

SG 4 Stakeholder Capacity Building: ECCP Recommendations

Clarifications of terminology

Partnership is one of the key principles of European Union (EU) fund management and implies close cooperation between the public authorities of the member states at national, regional or local level and with social partners, non-governmental organizations (NGO) and other interested parties. These are partners in line with the multi-level governance approach involved in the preparation of the national "Partnership Agreement" (a document prepared by a Member State setting out that Member State's strategy, priorities and arrangements for using the ESI Funds for effective and efficient way). way to deliver the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, and which is endorsed by the Commission after assessment and dialogue with the Member State concerned)

Beneficiary : public or private body or a natural person, responsible for initiating or initiating and executing operations (*a project, contract, action or group of projects selected by the management authorities of the programmes in question, or under their responsibility, which contributes to the objectives of a priority or priorities*) and, in the context of state aid, the body receiving the aid.

Stakeholder – A **stakeholder** is an individual, group or organization that is affected by the outcome of the implementation of European policies.

Target groups: a set of subjects with homogeneous characteristics in relation to an existing situation or need (i.e. rural areas, disadvantaged areas, young people, students, women, unemployed, ...)

ECCP	Recommendations	Supporting Comments
<p>General text</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is recommended to simplify the Programmes or provide a synthesis of Programmes and adopt a clear communication standard to allow stakeholders and citizens to understand and participate. 2. The European Code on the application of the Partnership Principle: a guide for EU Member States on the meaningful application of the Partnership Principle 3. To ensure inclusiveness and transparency, it is recommended to simplify communication and, for example, it would be convenient to limit the use of acronyms and provide an explanation at the beginning of meetings or documents. 4. Considered (3): Specify that the selected partners have the widest possible representation of all stakeholders. Representatives of all kinds of stakeholders should include youth, students, and women . Considered (4): specify that special attention should be paid to the inclusion of groups that may be affected by the effects of the programmes, but find it difficult to influence 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Simplification is a basic principle to make an issue accessible to a larger number of stakeholders. Therefore, all possible simplification measures must be ensured. 2. The current name of the Regulation in force “European Code of Conduct on Partnership in the framework of the European Structural and Investment Funds” may lead readers to think that the Regulation lays down rules for stakeholders on how to behave. We propose to amend the name of the ECCP to highlight who it is for in a more understandable way. It does not convey the feeling of being a binding regulation intended for managing authorities and administrations to establish appropriate procedures outlining partnership involvement. 3. The use of acronyms does not allow all partnership stakeholders to participate effectively in its activities and creates a feeling of inadequacy, especially for representatives of economic, social and civil society groups who are not experts in the work of the European Structural and Investment Funds programming. It is proposed to include a provision to this effect, to raise awareness about the non-use of

	<p>them, among them young people, but also students and women.</p> <p>5. Considered (9): Extend the following provision also to monitoring and evaluation stages: "Effective partnership should be facilitated by helping relevant partners to strengthen their institutional capacities for programme preparation and implementation. "</p>	<p>acronyms when interacting with external stakeholders and the general public.</p> <p>4. We find it especially important to emphasize the participation of young people and women to ensure an effective and genuinely representative partnership.</p>
Basic principles		
<p>Representativeness (Chapter 2: Articles 2 - 4)</p>	<p>Art. 2.- In order to emphasize the added value of partnership, beyond simply being a condition for the implementation of the Common Disposal Regulation Funds, underline the need to guarantee that the representatives are effectively representative of the issues covered by the partnership process.</p>	<p>The ECCP should include a reference to the Charter of Fundamental Rights and also safeguard compliance with the Charter, including the rights of all partners involved in partnership-based processes.</p> <p>It is important to ensure that participation is from the entire organization of each stakeholder. Stakeholders represent groups/institutions and not a particular citizen. This means groups of citizens, associations (public and private), communities, representatives of society and the economy. In the case of a single person designated by the stakeholder involved in the process, it is not enough to involve a person as representative of the stakeholder if, specifically, the designated person does not make significant contributions related to the technical issue under discussion. This creates the risk of simple formal commitments that do not generate any substantial added value. It is suggested to identify representatives</p>

	<p>Interested parties must have a thorough understanding of the European rules governing the use of funds.</p>	<p>with the potential to establish connections with others in the stakeholder organization that possess the necessary qualities/competencies/merits.</p> <p>Training and information activities should be ensured during the programming period to ensure that stakeholders have adequate knowledge of current regulations and adequate awareness and skills related to collaborative/partnership work. This will allow a better understanding of the issues related to the definition, management and evaluation of Programs.</p>
<p>Transparency (Chapter 3: Articles 5 - 7)</p>	<p>Chapter 3: Article 5, first paragraph: Proposal: Make the following text stronger “Member States and managing authorities shall consult By doing so, they will keep them ... -</p> <p>Chapter 3: Article 5, second paragraph: Strengthen the following text: “.... . Member States shall take into account the need to:</p>	<p>Reason: To develop programmes based on real local needs, Member States and Managing Authorities <u>should consult</u> relevant partners. In this sense, the role of the local and regional authorities and local communities should be emphasized, facilitating the implementation of the principle of subsidiarity and the bottom-up approach.</p> <p>Reason: In order to develop partnership agreements and programmes according to local needs and challenges, Member States and Managing Authorities <u>should strive for good cooperation</u> with relevant partners taking into account their possibilities and needs for better development of financing programmes. In addition, <u>they need to improve their own institutional capacity</u> to respond to local challenges related to the consultation process, such as: tight deadlines for</p>

		partners to review and comment on key preparatory documents and draft programmes, lack of visibility, gaps in dissemination of information consultation. and on the result of the query.
Intervention (Chapter 3: Articles 5 - 9)	<p>It is suggested to promote the effective participation of young people, including students and women.</p> <p>It is suggested to promote forms of continuous participation of the interested parties throughout the cycles of the programme and the project, not only at the beginning or at the end.</p> <p>It might be useful to also involve youth organizations, such as the Polish Council of Youth Organizations and Fridays For Future.</p> <p>Proposal Art.6, first paragraph: Member States will involve relevant partners, including representatives of the local and regional level , in accordance with</p> <p>Proposal Art.8, first paragraph: Member States will involve relevant partners, including representatives of the local and regional level, in accordance with</p>	<p>This promotes the participation of young people and women, which is still far from being adequately guaranteed.</p> <p>Reason : In order to identify development needs, set priorities and specific objectives and ensure an integrated approach to the use of ESI funds, Member States should emphasize the involvement of local level representatives, especially local and regional authorities, to ensure that challenges of local communities will be addressed by the Partnership Agreement and funding programmes. In this way, Member States could exclude situations where less developed regions cannot catch up with already more developed areas, which could have the consequence that less developed regions cannot be considered as eligible beneficiaries of different funds.</p>
Institutional strengthening (Chapter 6: Article 17)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "The managing authority will make use of technical assistance..." 2. Member States will subsidize the time, expertise and networking costs of non-governmental members of ESF or use technical assistance in monitoring committees through long-term systematic grant schemes in order to 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make the text stronger. 2. Cover the costs of non-governmental members of the Monitoring Committee (MC): this could take the form of, for example, subcontracting to coordinating organizations (for example, based on 3 tender offers, or directly to the contact person or advisory board for the promotion of a

	<p>train and inform smaller organizations and citizens.</p> <p>3. Member States will assign specific capacities (e.g. offices or officials with a specific job description) with the aim of interacting with representatives of civil society and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - help them organize if necessary; - organize training sessions, workshops, meetings, consultations, etc. for them; - operate a funding scheme to support the capacities of partners (working time, 	<p>partnership culture), which brings together all MC members representing a specific field (e.g. environment, disability, gender equality, ethnic minorities, etc.); these could refinance MC members, for example through an assignment agreement, with the experts helping them by following the terms of a specific business contract. This type of funding will be long-term and systematic for all MCs and all their non-governmental members. (Covering MC members' travel expenses to meetings and supporting the purchase of publications or training expenses is fine but, at the same time, not sufficient in itself). The predictability of these long-term financing tools is necessary.</p> <p>3. Training sessions, workshops, meetings with officials, etc.: to develop the understanding, awareness, knowledge, etc., of the partners regarding the operation of the programmes, etc. It is recommended that the training sessions focus on the rules for the management or application of the funds, including public procurement, state aid, horizontal principles, additionality, etc.</p>
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	<p>experience, networking, etc.) who are active in the partnership-based structures of EU funds.</p> <p>The ECoPP encourages civil society to rely on EU funds to organize themselves under umbrellas in order to ensure representation in partnership-based processes and also ensure two-way communication between authorities and different levels of civil society. (national, regional, local).</p> <p>In reference to article 17, it is suggested that training can be promoted , as well as the exchange of experiences, involving both the staff of the Stakeholders and the staff designated by the entities in charge of the Funds (that is, management authorities,...), so that the professional promotes the development of these figures and the partnership process is adequately managed both by the administrators of the Fund/Programme/Policy and by the partners.</p> <p>It is recommended to monitor the results of the training to improve the training activities following the principle of 'learning by doing'.</p> <p>Proposal: Managing authorities should strengthen their institutional capacity for the development of better cooperation with partners and stakeholders and better preparation and application processes, paying special attention to facilitating the participation of target groups.</p>	<p>Improve the information on processes that reaches the public, so that it is closer and more effective if it is contrasted with the public that is further removed from the bureaucratic and fund management processes. It is also necessary to make it reach through digital media and social networks.</p> <p>Simply providing technical support is not enough. Instead, it is necessary to promote the skills of people working in partnership entities, either through training activities (e.g. partnership skills training for all stakeholders) or by sharing experiences. This would ensure a more knowledgeable and resourceful constituency, which is well prepared to provide useful information because the people involved would understand the context they are expected to address.</p> <p>Reason: The high bureaucracy represents a great challenge for a good cooperation of the partners with the managing authority. Therefore, there is a need to reduce bureaucracy in the processes of preparation and implementation of the programmes. In addition, the success of the application process is greatly influenced</p>
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		<p>by challenges such as the complexity of the cohesion funds application process, tight deadlines in funding programmes, difficult to understand call descriptions and language barriers.</p>
<p>Review and evaluation (Chapters 4 and 5: Articles 10 - 16)</p>	<p>1. It is suggested to promote more creative forms of ongoing stakeholder engagement and partnership (i.e. positive incentives, public consultations and hearings, awards, lists, and examples of good practice) throughout the programme and project cycles , not just at the beginning or end.</p> <p>2. Proposal for a new article 12.a “Strengthening of the alliance through the co-creation of solutions”.</p> <p>Art. 12 Strengthening partnership through co-created solutions</p> <p>1) The monitoring committee defines the standards of knowledge about European funds and the (soft) skills related to partnership and co-creation that the members of the monitoring committees must have.</p> <p>2. The monitoring committee appoints an alliance facilitator, independent of the entities that make up the monitoring committee, who guarantees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. maintenance of standards of knowledge and (soft) skills of committee members b. application of the principles of partnership in the monitoring committee c. facilitation of co-creation processes . 	<p>Stronger and more creative reviews could foster partnership as well as greater stakeholder inclusion.</p> <p>The proposal for a new article is a joint proposal made by SG 2 and SG 4. Regarding SG 4, the main focus is on the creation of an alliance facilitator, a figure dedicated to promoting the implementation of the partnership principle actively and tangibly. The role should be assigned to an independent person or entity that can ensure tertiary status and whose functions include being a liaison between stakeholders and managing authorities.</p> <p>Because?</p> <p>The actual ECCP appears to be a "procedure" to provide the correct way to choose partners and ensure the ability to participate in the decision-making process. In fact, very often participation in the committee's work is reduced to accepting or submitting comments on the Management Authority's proposal. A new article should strengthen and increase the meaning of co-creation in</p>

	<p>3. Managing authorities should ensure that partners can participate in the co-creation of the main assumptions related to: calls for proposals, progress reports, programme monitoring and evaluation.</p> <p>4. The co-creation will be carried out through the organization of workshops or in other ways determined by the monitoring committee.</p> <p>5. The monitoring committee will approve the annual programming of co-creation workshops in terms of preparation, calls, progress reports, monitoring and evaluation of programmes.</p> <p>6. Proposals for the co-creation of new innovative solutions that improve partnership, participation and communication to the public may be submitted to the Commission and, if they are assessed as effective, receive incentives, such as an increase in the % of co-financing, for example.</p>	<p>the decision-making process. Provide an opportunity for common reflection on the relationship between the problem, goals, actions and expected effects.</p> <p>The main objective of SG2 and SG4 is to strengthen co-creation and partnership in the implementation of EU funds. We do not look at this problem from the formal perspective, as it is well covered in the current ECCP articles. We want to strengthen the "soft" and immeasurable circumstances of co-creation and partnership.</p>
<p>Exchange and learning (Chapter 6: Article 18)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Commission will update and amend the collection of good partnership practice examples based on information collected through the European Community of Practice on Partnership, as well as by surveying partners and Member States on their experiences and encouraging Member States to do the same. 2. The Commission will organize workshops for Member States' managing authorities on the 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For example, propose to regularly (e.g. twice a year) update the collection of good practices and draw the attention of Member States to the importance, benefits and tools of partnership-based decision-making.

	<p>need, benefits and tools in terms of partnership.</p> <p>3. It may be useful to promote the activation of a specialized training module in universities in the fields of law, economics, public administration and management engineering aimed at young people and professionals from associations.</p>	<p>3. Consequently, it would generate the interest and involvement of the youngest from their educational and training itineraries.</p> <p>It would also allow for the creation of a potential base of specialized personnel who can be upgraded in a variety of related career paths, as well as upskilling partnership professionals.</p>
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