

Evaluating cross-sector partnerships

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Introduction

In recent years, the role of the private sector in development has changed significantly. Whereas for many years business and especially the multinational companies were seen as part of the development problem, they are today increasingly recognised as key players in development and integrated into solutions. At the World Economic Forum in 1999, UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, presented the *Global Compact* challenging business leaders all over the world to 'embrace and enact' a set of universal principles in the areas of human rights, labour standards and the environment. The Compact also encourages business to engage in cross-sector partnerships with the public sector and civil society in order to promote development (see www.unglobalcompact.org). At the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002 the need for and the importance of collaborative alliances between the three sectors was highlighted further. Partnerships as a new approach to development were put very high on the agenda and during the 9 days of the summit more than 300 partnerships between governments, NGOs and business were announced (see www.johannesburgsummit.org). Since then the partnership model has gained further ground as a new approach to development and an important tool for the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals. The partnership model is not only supported by the development community. It is also widely embraced by the private sector. Reference is increasingly made to corporate social responsibility (CSR) and the triple bottom line whereby the traditional accounting line for companies is extended to also encompass environmental and social performance (Elkington, 1997).

The partnership model is currently being promoted in the belief that it contains a valuable win-win potential. Collaborative relations between the three sectors of society are believed to increase the possibilities of tackling the pressing social, economic and environmental challenges and make important contributions to societal development as well as benefit the various partners in the collaboration (Miller and Ahmad, 2000: 16). For the public sector, partnerships with NGOs and the private sector may result in capacity building through which the design and implementation of policies can be improved and the legitimacy of the public sector enhanced (Miller and Ahmad, 2000: 19; Jones, 2002b: 3). For NGOs, partnerships may involve organisational development, the provision of additional and much needed resources, and not least increased recognition and status whereby the organizations' political influence can be strengthened (Jones, 2002a: 3; Miller and Ahmad, 2000: 16-17). Turning to the business side, several potential benefits of cross-sector partnerships and CSR in general are highlighted. Corporate community involvement may lead to business benefits like improved reputation and brand value, license to operate, development of local markets, improved risk management, and greater ability to attract, motivate and retain

employees (Rochlin and Christoffer, 2000: 11; Nelson, 2004: 14; Emerson, 2003: 30).

However, this positive view of partnerships is not uncontested. A much more critical perspective on business engagement in development can also be identified.¹ Broadly speaking the criticism is expressed in two types of arguments: on one side, the argument that CSR and partnerships are bad for business and on the other side the argument that it is bad for development. Let me start with the latter. One of the main criticisms in relation to the development potential of partnerships is that this approach to development is very much governed by the concept of the business case, which implies that CSR and partnership initiatives are only established and sustained if business has clear advantages and benefits to gain from it. According to the critics, the focus on the business case sets clear limits on what CSR and partnership initiatives can achieve for the wider society as corporate objectives are not always compatible with development objectives. With regard to corporate values, a distinction is made between negotiable and non-negotiable values indicating that certain corporate values go unquestioned and are seen as having primacy over conflicting values and norms. A central non-negotiable corporate value is for example the right to make a profit. With this distinction the critics argue that CSR-initiatives only address issues that do not conflict with their fundamental and non-negotiable values, like profit making. The result is that the most pressing development problems and the needs of the poorest and most marginalised people are not addressed through CSR and partnership initiatives in cases where there is no clear business incentive for the involvement. The current framework of CSR and partnerships thus raises serious questions about what happens to the development issues for which there is no obvious business benefits to be gained. It seems that CSR and the partnership approach leave serious development gaps that need to be tackled by other initiatives (Frynas, 2005: 586-588; Newell, 2005: 545; Blowfield, 2005: 520-524; Blowfield and Frynas, 2005: 508-512).

With regard to the other camp of critics who question the alleged business benefits of cross-sector partnerships the overall critique is that CSR damage profitability. The perception is that business will be less efficiently run when corporations work for other goals than profitability. Taking on a social responsibility carries with it certain performance goals which are not strictly related to profitability and it involves addressing the interests and needs of other groups beyond the shareholders (Henderson, 2001: 20-21, 54-55; Murphy and Bendell, 1997: 223-224). Moreover, these multiple goals are seen as problematic because they result in companies trying to maximize

¹ Some of these more critical perspectives relate to corporate social responsibility (CSR) in general and not partnerships in particular. However, as partnerships are part of the CSR phenomenon in the sense that they serve as a way of exercising CSR, the CSR related criticism is highly relevant for the debate on partnerships.

their performance along several dimensions in stead of focusing on one main objective, which ought to be profitability and wealth creation. Corporate focus on profitability, it is argued, will also ultimately be of greater benefit to society than CSR activities as the maximization of corporate and shareholder wealth will transform into greater social welfare. Following the CSR agenda may thus not only damage corporate profitability but also reduce social welfare in general (Margolis and Walsh, 2003: 271-272, citing Jensen, 2002: 239; Henderson, 2001: 27).

As can be seen from the above, the effects of partnerships are highly disputed and not at all clear. As these cross-sector relations are a rather recent phenomenon only a limited number of studies have been made in this field, especially on the developmental impacts of partnerships (Margolis and Walsh, 2003: 289; Rochlin and Christoffer, 2000: 12, 30). Most of the partnership studies seem to be rather one sided in the sense that they either focus on the business or the developmental effects, but rarely both at the same time, and most often with a high priority to business effects at the expense of the developmental perspective. Furthermore, several of the existing studies in this field are based on large databases and statistical tests of associations between corporate social performance rankings and various business measures. Such studies can be criticized for providing insufficient knowledge. As the processes and chain of events linking CSR activities and partnerships to certain outcomes are not examined, the studies provide very limited knowledge about what works, when, why and how in this field. This knowledge gap has made some scholars state that the current fascination with partnerships to a large extent seems to be driven by dogmatism and ideology rather than systematic and rigorous empirical evidence of its outcomes (Dowling et al., 2004). These days we also see requests for more thorough analyses and stronger evidence emerging, not least within the UN-system who is actively promoting the partnership model (Witte and Reinicke, 2005: 47-48).

On the basis of the above sketched knowledge gap and the emerging requests for stronger evidence on the functioning of cross-sector partnerships, this paper aims at developing a framework for evaluation of cross-sector partnerships that allows for further knowledge production in this field. With a general evaluation model, partnerships in different geographical settings and with different aims can be analysed within the same framework whereby broader insights on partnerships as a new approach to development can be gained. A general framework makes it possible to move beyond non-comparable case studies and into the more interesting field of cross-case analyses.

In the following pages an evaluation model encompassing both business and developmental effects as well as the process of partnering is presented. As such the evaluation model allows for analyses that address some of the shortcomings of existing studies mentioned above. Before presenting the evaluation model a definition of partnerships is presented. In the present paper partnerships are understood as a voluntary strategic alliance between two or more actors from some combination of the public sector, business and civil society. Ideally, partnerships imply joint problem solving through the sharing of risks, responsibilities, resources and competencies for mutual benefit for all collaborating parties and as such they are distinct from both charity and contractual relations (Nelson and Zadek, 2000: 14-15; Nelson, 2002: 46-47; Googins and Rochlin, 2000: 130-131; Miller and Ahmad, 2000: 11-13). With this general definition of partnerships it must furthermore be clarified that this project focuses on a particular kind of partnerships, namely partnerships in the field of general societal development and poverty reduction. Partnerships for environmental and sustainable development are thus excluded from the analysis. The reason for this focus is the fact that relatively more studies have been done in the latter field compared to the former (SustainAbility, 2001: 4). There seem thus to be a particular need for more research on partnerships for social development and poverty reduction.

Framework for evaluation of cross-sector partnerships

In this paper the understanding of evaluation builds on the definitions of Michael Scriven and Evert Vedung definitions. According to Michael Scriven evaluation is *'the process of determining the merit, worth, and value of things'* (Scriven, 1991: 1). Evert Vedung takes the definition of evaluation a bit further and specifies additional characteristics of evaluation. Vedung defines evaluation as a *'careful retrospective assessment of the merit, worth, and value of administration, output, and outcome of government interventions, which is intended to play a role in future, practical action situations'* (Vedung, 1997: 3).

In the present paper evaluation is however not confined to government interventions but applied to broader social initiatives, i.e. cross-sector partnerships for development. As Vedung notes, evaluation is a general analytical process and as such it can be applied to any area of social endeavour (Vedung, 1997: 3).

Following the above definition, it is suggested that the evaluation of partnerships focus on implementation, i.e. process and output, as well as outcome. The reason for taking this broader perspective is that it allows for a more holistic understanding of the functioning of partnerships. Analysing the implementation process, including the outputs produced, may also provide a more

solid basis for the evaluation of partnership outcomes. Gaining insight into how a given intervention has worked and the outputs it has produced during the implementation phase may serve to limit the problem of causality in impact assessment. It is always a challenge to establish the link between observed outcomes and the intervention and to make sure that certain impacts can actually be attributed to the intervention under research (Roche, 2000: 81).

As it may appear from the above, the terms outcome and impact are used interchangeably. Other scholars and practitioners sometimes distinguish between outcome and impact in the sense that the former refers to short and medium-term effects, whereas the latter refers to effects in the longer term. This distinction is not upheld in the current paper. Outcomes and impacts are both defined as the effects produced when the project activities and outputs reach the project population or maybe even a broader group of people and these outcomes/impacts can then be immediate, intermediate or ultimate (Vedung, 1997: 5). It should furthermore be emphasized that outcomes/impacts are understood here as both intended and unintended effects of a given intervention. In this way evaluation is regarded as inquiries that reach beyond analyses of goal-attainment. Evaluating the outcomes of partnerships is seen here as not only a matter of assessing the degree to which they have reached their stated goals. It is about viewing the intervention and its outcomes in its entirety by also including unintended side-effects of both negative and positive character. By applying this more holistic approach instead of focusing on goal-attainment, the risk of producing a biased, if not fundamentally wrong, picture of the intervention and its results is reduced significantly (Vedung, 1997: 45-47).

Elaborating further on the meaning of evaluation in this context, the use of the above definition by Vedung clarifies that evaluation of partnerships is confined to *ex-post* assessments. *Ex-ante* assessments and prospective appraisals, like needs assessments and analysis for goal setting are thus excluded from the evaluation framework. This paper focuses on evaluation of partnerships that have already been initiated, which excludes planned but not-yet adopted partnerships.

Having clarified the understanding of evaluation I shall now move on to a presentation of the selected evaluation parameters. In the following a number of evaluation parameters related to partnership processes and partnership effects are presented. Potential partnership outputs are not included in the framework as they may vary considerably depending on the concrete activities of the various partnerships. In this sense partnership outputs are difficult to capture and conceptualise within a general evaluation framework. The evaluation of partnership outputs must take the individual project and its project activities as its starting point, whereas partnership

processes and outcomes can be evaluated according to a number of established parameters as presented below.

The partnership process – evaluation parameters

Cross-sector partnerships are expected to foster better, more adequate and innovative solutions to societal problems on the basis of a constructive dialogue between the actors involved and an exploitation of their different resources and comparative advantages (Brinkerhoff, 2002: 4; Gray, 1989: 21-23). As Barbara Gray notes, collaboration contains the possibility for actors to *'constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible'* (Gray, 1989: 5). In this connection Chris Huxham talks about collaborative advantage and synergy between collaborating organizations (Huxham, 1993: 603). Such advantages and synergistic effects are achieved *'when something unusually creative is produced – perhaps an objective is met - that no organization could have produced on its own and when each organization through the collaboration is able to achieve its own objectives better than it could alone'* (ibid.).

Looking at the realities of partnerships it is however not given that the potential value of collaboration is realized. Working with others is never simple and when the collaboration is across organizations the complications are magnified (Huxham, 1996: 4). Collaborative relationships like cross-sector partnerships may be marked by considerable collaboration difficulties and conflict between the parties involved (Gray, 1989: 9). So even though partners initially get together to undertake collective action on the basis of a shared vision it is not given that a successful collaborative process follows. Asymmetric power relations and conflict of interests may result in the overtaking of a partnership's operation and objectives of one of the partners leading to outcomes that increase that partner's benefits at the expense of more general welfare (McQuaid, 2000: 23-24). Conflict of interests in a partnership may also result in a situation where the collaboration is more or less dissolved during the process and a greater separation of responsibilities established in which each of the actors involved concentrate on their own task (Klijn and Teisman, 2003: 142). In such cases of partnership capture or greater separation of responsibilities a situation of collaborative inertia, and not collaborative advantage, prevails (Huxham, 1996: 4). In the literature on partnerships and collaboration there seems, however, to be a tendency to overlook these potential problems of coordination and collaboration. Partnerships are often viewed in a too harmonious perspective. Potential conflicts of interest and asymmetric power relations are often not recognised as complicating factors that may hamper the achievement of development objectives (McQuaid, 2000: 23; Caplan, 2003: 31-32; Zammit, 2003: 224; Lister, 2000: 229). Very

often a functionalist perspective and a rather uncritical perception of collaboration as a means of acquiring resources and solving problems are applied. In this functionalist perspective issues such as exploitation, repression, and asymmetrical power relations which have preoccupied the more critical theorists are neglected (Hardy and Philips, 1998: 217-218).

To move beyond the functionalist perspective on collaboration and into the more critical field of exploring the problems of collaboration, network theory is useful and relevant (Klijn and Teisman, 2003: 137; Brinkerhoff, 2002: 178; Kouwenhoven, 1993: 120). The concept of networks is very broad and is taken to mean different things. Two main perspectives on networks can be identified. In the Anglo-Saxon literature and within the so-called interest mediation school, networks are seen as a model of state/society or government/interest group relations in a given issue area. The other position is the Max Planck School or the governance school representing predominantly German public policy scholars who regard networks as an alternative form of governance to market and hierarchy (Börzel, 1998: 254-260). It is in this latter perspective that network theory becomes particularly relevant for the study of partnerships as these collaborative relations can be characterized as networks. In the governance perspective, networks are defined as *'informal interactions between public and private actors with distinctive, but interdependent interests, who strive to solve problems of collective action on a non-hierarchical level'* (Börzel, 1998: 260). Along the same line, other scholars define networks as *'more or less stable patterns of social relations between interdependent actors'* (Klijn, 2003: 32; Kickert et al., 1997: 6).

Before elaborating further on this perspective and its relevance for a critical exploration of partnership processes, it must however be pointed out that also the network perspective has been accused of consensualism and criticized for a lack of emphasis on issues such as conflict, power, competitive dynamics, antagonism and lack of coordination and consensus (Kjær, 2004: 198-199, 204-205; Davies, 2004: 20-22). However, notwithstanding this critique, part of the network literature also recognises the risk of conflict and collaboration difficulties in networks. The limitations and potential problems of network-based governance seem to be particularly well theorised in the Dutch network literature which draws upon game theory and actor-centred institutionalism. Within this perspective network-based policy processes are seen as a series of games in which actors behave strategically (Klijn and Teisman, 2003: 137). A game is defined as *'an ongoing, sequential chain of (strategic) actions between different players (actors), governed by the players' perceptions and by existing formal and informal rules, which develop around issues or decisions in which the actors are interested'* (Klijn and Teisman, 1997: 101). The strategic behaviour of actors is thus a crucial characteristic of games. A strategy can be defined as *'the set*

of decisions taken by one actor which reflects the combination of resources and targets they bring into play' (ibid.).

In games, actors can choose a number of different strategies. It is not given that they apply collaboration as their main strategy of engagement (Hardy and Philips, 1998: 218). According to Scharpf, two overall strategies are available for players in a game: defection and cooperation (Scharpf, 1997: 73). To be more specific and move beyond the dichotomy of defection and cooperation, one can distinguish between four different types of strategies: go-alone strategies, conflictual strategies, avoidance strategies and cooperative strategies (Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004: 49). Go-alone strategies are strategies where an actor has formulated a solution to a problem and attempts to realize this despite his dependencies. Conflictual strategies aim at preventing or blocking a solution or policy measure. Avoidance strategies is a more passive attitude where actors do not block initiatives as such but avoid taking part in them either because of a lack of interest or unwillingness to pay the costs. Lastly, the cooperative strategy imply that actors, based on a recognition of their dependence, try to interest other parties in their plans and obtain valuable results through negotiation and dialogue (ibid.). The choice to collaborate implies willingness to share power. According to Barbara Gray *'collaboration operates on a model of shared power. In collaboration, problem-solving decisions are eventually taken by a group of stakeholders who have mutually authorized each other to reach a decision'* (Gray, 1989: 119). This notion of power sharing does not mean that all actors in a collaborative relationship necessarily have to be equal in power. The point is, however, that too large inequalities in power may hamper collaboration as actors must be mutually dependent on each other to make the collaboration work (ibid.). Sometimes actors in a network are not willing to share power and change their go-alone strategies for collaborative strategies. In networks like cross-sector partnerships a main hindrance to collaboration may be significant differences in the ideologies and values of private and public actors (Waddock, 1989: 84). Jacobs (1992) has described the public and private sectors as two ethical systems with different moral syndromes. The public sector is characterized by the guardian syndrome, and the private sector by the commercial syndrome (Jacobs, 1992: 32, cited in Klijn and Teisman, 2003: 142). This difference in moral syndromes implies among other things differences in problem definitions which may be very difficult to reconcile. Whereas the public sector is oriented towards public objectives and devoted to a public cause the private sector is driven by profit maximization and devoted to consumer preferences (Klijn and Teisman, 2003: 143).

In addition to differences in values, collaboration may be hampered by too high transaction costs for the actors involved (Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004: 114). The transaction costs related to

cooperation in networks involve decision making costs in terms of money, time and energy spent on participation in coordinating games. Secondly, there are the external political costs in terms of the compromises that actors in games will have to accept as part of the cooperation (Kickert and Koppenjan, 1997: 41). The amount of disadvantages and costs actors are willing to accept depends on what Scharpf terms the dependence-characteristics of the exchange relationship. The dependence-characteristics of a relationship are defined by the relative importance of the resources received through the relationship and the non-substitutability of the resources. If the resources other actors possess are highly important and non-substitutable to other actors the relationship will be marked by high mutual dependence, which implies that all parties would be willing to accept certain disadvantages and costs in order to uphold the relationship. On the other hand, in the case of mutual independence due to low importance and high substitutability of the resources possessed by other actors the interest in upholding collaboration and interaction will be limited (Scharpf, 1978: 354-357).

Cooperation is further complicated by the fact that games involve a certain degree of uncertainty as the players' strategies are dynamic and subject to change and adaptation as the game unfolds. The strategies of the individual actors are influenced by the strategies of other actors as well as external developments and are constantly re-evaluated according to these new insights (Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004: 50-51; Klijn, 1996: 99). Games are thus very dynamic and complex processes. Not only do all actors choose their own strategy which may conflict with the strategies and interests of other actors, but these strategies are also subject to change. In this sense collaborative relations like cross-sector partnerships are marked by not only institutional complexity but also a high degree of strategic complexity which make decision making in such settings extremely challenging (Klijn and Teisman, 2003: 138). Cooperative problem solving is not only a matter of reaching compromises through negotiations between actors with diverging interests. It is also a matter of dealing with strategic uncertainty in the game (Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004: 51). The so-called prisoner's dilemma demonstrates how unpredictability and uncertainty in games may prevent cooperation. The dilemma refers to a game constellation, where defection, despite the collective benefits of cooperation, is the dominant strategy of the players due to uncertainty about the other actors' willingness to cooperate and the risk of being exploited (Scharpf, 1997: 75).

As can be seen from the above, partnership processes may unfold in different ways. In the evaluation of partnerships it is suggested to analyse whether the partnership processes are marked by synergy, constructive dialogue and exploitation of comparative advantages or conflict, collaboration difficulties, overtaking of the partnership by one partner, separation of responsibilities

etc. In other words it should be analysed to what extent the partnerships are characterized by collaborative advantage or collaborative inertia. As part of this analysis emphasis should be put on the actors' behaviour and the strategies they apply in relation to their partners. Do the various actors follow a go-alone strategy, a conflictual strategy, an avoidance strategy or a collaborative strategy? The evaluation parameters to be focused on are summed up in the box below.

The partnership process – evaluation parameters

Actors' strategies

- Go-alone strategies
- Conflictual strategies
- Avoidance strategies
- Collaborative strategies

Characteristics of the partnership process

- Collaborative advantage
 - Synergy between partners
 - Exploitation of comparative advantages
- Collaborative inertia
 - Conflict of interests
 - Increasing separation of responsibilities
 - Overtaking of partnership's operations and objectives by one partner

Following the above discussion of partnership processes and a clarification of the relevant evaluation parameters, the next section contains an outline of the parameters to be applied in the evaluation of partnership outcomes.

Partnership outcomes – evaluation parameters

As sketched in the introduction, partnerships may produce business as well as societal/developmental effects. In order to move beyond a one-sided analysis of partnerships and gain further knowledge about the win-win potential of partnerships both types of effects should be addressed in the evaluation of partnerships.

Starting with the developmental effects, the concept of development must be defined before moving on to a clarification of potential partnership impacts on development. Development is a

multifaceted concept that covers various processes of change in society. Development can take place in different spheres of society, and be defined as progress in the economic, social, political or environmental field. As this evaluation framework is confined to partnerships in the field of more general societal development, and does not focus on partnerships for sustainable development, I shall concentrate on the first three aspects of development.

In the 1950's, development was predominantly seen as a matter of economic growth measured in income per capita. However, from the 1960's and through the 1970s the issue of income distribution was increasingly raised and slowly the economic growth focus was supplemented by a focus on redistribution and poverty-oriented strategies, like the basic needs strategy (Martinussen, 1994: 54-56). Within the framework of the basic needs strategy, development is regarded as not only a matter of economic growth and increased incomes - a crucial aspect of development is meeting people's needs for adequate standards of nutrition, health, shelter, water, sanitation, education etc. (Streeten et al., 1981: 3). This perspective on development and its inherent critique of the one-sided economic growth focus has gained further ground in recent years with Mahbub ul Haq (1995) and UNDP's introduction of the concept of human development and also Amartya Sen's *Development as Freedom* (Sen, 1999). UNDP defines human development as '*a process of enlarging people's choices*' the most critical ones being the choices to lead a long and healthy life, to be educated and to enjoy a decent standard of living (UNDP, 1990: 10). Following the 1990 Human Development Report, additional aspects have been added to the concept of human development. In the 1991, 1992 and 1993 Human Development Reports, the issues of human freedom and political rights to participate in public life and political processes were emphasised strongly as other essential elements of human development (UNDP, 1991: Ch. 1 and 5; UNDP, 1992: Ch. 2; UNDP, 1993: Ch. 2 and 4). Along the line of UNDP's perception of development, Sen characterizes development as a '*process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy*' (Sen, 1999: 3). In this perspective development implies removing the varieties of unfreedom that people suffer from, like undernutrition, lack of access to essential services like sanitation, water, health, education and also denial of political liberty and basic civil rights (Sen, 1999: 15). Focusing on these aspects of development does not imply a rejection of the economic growth perspective on development. The concepts of human development and development as freedom are broader and more inclusive perspectives on development that move beyond the focus on economic growth, but as such they are not in conflict with the economic growth perspective. Within the framework of human development and development as freedom, economic growth is recognised as a necessary precondition for development. However, the point is that it is not sufficient, as there is no automatic link between economic growth and human progress. In order for economic growth to translate into

progress for people, investments have to be made in health, education, and the general well-being of people. In this way economic growth is seen as a *means* to development and not an *end* in itself (Sen, 1999: 14; UNDP, 1990: 10 -11; UNDP: 1991: 13; UNDP, 1992: 12).

While the above understandings of development take the economic growth perspective as their starting point, other perspectives on development focus on more structural changes. These are the so-called modernization theories, which regard development as a process whereby third world countries develop structural characteristics similar to the ones of the developed Western world (Martinussen, 1994: 57 -58). To this perspective belongs the political development approach, which puts the improvement of state institutions at the centre stage of development. Samuel P. Huntington is one exponent of this approach. According to Huntington, societal development presupposes development of the state enabling it to handle the changing and increasing demands that arise from a society in progress. One of Huntington's central theses is that economic and social changes in society will result in expectations and demands of such proportions that the state will not be able to meet it unless a conscious strategy of state building is pursued. Without such efforts there is a great risk of instability and chaos. The solution, as Huntington sees it, is to strengthen the military and also the agencies in the civil service with the responsibility for law and order (Huntington, 1968, cited in Martinussen, 1994: 214 -215). This state building strategy has later been widely criticised for its recognition and acceptance of military rule. Notwithstanding this critique, several scholars have accepted the basic idea about state building as an essential part of ensuring progress in a society. But instead of focusing on the repressive state components, emphasis is increasingly put on capacity building of state agencies with the responsibility for essential development functions, like health, education and water. Through such strategies it is hoped that the state's responsiveness and sensitivity to the demands of people can be increased to the benefit of general welfare in society (Martinussen, 1994: 215 -216).

Related to the above political development approach but however different from its top-down approach to state building are the so-called *reaching up* strategies of strengthening civil society. In this approach to development, emphasis is put on capacity building of civil society organizations. By strengthening non-governmental organizations it is believed that a more poverty oriented and responsible state can be created through pressure and demand making from a stronger and better organised society. Within this perspective, capacity building of civil society is thus a central aspect of development (Martinussen, 1994: 216 -217, 398-408).

Having presented the economic perspective on development, the human development approach

and the so-called modernization theories I shall move on to a clarification of the developmental impacts to be included in the model for evaluation of partnerships. When considering the developmental impacts of partnerships, it is suggested to take all three perspectives on development into consideration. This approach has several advantages. First, the application of a multifaceted concept of development allows for a nuanced analysis of each partnership with regard to its developmental consequences. Secondly, and very importantly, the holistic perspective on development makes it possible to evaluate and analyse partnerships with varying developmental aims within the same framework. It can be argued that the more heterogeneous the mix of projects to be evaluated the broader, more abstract and more multi-dimensional the outcome measures must be (Goldsmith et al., 2004: 3). This argument not only points to the need for a broad understanding of development but also rather broad and abstract performance measures under each of the three dimensions of development. The selected measures for the various dimensions of development, which are presented below, are thus rather broad. In this way the evaluation framework is expected to be applicable to different kinds of partnerships where the available information and data may vary to an extent that makes the use of very specific measures and indicators problematic.

In selecting the relevant measures for the evaluation of partnerships' developmental impact, several sources of information have been drawn upon: The World Bank development indicators (*World Development Reports*), UNDP development indicators (*Human Development Reports*) and not least the Millennium Development Goals (www.developmentgoals.org). The MDGs are seen as particularly important due to the fact that the ambition to reach the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 is a central motivating factor for the development community's collaboration with the private sector. Moreover, the MDGs are driving much of the current development work and they are widely accepted as a framework for measuring development progress. It thus seems reasonable and relevant to evaluate partnership projects according to their contributions to the MDGs. Below the selected evaluation parameters for each of the three dimensions of development are presented.²

Starting with economic development, two main measures are suggested. The first one is job

² It is fully recognized that the selected development measures are influenced by many different factors which makes it difficult to attribute detected changes to a specific partnership project. The attribution problem is further elaborated upon below in the section on measuring partnership outcomes.

creation, i.e. the extent to which partnership projects increase the employment opportunities for people in both the formal and informal sector. The second measure is development in people's income. The question to be answered here is whether partnerships contribute positively to the personal income level, and especially the income of poor people living below the international poverty line of 1 US\$ a day.

In relation to human development, evaluation parameters have been selected in the field of health, education and more general human freedom. Concerning health, partnerships should be evaluated according to their influence on people's access to essential services like health care and treatment (incl. immunization, sanitation, clean water and adequate nutrition); their influence on people's state of health measured by their nutritional status and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other major diseases; and lastly their influence on mortality rates. Continuing with education, it should be analysed to what extent partnerships contribute positively to school enrolment and literacy. As the last aspect of human development several evaluation parameters have been selected for the issue of human freedom. The selection of these measures has been very much influenced by Charles Humana's human freedom index as presented in the 1991 *Human Development Report* (UNDP, 1991: 20). Humana distinguishes between negative and positive freedoms, where the former is the freedom from something and the latter the freedom to do something. Applying this distinction, partnership impacts on negative freedoms like freedom from forced or child labour, judicial killings, unlawful detention, torture, coercion and corporal punishment should be evaluated. And regarding positive freedoms, partnerships' influence on the freedom to peacefully associate and assemble, organise political opposition and independent trade unions, speak freely and participate in public debates without censorship should be taken into account.

Having presented the evaluation parameters of economic and human development, it is important to emphasize that the evaluation of partnerships' contributions in these fields should be gender sensitive. The cross-cutting issue of gender equality and empowerment of women is thus also to be addressed when looking at partnership impacts on economic and human development. The living conditions of women constitute a particular development challenge in many developing countries and this challenge is also emphasized in the Millennium Development Goals. Issues like women's income and employment opportunities, their health status, access to education and their possibilities of political participation should thus be paid special attention to during the evaluation of partnerships and their impacts on economic and human development.

Moving on to the issue of political development and state building, partnerships' contribution to state capacity is suggested as a central evaluation parameter. The impact of partnerships on public sector capacity is actively discussed within the partnership literature. Some scholars have expressed concerns that partnerships and private sector engagement in development may let government off the hook and ultimately undermine the public sector and its capacity (Frynas, 2005: 596-597; Nelson, 2004: 15). However, there is also the possibility that partnerships bring in new skills and human resources to the public sector and thereby strengthen it. As Jones notes *'partnership can make service provision more efficient and more effective and help the public sector better meet its service obligations'* (Jones, 2002b: 2).

Applying state capacity as an evaluation parameter calls for a clarification of the concept. Merilee S. Grindle introduces four different state capacities: institutional, technical, administrative and political capacity (Grindle, 1996: 8). In the evaluation of partnerships' influence on state capacity, it is suggested to focus on the aspect of administrative capacity in particular. Administrative capacity can be defined as the ability to carry out basic administrative functions essential to the provision of social services and investments in human resource development (ibid.: 8). The focus on this type of capacity is motivated by the fact that the political development approach as noted above increasingly concentrates on the development of non-repressive state components with the responsibility of delivering social services. Moreover, it can be argued that the discussion on partnerships and their influence on state capacity in particular tend to focus on this aspect of state capacity. It is also this kind of capacity that partnerships for social development and poverty reduction seem most likely to be able to influence given their focus. When analysing partnerships' influence on administrative capacity, the two dimensions of human and organizational development should be taken into consideration. Whereas human resource development is about overcoming the skill constraints and increasing the capacity of individuals to carry out their responsibilities, organizational development involves initiatives like introduction of better management systems and more effective incentive systems, restructuring of work relationships and improvement of information and communication flows (Grindle, 1997: 9-15).

Beyond this state focus, the evaluation of partnerships' impact on political development should also involve an analysis of their influence on civil society organizations. It should be analysed to what extent the partnership projects have contributed to a strengthening of civil society organizations. In this connection the organizations' capacity to plan and implement projects as well as their ability to act as independent pressure groups and gain influence in political processes must be addressed.

The issue of partnership impact on civil society organizations seems very relevant to address as it is highly disputed in the partnership literature. Some scholars point to the risk that cross-sector partnerships between NGOs and business may undermine activist pressures. NGO collaboration with the private sector may imply co-optation and institutional capture to an extent that the agendas and decisions of NGOs are increasingly dominated by business and subjected to self-censorship. Furthermore, business-NGO partnerships may lead to tensions and divisions within civil society, as some NGOs decide to collaborate with business and others stay away. There is thus a risk that partnerships reduce citizen participation and activism as well as reduce the coherence and strength of civil society (Utting, 2000; Jones, 2002a: 3). On the other hand, there is also the possibility that partnerships with business bring in new skills and funding for the NGOs as well as enhance their scope of influence (Jones, 2002a: 3).

Below, the various development measures to be included in the evaluation framework are summarized.

Table 1, Dimensions of development and related evaluation parameters

Dimensions of development	Evaluation parameters
Economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job creation and employment opportunities (formal and informal sector) • Personal income level
Human development	<p><u>Health</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to essential services and goods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health care and treatment incl. immunization - Sanitation - Clean water - Adequate nutrition • State of health in the population: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People's nutritional status - Prevalence of HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other major diseases • Mortality rates <p><u>Education</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School enrolment • Literacy rate

Human development (cont.)	<p><u>Human freedom</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative freedoms – freedom from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forced or child labour - Judicial killings - Unlawful detention - Torture, coercion and corporal punishment • Positive freedoms – freedom to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peacefully associate and assemble - Organise political opposition and independent trade unions - Speak freely and participate in public debates without censorship
Political development	<p><u>State</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human resource development and organizational strengthening for improved administration of social services <p><u>Civil society</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to plan and implement projects and ability to act as a pressure group and gain influence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial and human resources - Degree of freedom vs co-optation, institutional capture and censorship

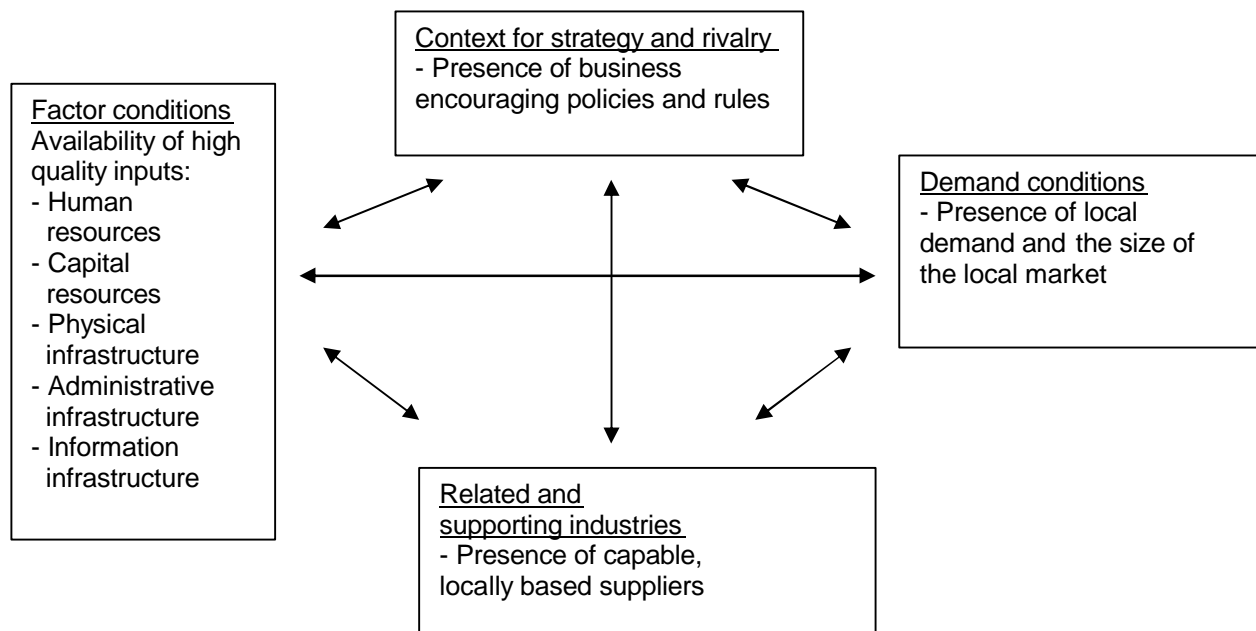
Before moving on to the question of potential business effects and the relevant parameters in this field it is important to emphasize that the above framework primarily is intended for evaluations at project level. In this sense the above framework aims at analyses of partnerships' developmental impacts at project level and not general analyses of partnerships' overall societal impact. This is not to say that the wider developmental implication of partnerships should not be taken into account. Where possible, conclusions about partnership outcomes beyond the project level should of course be drawn. However, it is recognised that such broader analyses of partnership impacts are very challenging and may not be possible at all. First of all, some partnership projects may take

on a character that makes it highly unlikely for them to produce significant impacts at an overall societal level, and secondly any observed changes at an overall societal level are in general very difficult to attribute to a given partnership project. The attribution problem is further elaborated on below in the section on measuring partnership outcomes.

A further important comment on the above framework is that all its elements are not to be activated in every partnership evaluation. Partnerships should only be evaluated according to the evaluation parameters that seem most relevant in relation to their focus. The various outcome measures sketched above will thus be activated at different times depending on the characteristics of the different partnership projects. In this way the above framework represents a menu of evaluation parameters from which to choose depending on the specific partnership being analysed.

After this presentation of possible partnership outcomes at the societal level I shall now move on to the business level. One way of looking at the potential business outcomes of partnership engagement is to use the framework of competitive context. The competitive context of a business consists of four elements as presented in the figure below.

Figure 1, The four elements of competitive context



Source: Porter and Kramer, 2002: 60; Porter, 1991: 127

By engaging in development projects business may improve their competitive context through a strengthening of the four elements related to various stakeholders like employees, suppliers,

customers and local government. Development engagement by business may for example improve the educational level in society leading to greater availability of trained and qualified employees and also more capable suppliers and supporting industries in the local context. Likewise development projects may lead to more prosperous local consumers whereby the local market can be strengthened to the benefit of the business. And with regard to the political context business engagement in development may serve to create a more productive and transparent environment for business activities (Porter and Kramer, 2002: 61 -62).

In line with the above, the independent think tank SustainAbility along with scholars like Steven A. Rochlin and Brenda Christoffer (2000) have highlighted how cross-sector partnerships may lead to various business benefits. In this connection SustainAbility (2001, 2002) makes a basic distinction between outcomes related to financial drivers and outcomes related to financial performance. These two groups of outcomes can be seen as interlinked in the sense that the financial drivers feeds into financial performance. I shall therefore start with the former and work towards potential partnership impact on financial performance.

With regard to financial drivers, partnerships for development may contain the business benefit of risk management and give companies a license to operate. Engaging in development may provide companies with a legal licence to operate from local governments, a local license to operate in the form of local community acceptance and finally a global license to operate, i.e. acceptance or lack of opposition from the global civil society. Partnership involvement may simply give companies a better reputation in different spheres whereby the risk of business disruption by protests and opposition is reduced. Moreover, the development engagement through partnerships may serve to develop local markets in a way that reduces the risk of production delays and improves supply chain reliability (SustainAbility, 2001 and 2002; Rochlin and Christoffer, 2000: 11). Furthermore, private sector engagement in development may harness new business opportunities through the development of local markets and local demand. C.K. Prahalad talks about *The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid* and points to the fact that developing countries with 4-5 billion underserved people and an economy of more than 13 trillion US\$ represent a huge market potential waiting to be realized (Prahalad, 2005). Internally in companies, partnerships for development and the potential reputation enhancement it implies may also make a difference. The ability to attract, motivate and retain skilled employees may be strengthened to the benefit of a company's ability to compete and innovate (SustainAbility, 2001 and 2002; Rochlin and Christoffer, 2000: 11).

Through these financial drivers linked to both the external and internal dimensions of a company's

activities financial performance may be enhanced in several ways. With an enhanced reputation and license to operate companies may first of all gain a better market position both in the developed and developing world whereby revenues can be increased. Secondly, companies' ability to attract capital at favourable costs may be enhanced. Thirdly, there is the possibility of cost savings and increased productivity due to the availability of skilled and highly motivated employees, reduced risks and safer supply chains (SustainAbility, 2001 and 2002; Rochlin and Christoffer, 2000: 11). However, at this point it is important to note that the idea about the profitability of private sector engagement in development is highly disputed. Some critics have pointed to the fact that such engagement might distract business from the business of business, which is to make money and profit. Instead partnerships for development may push up costs, as such activities impose additional and often time consuming responsibilities on business management (Henderson, 2001; Murphy and Bendell, 1999: 223 -224).

With this outline of potential business outcomes of partnerships for development a further specification of the exact outcomes to be included in the evaluation framework is needed. It is suggested here that evaluations of partnerships focus on business outcomes related to the various key stakeholders making up the competitive context of businesses. It should be analysed how business engagement in partnerships for development influence a company's relations with the local community and local government, its employees, its suppliers, customers and investors.

Below the potential business outcomes linked to the different stakeholders are presented together with the selected evaluation parameters.

Table 2, Potential business outcomes of partnerships and evaluation parameters

Stakeholder	Business outcome	Evaluation parameters
Local community and local government	License to operate and risk management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal license to operate: Company's access to government permissions and approvals necessary for the company to operate • Local license to operate: Opposition/criticism vs support from local community • Risk of business disruption or delays due to boycotts from

		local community and/or local government
Employees	Access to human capital: The knowledge, skills and moral of the company's workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of skilled and well educated workers • Ability to attract skilled and well educated workers • Staff satisfaction and ability to retain employees: the degree of staff-turnover • Staff motivation: the productivity of the workers
Suppliers	Supply chain reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capability of local suppliers to deliver the requested inputs in terms of both quantity and quality
Costumers	Brand value, reputation and customer attraction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer satisfaction (risk of consumer boycotts) • Market shares • Access to new markets: development of new business opportunities in developing countries
Investors	Access to financial capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company's ability to attract socially responsible investment (SRI)

As it appears from the above, the selected evaluation parameters are again, as with the developmental effects, rather broad. This broader perspective is chosen at the expense of a more narrow approach based on very specific indicators to allow for an application of the framework to different partnerships with varying information and data available. Furthermore, the above framework primarily includes outcomes related to the so-called financial drivers and improvements of the competitive context whereas financial performance measures like revenues and cost savings are excluded. This is not to say that potential benefits in this field are not important partnership outcomes for business. It is based on a recognition of the fact that partnerships first and foremost are believed to contribute positively to the financial drivers and an improved competitive context

which then in the longer run together with other factors may result in financial gains for the company involved. But in this case we are talking about long -term and also rather complex chain of effects which are difficult to capture. Furthermore, it must be noted that the intention is not to evaluate all partnerships according to all the evaluation parameters. As with the developmental outcomes, the various business outcomes and related measures are to be activated at different times depending on the characteristics of the concrete partnership being analysed. Again this is to ensure that the partnerships are evaluated on the basis of only the most relevant parameters.

As a last comment to the above evaluation framework, the level of measurement for the business outcomes must be discussed. Some business outcomes like the ones related to employees and customers can be measured at several levels. One may look at the outcomes for the local company branch involved directly in a concrete partnership project or focus on the company in general. One can imagine that business engagement in partnerships for development may strengthen the market position of the company in both the developing and the developed world. And likewise the development engagement may influence the employees at local as well as an overall company level. It is suggested here that the evaluations of partnerships primarily focus on the company at project level. Partnership projects are considered most likely to produce effects for the company branch situated in the local context of the project and furthermore, detected effects at an overall company level would be very difficult to attribute to the partnership project. As it was also stated in the section on societal outcomes this delimitation does not mean that evaluations of partnerships must disregard influences beyond the project level. If it is possible to detect influences of the partnership project at an overall company level this should of course be included in the analysis.

Based on the above presentation of the parameters to be included in the evaluation of business and developmental outcomes of partnerships, the measuring of these outcomes is discussed in the following section. The aim is to present a strategy of measurement and clarify how the impact assessment can be carried out.

Measuring partnership outcomes

It is acknowledged that the measuring of partnership outcomes constitutes a distinct methodological challenge in the evaluation of cross-sector partnerships. Some outcomes have a rather intangible character, like for example brand value and business reputation, whereas others may not be visible at the time of evaluation as they represent longer term changes like for example people's state of health. Measuring longer term outcomes is encumbered with great challenges.

The further you get in the chain of results, the harder it is to measure the outcomes that can be attributed to a given project. To meet these challenges it is suggested that evaluations of partnerships focus on both documented, likely and perceived effects. Likely effects involve qualified judgements about future results on the basis of the results produced by the partnership project up to the time of evaluation. Perceived effects refer to the perceptions about partnership outcomes among different groups of actors related to the partnership project in focus. This analysis might be conducted among the partners, the target group, and other actors influenced by or with an insight into the partnership.

Besides the methodological challenges mentioned above, the measuring of partnership outcomes also pose the problem of isolating the outcomes which reasonably can be assigned to the partnership under investigation. There is always a possibility that detected changes and outcomes have occurred as a result of non-program events. In other words, there may be significant influences from other programmes and interventions which are difficult to control. A fundamental and very important aspect of impact assessment is thus to disentangle the programmatic from the non-programmatic effects. Sorting the programmatic from the nonprogrammatic effect is a contrafactual exercise that implies a contrastation of the outcome that actually occurred and the outcome that would have occurred had the project not been implemented (Vedung, 1997: 166-167). However, the question of how actually to conduct such analyses in praxis still remains. A number of different approaches and designs can be applied for the purpose of impact assessment. Evert Vedung presents a rank-ordered list of six research designs for impact assessment: 1) Experiments with randomized controls, 2) Experiments with matched controls, 3) Generic controls, 4) Statistical controls, 5) Reflexive controls, 6) Shadow controls (Vedung, 1997: 170). In experimental designs with either randomized or matched controls the evaluation is based on a comparison of an experimental group and a control group which are equivalent in all relevant aspects apart from the fact that the experimental group has been exposed to the program (Vedung, 1997: Ch. 11). Notwithstanding that this is a strong design for impact assessment, the problem is that useful experiments are very hard to obtain in the real world of public policy and programmes where control groups are very hard to form (Vedung, 1997: 169). In such cases the weaker designs of generic, statistical, reflexive and shadow controls can be used. As opposed to experiments with either randomized or matched controls, these approaches are so-called naturalistic designs - naturalistic because they focus on programs as they unfold in real life instead of analysing them in a provisional tryout setting. Within the group of naturalistic designs a distinction can be made between the designs that use a reference or comparison case, like generic and statistical controls, and the ones that are one-group-only designs, i.e. reflexive and shadow

controls (Vedung, 1997: 195 -196). Without going too much into the technical details of generic and statistical control, the former implies a comparison of program participants with the larger population not covered by the programme, whereas the latter compare different subgroups keeping extraneous factors constant (Vedung, 1997: 196 -197). In reflexive controls, impact assessment is carried out by a measurement of variations in the target variable before and after the intervention. In this design, the pre-program scores serve as controls in relation to post-program scores (Vedung, 1997: 198-199). Lastly, in shadow controls impact assessment is based on estimates and assessments by people with special insights into the program. Instead of actually measuring the counterfactual case, the evaluator asks experts, program administrators and target groups to assess the contributions of the specific project by estimating what would have happened had the project not been implemented (Vedung, 1997: 204).

With regard to the evaluation of partnership outcomes, it is suggested to apply the research design of shadow controls together with reflexive controls to the extent that data is available. It is fully recognised that these two approaches have their limitations compared to the stronger approaches of for example experimental designs. However, reflexive and shadow controls are suggested as research designs due to the fact that experimental designs as well as generic and statistical controls seem rather difficult to obtain. These designs all make use of reference or comparison cases and in the real world of partnership projects it is very difficult, not to say impossible, to form reliable control groups. With regard to the application of reflexive control it is fully recognised that the availability of data in some cases may be too limited and weak to actually use this design. In these cases, impact assessment must be based on shadow controls.

Summing up

For the purpose of gaining further knowledge on the functioning of cross-sector partnerships a framework for evaluation of partnerships has been developed. It is suggested that process as well as results are focused upon in the evaluation of partnerships. Drawing upon network theory a number of evaluation parameters related to actors' strategies and the degree of collaborative advantage vs inertia is proposed for analysis of partnership processes. With regard to outcomes, evaluation parameters relating to both developmental and business outcomes are included in the framework. With this broad perspective the framework allows for critical analyses of the actual win-win potential of partnerships.

The framework is rather broad in the sense that it contains a broad selection of evaluation parameters from which to choose depending on the specific partnership being analysed.

Furthermore, the evaluation framework is characterised by rather broad evaluation measures in stead of more specific indicators. With this design the evaluation framework is expected to be applicable to different kinds of partnerships with varying information and data available.

All in all, the framework is designed as a broad and general evaluation model which is expected to serve as a tool for analyses of a broad variety of partnerships in the field of poverty reduction and social development.

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