- its institutional and legal framework
- taking into account the specificities of the Funds

Partnership principle in Article 8 of the CPR

That partnership shall include **at least** the following partners

such as:
environmental partners, NGOs,
bodies responsible for
promoting social inclusion,
fundamental rights, rights of
persons with disabilities,
gender equality and
non-discrimination

(a) regional, local,
urban and other
public authorities;

(b) economic and
social partners;

(c) relevant bodies
representing civil
society,

(d) research
organisations and
universities, where
appropriate.

Key issues to watch:

- Are partners well informed ?



- Are partners well consulted ?



- Do partners have an impact on the final decisions ?



- Are partners offered capacity-building opportunities ?

Some MS have established proper partnership with the relevant partners; in some MS there are **gaps**, e.g.

- **involving the relevant bodies** representing civil society, environmental partners, and bodies responsible for promoting social inclusion, fundamental rights, rights of persons with disabilities, gender equality and non-discrimination
- transparent consultation mechanisms with partners including a **feedback** mechanism

Code of Conduct on Partnership:

Commission Delegated Regulation 240/2014

Article 18.1:

The Commission shall set up a cooperation mechanism called the **European Community of Practice on Partnership**, which shall be common to the ESI Funds and open to interested Member States, managing authorities and organisations representing the partners at Union level.

The European Community of Practice on Partnership shall facilitate exchange of experience, capacity building, as well as dissemination of relevant outcomes.

ECOPP

Art. 18 of the European Code of Conduct on Partnership in the Commission Delegated Regulation no 240/2014 (the Regulation applies during the 2021-2027 programming period)

Previous initiatives: the community of practice on partnership under ESF Transnational Cooperation Platform (2015-2019)

ECOPP 2021-2027: involves all 2021-27 Common Provision Regulation and Common Agriculture Policy funds

CPR funds: ERDF/CF/JTF, ESF+, AMIF/ISF/BMVI, EMFAF,
and EAGF/EAFRD

Framework set-up: 2021

Launch: April 2022

Membership

1st call (2021) – Setting up the network

159 ECoPP members: representatives of partners as stipulated in Art 8. of the CPR and Managing Authorities and Coordination bodies in MS

Programme authorities from almost all Member States (except Greece, Ireland)

2nd call (2023) – Strengthening the network

Partners from underrepresented Member States (CY, DK, EL, HR, IR, LT, LU, MT) and certain categories of partners (economic and social partners, urban authorities, research and academia, EU umbrella organisations)



Objectives and tasks

The main aim of the ECoPP is to offer a genuine forum for practitioners at all levels of funds' implementation to exchange partnership practices.

- Facilitate exchange of experience regarding partnership
- Stimulate capacity building
- Disseminate relevant outcomes (good practices/ innovative approaches)
- Review the application and functioning of the European code of conduct on partnership and prepare proposals for a potential update



Modus operandi

Annual plenary sessions

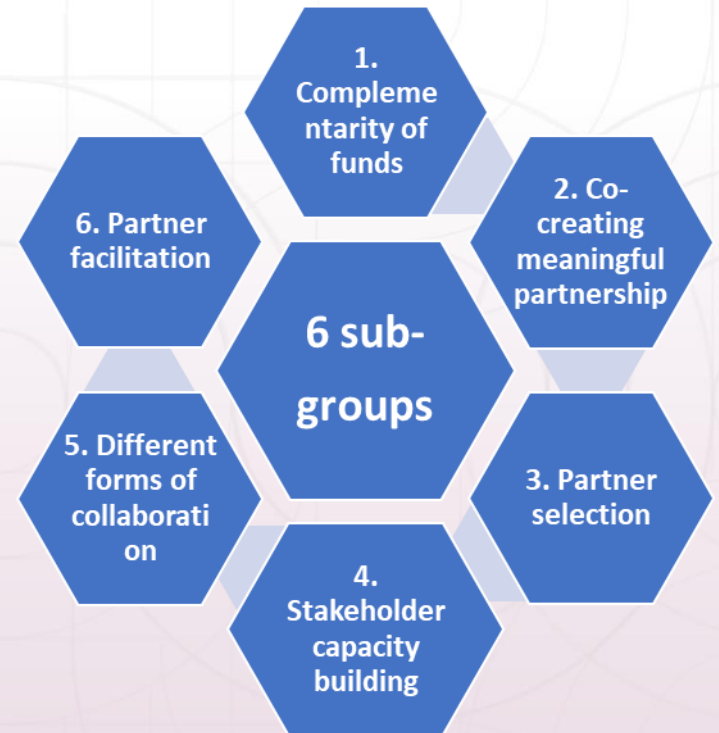
6 working **thematic sub-groups** working between plenary sessions
(approx. 120 members participating actively)

Gather and exchange relevant practices from different funds, Member States, regions and local areas relating to their chosen theme

Extract and explore information gathered in order to share key lessons with others

Create an output/s that draws on emerging findings and lessons to share with all ECoPP members

Present output/s at the second ECoPP meeting in a format of their choice



Sub-group 1: Complementarity of funds

Focus: How to promote synergies in partnership approaches among different EU funds, programmes and projects, European regions and governance levels

Guiding questions:

What are the benefits of ensuring synergy between partnership approaches across funds?

What is your experience of working in partnership with other funds at programme/project level (during preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation)?

What challenges are faced at programme/project level with regard to synergies between funds? How can they be addressed?

How can synergies between funds be improved? Which actors need to be involved to improve synergy?

Sub-group 2: Co-creating a meaningful partnership

Focus: How to involve relevant partners in the preparation of strategic documents such as partnership agreements and programmes through organisation of exchanges among stakeholders, consultation of documents and feedback mechanisms, etc.

Guiding questions:

What do we mean by co-creation?

What are the benefits of involving relevant partners in the design of partnership strategies?

What is your experience of involving partners in the design of key strategies (including partnership agreements, programme and project strategies)? How is/was stakeholder exchange organised/conducted? How is/was documentation made accessible? What kind of feedback mechanisms are/were used?

What challenges are faced at programme/project level with regard to involving partners as co-designers? How can they be addressed?

How can co-creating partnership with stakeholders be improved?

Sub-group 3: Partner selection

Focus: How to ensure that selection of partners process is transparent, balanced and representative with greater diversity in partner selection and fuller consideration of the timing and 'fit' of different inputs.

Guiding questions:

Why is it important to ensure transparent, balanced and representative partners selection?

Which stakeholders tend to be 'excluded' in partner selection processes and why?

What is your experience of selecting partners? How is/was the selection process organised/conducted? What efforts are/were made to ensure greater diversity in partner selection?

How are/were different inputs considered?

What challenges are faced at programme/project level with regard to selecting partners? How can they be addressed?

How can partner selection be improved?

Sub-group 4: Stakeholder capacity building

Focus: How to build the capacity of stakeholders to actively participate in partnership programmes and projects (including support from technical assistance)

Guiding questions:

What are the benefits of building stakeholder capacity for partnership programmes and projects?

What is your experience of building the capacity of stakeholders to actively participate in programmes and projects? How is/was stakeholder capacity building organised/ conducted? What kind of support does/did it receive? Does/did it involve the use of technical assistance? If so, how?

What challenges are faced at programme/project level with regard to the capacity building of stakeholders? How can they be addressed?

How can stakeholder capacity building be improved?

Sub-group 5: Different forms of collaboration

Focus: How other forms of collaboration, including social and civic dialogues, public-private partnerships, networks, consortia, etc. can provide further insights into improving partnership in Cohesion Policy and CPR funds?

Guiding questions:

What do we mean by collaboration? Does it differ from partnership? If so, how?

Why is it useful to look at other forms of collaboration?

What is your experience of working with other forms of collaboration (including social and civic dialogues, public-private partnerships, networks, consortia, as well as others)?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of these forms of collaboration?

What do they share with the EU's partnership principle? And how are they different?

What elements of these different forms of collaboration might enhance implementation of the partnership principle and the ECCP?

Sub-group 6: Partner(ship) facilitation

Focus: How can partners work as facilitators to ensure better stakeholder engagement in programme and project preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects in line with ECCP principles?

Guiding questions:

What do we mean by partnership facilitation? Why is it important to ensure the facilitation of stakeholder engagement in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of partnership programmes and projects?

What is your experience of facilitating stakeholder involvement, e.g. in monitoring committees, calls for proposals, etc.?

Who can/should assume a partnership facilitation role? What specific knowledge, skills and qualities are needed for undertaking partnership facilitation?

What challenges are faced by partnership facilitators? How can they be addressed?

How can partnership facilitation be improved?

16 February 2023, Brussels: The second plenary meeting of the European Community of Practice on Partnership



16 February 2023, Brussels: The second plenary meeting of the European Community of Practice on Partnership (ECoPP)

Presentation of key deliverables

- ❖ Set of recommendations on mechanisms for inter-fund coordination or multi-fund one-stop shops
- ❖ Accountability framework based on examples of both good and bad practices from ECoPP members
- ❖ Collection of (mainly) good examples of partnership practice and related recommendations
- ❖ Guide for different forms of collaboration in multi-stakeholder processes with tips on how to organise this collaboration and necessary competence for the managing authorities
- ❖ Guidelines (golden rules) for partnership facilitation at different stages of the partnership cycle and a proposal for a cross-fund e-platform to assist improved partnership facilitation by promoting exchange around partnership issues and challenges and access to relevant resources
- ❖ Recommendations for amending the European code of conduct on partnership (ECCP) on a range of topics.

Next steps for 2023

- **New call for strengthening the membership of the network**
- **Peer-review process aiming to improve the quality of the deliverables**



Current process: peer reviewing of deliverables (March- June 2023)

Aims

- To reflect on the usefulness of the products for ECoPP members and beyond
- To receive feedback on improvement of the products
- To finalise the products based on feedback received
- To jointly learn how to integrate improvements in implementation of
- the partnership principle in daily work of ECoPP members and beyond

Matching

Improvements regarding the policy frame for partnership: sub-groups 1 and 3

ECCP recommendations: sub-groups 2 and 4

Tools for implementing the partnership principle: sub-groups 5 and 6



Current process: launch of call for new members (mid-June 2023)

**Selecting additional members to the European Community of Practice on Partnership (ECoPP).
The aim is to ensure a more balanced geographical representation and more diversity of its members.**

Priority: applications from the following Member States: Cyprus, Denmark, Greece, Croatia, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, and Malta.

Priority: applications from urban authorities, economic and social partners, research organisations and universities, as well as European umbrella organisations representing the categories above



Core Principles of the ECCP

- **Representation** of partners
- **Transparency** of selection procedures
- **Partner involvement** in Partnership Agreement and programme cycle
- Strengthening of **institutional capacity** of relevant partners
- **Assessment** of partner roles in partnership **performance and effectiveness** during programming period
- **Exchange** of experience and mutual **learning** across ESIF



Key Challenges:

Lack of awareness of
ECCP

Box-ticking and focus
on compliance

Lack of
flexibility/contextual
understanding

Absence of guidance
on range of potential
partners

Absence of
adequate channels
for participation

Practical difficulties
of working in
partnership (time,
skills, etc.)

ECoPP recommendations: Representativeness

| Challenges | Solutions |
|--|--|
| <p>Stakeholders frequently do not have deep knowledge of regulations regarding use of funds</p> <p>Lack of diversity in selection of partners which limits access to new resources and perspectives</p> <p>Emphasis on equitable participation is lacking</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guarantee partnership awareness-raising, training and information activities • More efforts to include diverse partners, e.g. : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sub-regional authorities -cities, municipalities, metropolitan authorities or their representatives and smaller municipalities and rural areas ○ Civil society organisations representing vulnerable and marginalised groups - women, youth, people with disabilities, migrants, etc. ○ Environmental organisations / SMMEs/ Social enterprises /Academic institutions and research centres / Networks, coalitions and partnerships • All partners should be equally represented at all stages of programme cycles • Representatives of umbrella organizations should allow nominations of alternate members for smaller association and interest groups |



ECoPP recommendations: Transparency

Challenges

Accessible information channels and options for stakeholder engagement are limited

Weak connections and information flow between:

- **MAs and Monitoring Committee members**
- **National, regional and local levels**

Solutions

- Clearer guidance should be provided around timeframes, expectations and opportunities for partner input
- Less 'technical' terminology and use of acronyms
- Consideration of social networks and media in order to engage with non-formal entities
- Clearer rules of engagement (as well as procedures) for Monitoring Committees
- General obligation of restitution relating to proposals submitted by a partnership, both with regard to their acceptance and possible rejection.
- Online publication of contents of consultations and their outcomes
- Demonstration of how submitted proposals have tangibly contributed to development of relevant programmes and measures with qualified feedback about whether proposals have been accepted or not



ECoPP recommendations: Involvement

Challenges

Solutions

Meaningful stakeholder involvement often weak, particularly during programme implementation

Many partners feel they lack information and skills to develop 'good' partnership connections

The participation of vulnerable groups is still far from being adequately guaranteed

- Involvement of partners must go beyond 'consultation' and embrace 'co-creation'
- Concerted efforts needed to promote deeper and more continuous participation needed in programme cycles, especially during implementation
- Publicising a partnership's contact persons (in line with GDPR) to ensure effective partnership involvement
- Member States should be required to communicate relevant information promptly and make this information accessible and understandable
- Promote more effective involvement of vulnerable groups such as young people and women
- Participation of relevant partners/stakeholders should be foreseen in design of specific strategies required to fulfil ex-ante conditionalities



ECoPP recommendations: Institutional Strengthening

| Challenges | Solutions |
|--|---|
| <p>Lack of use of technical assistance</p> <p>Not enough attention given to factors that impede full participation of all partners and stakeholders in programmes and projects</p> <p>Institutional strengthening and capacity-building efforts often fragmented</p> <p>Lack of investment in training and support facilities for working in partnership</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical assistance should be used to ensure participation of those constrained by lack of resources, skills, confidence or adequate time • Cover the costs of non-government Monitoring Committee members • Reinforce articulation with ECCP and the roadmap of capacity building in Article 17. • Member States should allocate dedicated capacities (e.g. Office or Officers with a dedicated task description) with the objective of interacting with the representatives of civil society • Partnership skills training should be provided for all with enhancement of skills via training activities and experience sharing • Organise training sessions for partners regarding the functioning of programmes • Monitor training results |



ECoPP recommendations: Review & Assessment

Challenges

Participatory monitoring and evaluation systems that demonstrate added value of partnership impeded by lack of resources and access to appropriate methodologies and enhanced review systems

Solutions

- MAs should report systematically on concrete use of partnership principle
- Develop more participatory review systems
- Integrate review feedback across different levels so learning is fed back into practice
- In reference to Article 15 - A universal obligation of restitution should be established with regard to proposals submitted by a partnership, both concerning their acceptance and possible rejection



ECoPP Recommendations: Exchange of learning

Challenges

Efforts to promote both systematic and dynamic exchanges of learning about working in partnership across multiple levels have not received enough attention

Particular challenge is how to make stronger policy level learning connections

Solutions

- Emphasis should be placed on responsibility of **all** stakeholders to improve exchange and learning
- Co-creation principles, processes and practices should be promoted
- Regular updates on collection of practices in order to learn more strategically from partnership successes and failures
- More proactive information exchanges across multiple levels to deepen awareness and capacity
- Draw Member States' attention to importance, benefits and tools of partnership-based decision-making
- Promote activation of a specialized training module in universities



ECoPP overarching recommendations on ECCP

**Awareness
raising & clarity**

Stronger Vision

**Wider Scope &
linkages**

**Emphasis on
co-creation**

**Greater
Accessibility**

**Reinforcement
of application**

Thank you for your attention!





Q1: In your view, which of the core principles of the European Code of Conduct currently in force is/are the least adequately implemented in the Member States and why?

Q2: In your view, which of the core principles of the European Code of Conduct currently in force is/are adequately reflected and which is/are the least adequately reflected in the Code and should be revisited in the event of an update of the Code?





- What are your suggestions for further awareness-raising around the implementation of the partnership principle across the CPR funds and EAFRD?
- How can your organisation help disseminate good practices regarding partnership?
- What would be the particular instruments/ fora where you could disseminate the recommendations/deliverables of ECoPP?
- What specific measures have your organisations taken/ would like to take to support/ strengthen partnership?
- What are the main issues/challenges of partnership that you would like your group (CPR Partners) to address going forwards?



Discussion in groups

Q1: In your view, which of the core principles of the European Code of Conduct currently in force is/are adequately reflected and which is/are the least adequately reflected in the Code and should be revisited in the event of an update of the Code?

Q2: What would be the particular instruments/ fora where you could disseminate the recommendations/deliverables of ECoPP?

Q3: What specific measures have your organisations taken/ would like to take to support/ strengthen partnership?

Q4: What are the main issues/challenges of partnership that you would like your group (CPR Partners) to address going forwards?

