

## **Lisbon minus 3: Evaluating CSR partnerships**

Rome, August 2006

### **Foreword**

In 2005, the Commission called for a fresh start on the Lisbon agenda, recognizing explicitly that CSR *“can play a key role in contributing to sustainable development while enhancing Europe’s innovative potential and competitiveness”*.

About three years before the 2010 deadline, it is evident that, since the Lisbon Council, CSR practices have been largely developing in the EU. Nevertheless, it is very difficult to establish how much these practices are effectively contributing to sustainable development, and especially to the achievement of the social and environmental public policy objectives identified in the Communication of the Commission COM(2006) 136 final<sup>1</sup> (improvements in public health, innovations that address societal problems, greater respect of human rights and environmental protection, poverty reduction, etc.).

One of the CSR instruments used by private companies and promoted by the EU Commission to contribute to these objectives are partnerships with external stakeholders, and especially citizens’ organizations. The Active Citizenship Foundation (FONDACA) has recently carried out a research study on these partnerships and one of the main conclusions of the research does precisely regard the lack of evaluation of their results (outcomes and outputs), linked to a lack of methodology and indicators<sup>2</sup>. The present project proposal is thus aimed at contributing to improving the evaluation of these partnerships, providing the partners with simple instruments which could be used in all EU countries.

### **General aim and object**

The general aim of the project is to increase the effectiveness of partnerships between companies and citizens’ organizations as a CSR tool, thus contributing to the fulfilment of the 2010 Lisbon Agenda objectives.

The object of this proposal is the developing, implementation and dissemination of a methodology for evaluating partnerships between private companies and citizens’ organizations, on the basis of existing practices, standards and guidelines for good partnerships.

### **Rationale**

- CSR is one of the instruments for reaching the objectives of the Lisbon agenda in 2010 identified by the EU institutions.
- At the core of the EU CSR strategy it is the engagement of companies with external stakeholders in the pursuit in common actions of general interest on a partnership basis.
- Among the partnerships carried out in this framework, many of them involve as main actors private companies and citizens’ organizations. This kind of partnerships could be able to

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<sup>1</sup> Communication of the Commission “Implementing the partnership for growth and jobs: making Europe a pole of excellence on CSR”, 22 March 2006.

<sup>2</sup> “Not Alone: A research on successful partnerships between private companies and citizens’ organizations in Europe”, July 2006. This research was carried out in 9 European Union countries between 2005 and 2006.

contribute substantially to the objectives identified in the Lisbon Agenda and the related documents, though there is need for further studies.

- The research of FONDACA on this topic<sup>3</sup>, as well as the resulting guidelines for good partnerships in Europe, have both highlighted the lack of appropriate and effective evaluation of partnerships, meaning a structured and shared process using pre-set criteria to measure their success.
- It is therefore necessary to increase the ability of private companies and citizens' organizations to evaluate together the impact of their partnerships, so that this CSR crucial instrument can further develop.
- The setting up, implementation and dissemination of a methodology for the evaluation of these partnerships can be an effective answer to this need.

### **Specific objectives**

- To contribute to a clear definition of the main features and problems of the existing partnerships' evaluation processes.
- To define criteria or standards for the evaluation of these partnerships, based on existing practices and tools.
- To set up, implement and disseminate a methodological proposal and instrument for the evaluation of partnerships, involving actors of actual partnerships from 15 European countries.
- To promote the development of partnerships' evaluation strategies and activities as part of the CSR policies of private companies and citizens' organizations in Europe;
- To favor the development of CSR partnerships, especially in new member States and acceding countries.

### **Development of the project**

The project will be developed as follows.

#### **1. Preparatory phase**

##### *1) Preliminary studies – December 2006/February 2007*

The project staff will gather and analyze:

- The existing documents, research papers and case studies on evaluation of partnerships, and in particular on those between citizens' organizations and companies;
- The existing methodologies, standards, guidelines and indicators for the evaluation of business-citizens partnerships.

##### *2) Drafting of preliminary proposal – March/April 2007*

An intermediate report summarizing the major findings that will have emerged during the preliminary studies and a first methodological proposal and instrument for evaluating the partnerships will be drafted and sent to the partners.

##### *3) Identification of national partnerships - December 2006/April 2007*

Each partner will have to identify one national partnership and make a first contact with all the parties to verify their interest in experimenting the evaluation methodology and instrument on their own partnership.

##### *4) Partners' meeting – May 2007*

The partners' meeting, which will take place in Rome and last for 2 days, will be aimed at:

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<sup>3</sup> “Not Alone: A research on successful partnerships between private companies and citizens' organizations in Europe”, July 2006.

- Discussing and improving the proposed methodology and instrument for partnerships' evaluation;
- Discussing the carrying out of the national tests on the methodology and evaluation tool;
- Discussing the organization of the September seminar in Lisbon;
- Discussing the organization of the national training seminars.

5) *Final draft* – May/June 2007

- The project staff will finalize the draft methodology on the basis of the discussion during the partners' meeting and will send it to the partners.
- The partners will send the methodology to all the partnerships' protagonists in order to get their final commitment for participating in the project and experimenting the methodology.

6) *First tests of the methodology* – June/August 2007

- The partners will test the applicability and effectiveness of the methodology on the national partnership they have identified.
- They will make the evaluation together with the business and citizen actors of the partnership, acting as a facilitator and collecting the feedback / improvement proposals of the 2 (or more) parties on the methodology itself (including the evaluation criteria or standards).
- Each partner will draft a brief report in English containing a short description of the partnership, the results of the evaluation and the proposed modifications to the methodology. The report will be sent to the project staff.

## 2. Main activities

7) *Lisbon seminar* – September 2007

- The Lisbon seminar will be a European event, lasting 1,5 day. Its main objective will be to share both the methodology and the experience in applying it with stakeholders from the 15 project countries, in order to produce a final document, which will take into account the different experiences.
- It will take place in Lisbon in order to increase the awareness of all participants, and especially the Portuguese EU Presidency, regarding the importance of CSR partnerships in view of the Lisbon Agenda deadline.

### Organization of the seminar:

The seminar will be composed of 2 plenary and 1 workshop sessions:

- The first plenary session will be dedicated to the presentation / discussion of the project and the draft evaluation methodology.
- The workshop session will be aimed at presenting and discussing the first national experiments of the methodology in restricted groups, so that every participant will have the possibility to comment on these concrete applications on the basis of its own experience.
- The last plenary session will be dedicated to reporting the workshop results and shaping the final version of the methodology.

### Participants in the seminar:

- The participants in the seminar will be about 70, including the FONDACA project staff.
- Each national partner organization will send its member in charge of the project and invite the actors of the partnerships that will be presented during the workshops, as well as another private companies or stakeholder interested and/or having an experience in the evaluation of CSR partnerships (representatives of public institutions, trade unions, scholars, experts, other citizens' organizations, etc.). The number of private companies and stakeholders (especially public

institutions and NGOs) coming from Portugal will be higher since the seminar will take place in Lisbon during the Portuguese EU Presidency.

8) *Final version of the methodology* – September/October 2007

- The project staff will finalize the methodology document on the basis of the seminar results, as well as the brief evaluation reports on the national partnerships.
- The staff will send the final version to the partners.

9) *Translation and printing of the methodology* – October/November 2007

- Each partner will be responsible for translating and printing the final methodology in its own language.

### **3. Follow-up activities**

10) *15 National Seminars* – November/December 2007

- Each partner will organize a 1-day seminar aimed at training at least 10 participants (citizens' organizations and private companies) in the use of the evaluation methodology. Each seminar will include the presentation of the methodology and instrument, as well as group work to practice on partnerships in which the participants are involved.
- Each partner will send a brief report in English to the project team on the results of the training seminar.
- The participants will be invited to report to the project team on the further application of the evaluation methodology in their partnerships.

11) *Dissemination of the methodology* – November/December 2007

- The evaluation methodology document will be posted on the partners' websites.
- The printed version of the final text will be distributed by the project partners to the participants in the national seminars and sent to all participants in the Lisbon seminar, as well as a selected set group of NGOs, businesses, institutions and other stakeholders. The identification of the target group will mainly be done on the basis of the participation / interest of the identified bodies in CSR partnerships.

12) *Communication* - November/December 2007

- Information on the project and the evaluation methodology will be inserted in the internal and external communication instruments (newsletter, social report, etc.) of FONDACA, the partner organizations, the companies and citizens' organizations participating in the Lisbon and the national seminars.

13) *On-line database* – September/December 2007

- The project staff will set up an on-line database on the FONDACA website in which all the experiences of partnerships presented and discussed during the different seminars or later reported by the participants will be inserted, together with other relevant experiences collected during the preparatory studies.

14) *Interactive Forum* – October/December 2007

- The project staff will set up an online forum in the FONDACA website in which every organization, company or any other interested person will have the possibility to ask questions on the use of the evaluation methodology, as well as to report its own experience in its implementation.

## Timing

The activities of the project will be developed during 12 months from 22 December 2006 till 21 December 2007, as follows:

Months / Phases	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1) Preliminary studies	X	X	X										
2) Drafting of the preliminary report				X	X								
3) Identification of national partnership	X	X	X	X	X								
4) Partners meeting						X							
5) Final draft						X	X						
6) Testing of the methodology							X	X	X				
7) Lisbon seminar										X			
8) Final version methodology										X	X		
9) Translation / printing of the methodology											X	X	
9) National seminars												X	X
10) Dissemination activities												X	X
11) Communication activities												X	X
12) On-line database										X	X	X	X
13) Interactive forum											X	X	X

## Partnerships

The partner organizations are based in the following countries:

Austria                      Hungary                      Bulgaria  
Denmark                      Malta                              Romania  
France                        Poland  
Germany                      Slovakia  
Italy                            Slovenia  
Portugal  
Spain  
United Kingdom

## Expected results / Outputs

- A multi-stakeholder debate on the effective contribution of business-citizens partnerships to European public policy objectives;
- A methodology for the evaluation of these partnerships in Europe, shared and discussed by around 70 partnerships' actors from 15 European Union countries;
- The training of about 150 citizens' organizations and private companies in the use of this evaluation tool;

- The insertion of the proposed standards and methodology in the CSR strategy of all citizens' organizations and enterprises involved in the project (partners and participants in the Lisbon and in the national seminars);
- A database containing the description and the measured results of partnerships between private companies and citizens' organizations from all Europe;
- An interactive forum supporting citizens' organizations and private companies in the implementation of the evaluation methodology.

### **Impact and/or multiplier effects and dissemination of results**

One of the project objectives is to have all citizens' organizations and enterprises involved in the project to include the proposed standards and methodology in their CSR strategy, which means that they should use them to evaluate every single citizens-private partnership in which they will participate in future. This will contribute to the lasting impact and multiplier effect of the project because it will be an occasion to make the evaluation methodology known to other NGOs and private companies (the future partners) and to encourage them to include it in their own CSR strategy.

As regards the communication on the project and the dissemination of the results, they will mainly consist in:

- the 15 national 1-day seminar organized by the partners and aimed at training at least 10 participants (citizens' organizations and private companies) in the use of the evaluation methodology. Each seminar will include the presentation of the methodology and instrument, as well as group work to practice on partnerships in which the participants are involved.
- the translation of the evaluation methodology into every project countries' language and its publication on the websites of all project partners;
- the insertion of the evaluation methodology in the internal and external communication instruments (newsletter, social report, etc.) of FONDACA, the partner organizations, the companies and citizens' organizations participating in the Lisbon and the national seminars;
- the printing of 100 copies of the evaluation methodology document in every partner's language and its dissemination among a selected group of national NGOs, businesses and other interested stakeholders. The identification of the target group will mainly be done on the basis of the participation of the identified bodies in CSR partnerships;
- an online database in which all the experiences of partnerships presented and discussed during the different seminars or later reported by the participants will be inserted, together with other relevant experiences collected during the preparatory studies;
- a forum on which every organization, company or any other interested person will have the possibility to ask questions on the use of the evaluation methodology, as well as to report its own experience in its implementation.

The last two activities will continue on the website of FONDACA even after the formal end of the project.

### **Added value and innovativeness of the action**

The added value and innovativeness of the action reside mainly in the following elements:

1. The partnership studies, which have been increasingly developed in recent years, have been focused more on public-private or tripartite partnerships rather than on partnerships between corporations and citizens' organizations.
2. Both empirical researches and existing guidelines for good partnerships highlight the lack of appropriate and effective evaluation activities meaning a structured process established to measure success by pre-set criteria.

3. The elaboration and the dissemination of such a methodology on a European scale would thus contribute to increasing the credibility and the development of this type of partnership.
4. The innovativeness of the action is also linked to the fact that this methodology will be proposed by a group of NGOs, while most guidelines / handbooks for good partnerships published until now have either been produced by research centers or corporations.
6. Lastly, the evaluation methodology will concretely be tested by corporations and NGOs from 15 different European countries and its final version will integrate their observations and proposals. It will contribute to make it a very practical and truly European instrument, which could especially be used for transnational partnerships.

### **Sectors involved in the operation**

On the basis of the experience of the previous European project carried out by FONDACA on CSR, we can consider that the sectors involved in the operation may be the following:

- Utilities (like power companies)
- Telecommunications / Communication
- Retail sector
- Travel companies
- Banks
- Pharmaceutical industry
- Car industry
- Food industry

However, the partner organizations will be free to choose the partnerships they will study in any sector.

### **Aspects allowing the involvement of social partners/stakeholders in the project to be assessed**

In addition to the NGOs and private companies involved in the partnerships identified by every partner organization, other stakeholders (especially trade unions and public institutions) from every participating country will be invited to participate in the Lisbon seminar. It is actually important that they contribute to the elaboration of the evaluation tools since they often participate in partnerships with private companies, either on their own or together with NGOs, and their point of view on the indicators and methodology is thus very precious.

Moreover, European, national and local public institutions will be among the recipients of the evaluation methodology. They could actually favor its dissemination in the framework of their policy on CSR and encourage its use to better assess the effective contribution of citizens-business partnerships to the achievement of public policies objectives.

### **Human resources**

The project team will be composed of Giovanni Moro (project manager), Charlotte Roffiaen (project administrator), Ilaria Vannini (project secretary), Anna Vanni (accountant).

In each country involved in the project, a citizens' organization (expert) will carry out the activities mentioned below. In addition to that activities, the Portuguese partner will also be in charge of organizing the European seminar in Lisbon.

### **Partner Organizations Tasks:**

Each partner will have to:

- Identify 1 national partnership and contact the parties to verify their interest in experimenting the evaluation methodology on their own partnership;
- Participate in the Partners' meeting;

- Test the applicability and effectiveness of the methodology on the national partnership they identified, doing the evaluation together with the partnership actors;
- Draft a brief report in English containing a succinct description of the partnership, the results of the evaluation and the proposed modifications to the methodology;
- Participate in the Lisbon seminar and present the partnership on which he/she has worked;
- Invite the actors of the above-mentioned partnership to the Lisbon seminar, as well as another stakeholder interested and/or having an experience in the evaluation of CSR partnerships (representatives of public institutions, trade unions, scholars, experts, other private companies or citizens' organizations, etc.);
- Take care of translating the final version of the methodology into their own language and posting it on their website;
- Organize a 1-day national seminar aimed at training at least 10 participants (citizens' organizations and private companies) in the use of the evaluation methodology;
- Send a brief report in English (about 2 pages) to the project team on the results of the training seminar.