Enhancing cooperation between the for-profit and the non-profit sectors in the Visegrád countries for the benefit of all

Workshop Report

7th October 2013, Hotel Alfa Art, Budapest, Hungary

Participants were welcomed in this workshop, which brought together businesses and green non-governmental organizations from Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, Czech Republic, Germany and Serbia. The structure of the workshop programme was presented. The first block was dedicated for thought-inspiring lectures on sharing experience in establishing partnerships from Western European, NGO and business point of view. This was followed by an interactive session in the second block, where participants had a chance to express their needs and provide their views on how this type of cooperation can be enhanced considering regional opportunities and conditions as well as potentially emerging obstacles.

Short introduction of the project Veronika Kiss, CEEweb for Biodiversity

Biodiversity, its services, and natural resources form basis for humanity’s well-being, and for businesses to operate. Visegrad countries have unique natural beauties and resources, but threats posed by unsustainable business operations can lead to their irreversible destruction, damaging finally also society and economy. The project ‘Enhancing business and biodiversity cooperation in the Visegrad countries for the benefit of all' initiates expert level discussions between conservation NGOs and businesses in order to work together to preserve biodiversity and our natural resources. The project is implemented by CEEweb for Biodiversity and its partners: PTTK in Krakow, BROZ, Veronica, DAPHNE CZ and Global Nature Fund. The project is generously supported by the Visegrad Fund.

Block 1
Presentations: Pro’s and con’s for establishing partnerships

Partnership between companies and green NGOs in Western Europe – opportunities and obstacles: Stefan Hörmann, Global Nature Fund

After introducing the Global Nature Fund, different types of partnerships were presented with real examples and lessons learned. Key points of cooperation were discussed such as the openness of the NGOs for partnerships with businesses, motivations for NGO-Business Cooperation from both perspectives. Possible types of collaborations were presented from philanthropy (donation, sponsoring) through project-based Partnerships (short-/ mid-term projects or events) until strategic partnerships (long-term projects or programmes to improve environment and corporate performance). Good examples for existing cooperation were shown involving the sectors of nature conservation, tourism, sports and agriculture. Lastly, some concrete advices were listed on how to design (strategic) partnerships, which gave participants really useful hints for improving their future partnerships. The presentation slides are available here.
o Corporate Responsibility at Vodafone Hungary – Orsolya Nyilas, Vodafone Hungary
The head of Internal Communications and Corporate Responsibility outlined the vision and mission of corporate responsibility of the company. Focus areas of their CSR activities were shown, including the environmental field. Environmental impact of the company’s products and services was presented, including energy use and carbon footprint, carbon dioxide emissions, waste management and the effects of network modernization on the environmental impact. Lastly, the history, focus areas and ongoing activities of Vodafone Hungary Foundation were introduced. The presentation slides are available here.

o Why are NGOs interested to cooperate with companies? experience from influential NGO point of view – Ágnes Oravecz, WWF Hungary
The presentation started with introduction of WWF Hungary, which has more than 2000 corporate partnerships worldwide. After the general introduction, the focus was shifted on WWF Hungary, its activities, mission and then zoomed on its corporate cooperation activities. The following types of cooperation were presented with concrete examples: communication, licensing, donation, sponsorship and transformation. Lastly, some NGO ‘tricks’ were suggested on how to enhance this kind of cooperations in the CEE region. The presentation slides are available here.

o How can small and medium size enterprises benefit from establishing and maintaining partnerships? – Béla Kocsy, EMVFE - First Hungarian CSR Association
The founders of the First Hungarian CSR Association (Első Magyar Vállalati Felelősségvállalás Egyesület) were diverse in background, including economists, managers, CEOs, PR and marketing communication experts, CSR consultants and other experts. Their keywords are community, cooperation and locality, whereas they have separate working sections of C(s)R management, communication (c(s)r) and organization as well as education and training. They work with a long list of business partners from corporate through medium to small enterprises, which was presented, with more detailed discussion of the SME sector in Hungary. Lastly, the ‘7 S model’ for establishing partnerships was presented together with the practices used for maintaining partnerships and the mutual benefits gained from these activities. The presentation slides are available here.

Block 2
Interactive session: Regional needs and opportunities

o Opening presentation:
Guidelines on enhancing cooperation between the for-profit and the non-profit sectors in the Visegrad countries – Veronika Kiss, CEEweb for Biodiversity
The guideline is going to be prepared within the framework of the project ‘Enhancing business and biodiversity cooperation in the Visegrad countries for the benefit of all’. Outline of the document was presented:
- Objectives: to provide a helping hand to initiate, maintain and improve multistakeholder partnerships aiming for the mutual benefit for nature and companies.
- SWOT analysis of cooperation between NGOs and businesses in CEE
- Analysis: motivations, benefits, obstacles, preconditions and key elements of successful collaborations.
- Introduction of existing initiatives, commitments, opportunities.
- Case studies, inspiring examples of cooperation between NGOs and businesses: Slovakian cases (protection of birds and bats during reconstruction of buildings, habitat restoration with Holcim Slovakia), Polish case (environmental Partnership Foundation and Tchibo)
Suggestions and practical tips on how to realize partnerships. The presentation slides are available here.

- The programme ended with an interactive discussion on how to improve the draft guidelines. Four questions were discussed by two parallel working groups formed by the participants. Answers collected from participants are summarized below.

**Question 1:** What is the motivation for cooperation and what are the benefits for both for and non profit sectors?

**Answers:**
For businesses the motivation can be that the CEO or high level manager is environmental conscious. For businesses the benefits are:
- PR, communication
- Networking
- Expertise
- Credibility
For NGOs the benefits are
- Businesses provide further alternatives
- Listed in Stefan Hörmann's presentation on Partnership between companies and green NGOs in Western Europe – opportunities and obstacles, which is available here.

**Question 2:** Why this type of cooperation has not yet spread widely?

**Answers:**
- There are more cooperation from the social field
- Now: economic crisis and social problems - > important for businesses to have connected cooperation activities
- Businesses see it rather as a cost than benefit. They have prejudice towards green NGOs as “narrow minded”
- NGOs have on the ground projects, and their funding, e.g. LIFE+ neither encourage them to look for partnerships. On the ground local actions should attract local partners.
- For NGOs reaching CEOs is very difficult. In CEE there is no platform for networking and meeting with CEOs.
  - In Western Europe CSR Conferences are spread, but there are now even more NGOs than businesses to participate.
  - In Western Europe direct talks or attending conference of those stakeholders who might be attracted for cooperation are working.
- NGOs are competing for corporate donations.

**Question 3:** What are the preconditions and key elements of successful collaborations?

**Answers:**
- Understanding of other partner, its goals, language, interest
- Identifying common goal
- Clear communication & strategy, honesty, transparency, division of tasks
- Know the problem of the other partner and the solution
- Define mission and ethical codex of NGO
- Know each other operational methods
o Identify suitable partners
o Flexibility about type of cooperation, compromise from both sides
o Keep the communication alive after the project
o Measure the outcomes and communicate the results
o Positive media campaign
o Destroy the picture of the enemy
o Transparency: clear criteria for cooperation

**Question 4:** How can cooperation be strengthened and lack of cooperation overcome?

**Answers:**
- Promote successful cooperation
- Guidelines for NGOs (lessons learnt)
- Promote CSR
- Creative ideas that are attractive to business and serve their purposes
- Offering opportunities – helping them to reach markers, e.g. for smaller farmers or home stays

The event is generously supported by the [International Visegrad Fund](https://www.visegradfund.org) and the European Commission
CEEweb for Biodiversity is a network of non-governmental organizations in the Central and Eastern European region. Our mission is the conservation of biodiversity through the promotion of sustainable development.