

# ANNEX

## METHOD & DATA

The research conducted for the Partnership Report is grounded on existing research on sustainable development partnerships as well as on an analysis of the political debate surrounding partnerships. Informed by this, it takes a largely inductive approach. The experiences of the Seed partnerships—70 survey respondents, including five award winners on whom case studies were written—form the basis for the report.

## RESEARCH STRATEGY

The research conducted for this report included the following elements:

- First, the relevant literature on partnerships for sustainable development was reviewed and the pertinent political discussions were analysed. This led to the identification of a broad range of important research questions.
- Based on these research questions, a first analysis of the 206 eligible submissions to the Seed Awards was conducted.<sup>44</sup> The results of this analysis were used to focus on a smaller number of research questions that seemed particularly relevant for nascent, locally driven partnerships.
- Reflecting this focus, a questionnaire for interviews with the five Seed Award winners was designed. It was used for a first round of semi-structured interviews with representatives of these partnerships.
- Following discussions with researchers, partnership practitioners and policy makers to test the practical relevance of the proposed research, the focal themes for this partnership report were defined.
- A survey was designed and conducted among all partnerships that had applied to the Seed Awards.
- Detailed case studies were written about the experiences of the five winning partnerships.
- The results of the survey and case studies were used to write the present report.

This brief overview of the research strategy employed shows that this report relies on a mix between qualitative and quantitative research methods. In the social sciences, both research traditions were long seen as opposing and mutually exclusive. More recently, however, a combination of both approaches

has become more common. A mixed approach can benefit from its qualitative elements for creating higher conceptual validity, enabling the development of new hypotheses and theories and addressing complex causal relationships. At the same time, its results are more externally valid and representative if they are backed up by quantitative studies.<sup>45</sup>

## CASE STUDIES

Five case studies were written for this report.<sup>46</sup> Short versions of the cases can be found in Chapter 2 and the detailed versions can be accessed at <http://gppi.net/partnershipreport.html>.

The case studies capture the experiences made by the five partnerships that won the Seed Awards in 2005. The case selection, then, was mainly driven by the selection criteria defined for the awards, rather than by scientific considerations. The two international juries who determined the winners were asked to assess among others factors the partnerships' local drive and focus, degree of innovation, and entrepreneurship as well as their likely contribution to sustainable development. The sample is therefore bound to be biased in favour of successful partnerships that score high on these criteria.<sup>47</sup>

To write the case studies, various data sources were used. First, the partnerships provided information about their composition, goals, structure, and needs in the application documents for the Seed Awards. These were initially submitted before mid-August 2004 and updated in late 2004. Second, basic background research on the political, economic, and social situation in the areas of operation as well as on some technical aspects of the partnerships' activities was conducted. This background research largely relied on information sources available on the internet.

Third, interviews were conducted with participants in the partnerships. The interviews were semi-structured around questions concerning the partnership's background; the process leading to the creation of the partnership; the partnership's developments since the application process; the partnership's governance in terms of its finances, structures, and procedures; and its way to define and measure success. In a first round of personal interviews in April 2005, only the main representatives of the partnerships were interviewed. In the autumn and winter of 2005/2006, as much as possible all representatives of partner organisations were interviewed, either by phone or in person. The greatest restrictions occurred in the *Harvesting Seabuckthorn at the Top of the World* partnership, where it proved logistically impossible to access the local partners in the Mustang area.

Fourth, the case studies benefited from information derived from the Seed support services. From April 2005 on, the support channel of the Seed Initiative worked with the five winning partnerships to help them overcome pressing hurdles. The individuals providing the support services were connected to the research effort in two ways. Firstly, they provided their perspectives on the partnerships as semi-insiders through interviews. Secondly, in one case the support provider was also conducting interviews for the case studies. This intersection of support for and research on the partnerships introduces an element of action research.<sup>48</sup>

Action research is a form of research that consciously intervenes in the real world and analyses the effects of this intervention with the aim of improving practice. It allows researchers to understand a social system more deeply as they become part of it and often makes the research ›objects‹ more cooperative. To some degree, the present research has been able

to benefit from these advantages of action research. At the same time, action research encounters limitations because its results are contingent and therefore little representative and because the personal involvement of the researcher can introduce a bias into the analysis.<sup>49</sup> It is hoped that these downsides can at least partially be alleviated by combining action research elements with more traditional case study research methods and by adding quantitative analysis to this qualitative approach.

Finally, all partner organisations that were interviewed were asked for written comments on drafts of the case studies. The comments are reflected in the published versions of the case studies.

## **SURVEY**

In January 2006, a survey was conducted among the partnerships that applied to the Seed Awards in 2004.<sup>50</sup> Of the 263 partnerships that were contacted, 70 sent filled questionnaires back. While 70 is a sample size that is bigger than in many other studies on partnerships, the sample is not representative of the existing universe of partnerships. The sample was self-selected firstly through its participation in the Seed Awards. The call for submissions was explicitly directed at nascent, entrepreneurial and locally driven partnerships for sustainable development. Partnerships fulfilling these criteria were thus more likely to apply than those that do not. Moreover, the call for applications was mainly disseminated through relevant web-based lists as well as the local branches of UNDP, UNEP and IUCN. This privileges partnerships that are aware of international developments and have access to the internet. The call for applications was distributed in English, French and Spanish, again privileging those articulate in these languages. Secondly, we can expect that the decision whether or not to respond to the survey introduces another self-selection bias.

Initiatives that perceive themselves as successful are more likely to respond to a survey than those that have failed or encounter serious difficulties.

The survey form covers questions relating to the current state of development of the partnership; the positive and negative factors influencing the partnership's development, including the partnership's support priorities; the composition of the partnership; the definition and evaluation of the partnership's goals and targets; the current and planned sources and allocation of resources.<sup>51</sup> Depending on the language of the application, it was sent by email in English, French or Spanish. For those who did not respond, follow-up emails were sent and telephone calls were made. Responses were treated confidentially and were received in most cases via email, in some exceptions as printed letters.

With 70 completed surveys, the response rate was 26.6 percent. This is slightly lower than that usually found in the social sciences.<sup>52</sup> One possible reason for this relatively low response rate is that the partnerships were disappointed at not receiving the Seed Awards and thus unwilling to cooperate. Thus, some explicitly described their disappointed hopes. Of the seven finalists who did not win the awards, for example, only three filled in the survey despite their previously close contact with the Seed Initiative. A second hurdle were the often unreliable email and phone connections especially for partnerships in developing countries. Thus, 41 of the partnerships could not be reached either by email or by telephone.

The received answers were coded and provide the quantitative information used in the report. Where correlations between various factors are represented, tests were conducted on the statistical significance of the results.

## CONTRIBUTION

The discussion about the sample chosen both for the case studies and for the survey shows that the Seed partnerships cannot be seen as representative of the whole universe of partnerships. But the sample makes a unique contribution to research about partnerships. Firstly, it deals with partnerships in the relatively early stages of their development. This allows for insights into the enabling factors and obstacles that

are most relevant in the early phases of partnerships and that are often lacking from other analyses.

Secondly, data collection was spread over almost two years—from the submission of the applications in summer 2004 to the completion of the survey and case studies in spring 2006. Rather than capturing just a snapshot of these partnerships, this approach allows for a greater focus on the process of partnership development.

## ABOUT THE SEED INITIATIVE

The Seed Initiative (*Supporting Entrepreneurs for Environment and Development*) is a global network for action on sustainable development partnerships. The Initiative aims to inspire, promote and develop the capacity of locally driven entrepreneurial partnerships that contribute to the internationally agreed goals contained in the Millennium Declaration (MD) and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPol).

The Seed Initiative responds to the challenges that many sustainable development partnerships face, including the need for both technical and financial support in the early stages of developing and building partnership until it enters into implementation, a need to focus on the wide variety of small initiatives, driven by local actors, in addition to large-scale partnerships, and the need for effective »communities of practice and knowledge« that allow mutual learning, support and collaboration.

In order to accomplish its goal, the Seed Initiative has chosen three main areas of focus:

**Promote partnerships** (*through a biennial international award scheme; events and publications*): Encourage local level, entrepreneurial partnerships that directly benefit local communities; mobilize collective action that provides practical interventions in environmental, social and economic development in developing countries; and demonstrate that the wide variety of small partnerships driven by local actors make a positive contribution to sustainable development;

**Support nascent partnerships** (*through offering tailor-made support services for winners of the Seed Awards*): Deliver bottom-up demand driven partnership support by responding strategically to the need of locally driven partnerships for technical and finan-

cial support in early stages of development, mitigating the potential risk of failure;

**Increase the understanding of partnerships** (*through research activities and developing learning tools*): Capture, profile and disseminate information on exemplary partnerships that could be used for sustainable development elsewhere; advocate the need for effective communities of practice and knowledge that allow mutual learning, support and collaboration; and integrate best practice examples of successful local partnerships into high level decision making processes.

The Seed Initiative delivers these actions through a lean operational structure that aims to deliver this focus by coordinating and partnering with likeminded organisations and networks that are delivering—or are willing to engage in—promoting, supporting and understanding of sustainable development partnerships.

Since its launch in January 2004, the Initiative has broken ground in revealing the wealth of entrepreneurial partnership activity taking place on the ground. During the 13th session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) in New York held during April 2005, five winners were announced. These were selected by an international jury to be the recipients of the first cycle of Seed Awards, awarded biennially by the Seed Initiative. The award scheme provides dedicated institutional capacity and targeted support services to partnerships. It focuses specifically on maximising the opportunity for partnerships in the beginning stages of development to succeed during the more difficult and early implementation phases.

Furthermore, it has effectively publicized the partnership approach to sustainable development, given advice to over seventy new partnerships and extensive support to twelve, supported five winning partnerships on the ground and engaged in a cutting-edge programme of research and learning to track the evolution of new partnerships to assist both policy makers and practitioners.

Through the publication of the Partnership Report, the Seed Initiative aims not only to develop best practice, generate awareness amongst decision-makers about the immense potential that such partnerships hold in contributing to the fight against poverty and the facilitation of sustainable development—but also to provide guidance for replication of successful partnership models globally in other developing countries.

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The governments of Germany, The Netherlands, Norway, the UK, the US; and Swiss Re.

## ABOUT GPPI

The Global Public Policy Institute (GPPI) is an independent, non-profit think tank located in Berlin with a long track record in research and consulting in global governance.

### GPPI ENGAGES IN THREE LINES OF WORK:

**Research:** GPPI explores new approaches to effective and accountable governance. Topics include, among others, the reform of international organisations and public-private partnerships.

**Consulting:** GPPI offers strategic consulting services to Governments, international organisations, foundations, NGOs and companies.

**Debate:** GPPI engages the broader public in a debate on new governance approaches through workshops, conferences, and publications.

For more information about the work of the institute please visit [www.globalpublicpolicy.net](http://www.globalpublicpolicy.net).

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<sup>48</sup> The social psychologist Kurt Lewin is generally regarded as the pioneer of action research, which he defines as »a comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action, and research leading to social action.« (Lewin 1946). For more information on action research, especially on its advantages and downsides, see e.g. Stringer (1999), Kock, McQueen, et al. (1997), Kock (2004), Argyris, Putnam, et al. (1985), Susman and Everet (1978).

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991).

<sup>50</sup> On survey methods, see e.g. Groves, Fowler et al (2004) or Fink (1983)

<sup>51</sup> A sample of the survey form can be accessed at <http://gppi.net/partnershipreport.html>.

<sup>52</sup> For studies on response rates, see e.g. Sheehan (2001), Manfreda and Vehovar (2003) or Tarnai and Paxson (2004).





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**Swiss Re**



»The Seed initiative is inspiring fresh thinking and innovative practices around the important partnership agenda. This report demonstrates the benefits of its unique approach: Combining hands on learning by doing with great analytical clarity and a dedication to learn from experiences made.

I believe that this report will greatly contribute to make partnerships more effective and impactful while at the same time advancing understanding about their very nature.«

*Georg Kell, Executive Head, United Nations Global Compact*

»The Partnership Report is a welcome contribution to our understanding about the role that different actors—and particularly business—can play in implementing the Millennium Development Goals. Backed up by a wealth of empirical material and drawn together with analytical clarity, this report is a powerful statement about the value of locally driven partnerships and makes compelling policy recommendations.«

*Monika Wulf-Mathies, Managing Director Corporate Public Policy and Sustainability,  
Deutsche Post AG*