

October, 2004

Partnerships in Action

Guidelines for North-South Co-operation

This document is based on text developed by the North-South Network of the European Region, formerly published on the European Scout web-site.

3. The Co-operation Process

Step 3: How to reach an agreement

Agreement

It is necessary for both partners in any partnership to be very clear about their objectives. They should clearly identify their philosophy and understanding of what the partnership involves. It is useful to draw up an agreement.

What is an agreement?

An agreement is a mutual commitment which provides a solid foundation for a partnership.

The agreement will help to:

- clarify what is to be achieved;
- serve as a reference point;
- show commitment from both partners;
- enable an effective evaluation to be made;
- ensure continuity if project coordinators change.

How to draw up an agreement

An agreement can only be drawn up as a result of dialogue and having built up a personal relationship. It also needs to be sensitive to different customs. In some places a request for a written agreement may give the impression that the spoken word is not trusted.

The agreement should include the following elements:

1. The objectives of both partners
 - a. what each Association wants to achieve individually, and
 - b. what the partners want to achieve together.

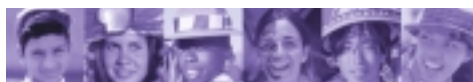
2. Procedures: how things should be done
 - a. communication
 - b. decision-making: who and what about
 - c. evaluation.
3. Responsibilities of both partners
4. Finance:
 - a. What is the commitment on both sides. It is essential to understand who is responsible for which aspects of the partnership.
5. Timetable
 - a. For the various activities in the programme of cooperation, including setting a time limit.

What needs to be done once the agreement has been drawn up?

First of all, both parties have to respect it. If it is not respected, it is important to find out the reasons. If one of the partners does not respect the agreement, without justification, it is essential to discuss it again.

How long should the agreement be for?

Every agreement should be evaluated. For this reason it is suggested to first start with a three-year (trienium) renewable agreement. In this way, the objectives can be revised every three years and the commitment renewed. The cooperation can also end without insulting anybody, because the length of the agreement was specified in advance.



How can an agreement be evaluated?

An evaluation should be undertaken not only upon completion of a project, but also on a regular basis during the period defined in the agreement. This can help determine subsequent stages of the project. Please see the chapter on evaluation (3.5) for further details.

Should an agreement be renewed?

There is no obligation to renew an agreement. Partnership is a mutual agreement between partners who both have responsibilities and are free to end the cooperation, if it no longer fulfills the needs of one or either partner.

