



What does the “COP on Partnership in the ESF” offer?

- COP’S BENEFITS AND ADDED VALUE -

The Community of Practice on Partnership in the ESF (‘COP’ in short) was set up as mutual learning network under the ESF-European Social Fund 2007-2013. The transnational cooperation ensures knowledge exchange of ESF-Managing Authorities (MAs) as well as other stakeholders, in particular, other programme managing authorities, such as e.g. MAs of the ERDF-European Regional Development Fund. The COP focuses on partnerships being adopted by national and regional Operational Programmes (OPs) of Member States (MSs). Partnerships are recognised as valuable and essential policy instrument and practice with which policy outcomes, policies and actions can be enhanced.

Our COP network brings relevant partnership stakeholders (MAs, etc.) together and exchange knowledge and experience. We jointly reflect our work and recommend improvements as well as further develop policies in the area of ‘partnerships’.

We offer

- **Systematic learning** from experiences and sharing knowledge on partnerships adopted by OPs and other programmes; thus assuring mutual learning and capacity building between ESF Managing Authorities, implementing bodies and other relevant stakeholders; and
- **Joint efforts for improving policy planning and delivery** regarding partnership approaches of EU Member States (enhanced quality and efficiency of Structural Funds programmes, especially ESF, and their impact on employment and social inclusion).

ADDED VALUE created by the COP concerns transnational cooperation, exchange and progress by implementing partnership approach. Thus, COP’s **BENEFITS** for MAs and other stakeholders encompass knowledge, stakeholders and policy development:

1. **Expanding of knowledge** about MSs’/regions’ practices by implementing ‘partnerships’ as well as providing contacts of the highly experienced participants of the network;
2. **Reflecting on the-same-eye-level** and **recommending improvements** for the ‘partnership work’ with experienced colleagues;
3. **Joint efforts of further development of policies** in respect of partnerships adopted by Operational Programmes, policies and actions of MS (COP as ‘**Think Tank**’)

We have developed a method, called the ‘PEO Exploration’ by using a critical friend review model. By project implementation we produce high quality products & actions such as:



- **“PEO Explorations & PEO Key Lessons reports” (Practices, Effects and Opportunities):** Exploring MSs'/regions practices on implementing the partnership principle and informing on results achieved by means of PEO Key Lessons reports (PEO Key Lessons reports were published for Portugal in June 2009, Sweden in November 2009, Germany in March 2010 and Greece in June 2010. All reports accessible at <http://partnership.esflive.eu/node/415>).
- **“Partnership portal”:** Comprehensive partnership knowledge base in respect of tools used by ESF-MA, PEO practices, country fiches, good practice templates (all capitalising good practice under the ESF Operational Programmes 2007-2013).
- **Policy fora:** Interactive moderated discussion fora on different topics accessible (<http://partnership.esflive.eu/forum>);
- **“Partnership Learning Manual”:** Summarizing results achieved by the PEO explorations in MSs and their integration of the lessons learnt (to be published by the end of 2011).
- **“Partnership Conference”:** 2-day event for policy makers, programme designers and partnership practitioners from EU 27 in order to exchange best partnerships practice examples adopted by the MAs at programme level (scheduled for October 2011).
- **“Communiqué on partnerships of ESF-MAs”:** A joint statement of ESF-MAs on partnerships stressing the importance of working in partnerships during all project and programme phases as well as on all levels of implementation from the national to the local level (to be published by October 2011)

Would you like learn more about our community, activities and products? Would you like to actively participate in our learning process? Please consult our website or contact us directly at cop@zsi.at.

<http://partnership.esflive.eu>

We are looking forward to the PEO-Exploration in your country!

“P”: PARTNERSHIP PRACTICES of MS/regions on all levels of governance;
 “E”: EFFECTS on policies as well as impacts for ESF target groups; and
 “O”: OPPORTUNITIES for improving policy planning and delivery.

Central to the PEOs is a **“critical friend” review model**¹. The principle of this model is that, rather than evaluators, visiting COP members work together with their hosts as equals in a reciprocal relationship that promotes continuous learning. Critical friends use two complementary approaches: (i) they generate information through discussions that offer new perspectives or ideas, and (ii) they ask challenging questions or suggest possible changes. By acknowledging one another’s unique contributions and engaging in constructive dialogue the PEO exploration process thus promotes the production of new knowledge and insights.

¹ Rallis, S. F. & Rossman, G. B. (2000) ‘Dialogue for learning: Evaluator as critical friend’ *New Directions for Evaluation*, 86, 81–92 and Brinkerhoff, J.M. (2002) ‘Assessing and improving partnership relationships and outcomes: a proposed framework’, *Evaluation and Program Planning* 25, Elsevier, pp 215-231.



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COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE ON PARTNERSHIP IN THE ESF

(under lead of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection)