NGOs and Companies: How to make a partnership work?¹,²

Clémence David

ABSTRACT

As the number of NGOs evolve in each field and in each country, the need for project management is these organizations have increased. Especially when they are partnering with companies? The fundamental aim of this research is to understand how to contribute setting up a fruitful partnership and what is it exactly and is there any other options for an NGO when the need of a partnership with companies becomes crucial. The paper ran a literature review on recent research to assess the main challenges with several types of contracts or agreement. Finally, the paper analyzed how the element of partnership contracts or agreement can contribute to project management performance. The obtained results have shown that NGOs have different options regarding contracting out with companies that could improve performance management but also have better results in a long-term partnership.

Keywords: Contract, NGO, Company, Social Impact, Main Goals, Settlement of Dispute, Financial Issue, Liabilities

INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the '90s, partnerships between NGO and Companies have developed and become real issues. This situation is due to the emergence and the increase of the problems in the social and environmental contexts and thus places NGOs and companies as actors of change. An example in 1992 the United Nations Conference on the environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Rio earth summit that “partnerships are key to sustainable development”³

It is important to define what a partnership is an especially a partnership between an NGO and a company According to the documental case “Emerging opportunities for NGO-business

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partnerships, a partnership is “Are those relationships that establish a non-statutory collaboration between organizations from different sectors (business, government, and civil society). Such partnerships are typically put in place to achieve sustainable development goals at strategic and/or operational levels.”

Figure 1: "The different types of a contract between NGO and Companies"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership Model</th>
<th>Sponsorship</th>
<th>Active engagement</th>
<th>Sharing Expertise</th>
<th>Societal research and development</th>
<th>Hybrid model</th>
<th>Economic cooperation</th>
<th>Alternative of general interest</th>
<th>Audit of practices</th>
<th>Service provision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Donation without a counterpart to an association</td>
<td>Involvement of the company in the associative project especially with the presence of its collaborators</td>
<td>Exchange of skills to better respond to challenges</td>
<td>Developing a service or product to meet a need</td>
<td>Joint venture</td>
<td>Mutual contributions of partners to strengthen the offer of each</td>
<td>Services launch by NGO’s that contributes an alternative of general interest</td>
<td>Call for change management in companies</td>
<td>Service launch by NGO’s to companies which indirectly contributes to the general interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>Projects call foundation</td>
<td>Skills sponsorship</td>
<td>Real estate expertise in social housing</td>
<td>Medical research with patient associations</td>
<td>Creation of a common structure for the training of employees in the insertion</td>
<td>Joint responses to a call for tenders from territorial communities</td>
<td>Sponsoring</td>
<td>Environmental Audit</td>
<td>Purchase of a service from a service company</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Who are the stakeholders in a partnership between an NGO and a company and what is their role in a partnership?

- **NGO ‘s Project Management:** "an investment that requires a set of logically linked and coordinated activities performed over a finite period of time in order to accomplish a unique result in support of the desired outcome".

- "Occidental Petroleum, ECOPETROL, International Alert, and Fundación Ideas Para la Paz Piloting Innovative Social Assessment in a Colombian Oil Field". The main goal of this project is to assure the positive impact for the local communities, who are

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Program Management “A program is a group of related projects managed in a coordinated manner to obtain benefits not available from managing them individually. Program management is the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to meet program requirements. Organizations with mature program management are far more successful than those without it, according to our research.”

4 types of Program:
- Strategic Program
- Operational Program
- Multi-Project Program
- Mega-Project

Asset Manager: “is normally a functional manager who is responsible to allocate scarce and/or limited resources (assets) to acquire, create, expand upon and eventually dispose of organizational assets. The asset manager’s primary or key focus is Return on Assets (ROA) and the majority of projects the Asset Manager is responsible for are funded using the Capital Asset Budgeting Process, more commonly known as CAPEX.”

There are 5 asset classes: “Human assets (HR), Information assets (IT, Engineering), Physical assets (‘plant manager” or “heavy equipment shop”), Financial assets (accounting), Intangible assets “difference between a company’s book value and market capitalization value.”

Portfolio of Project: “A "portfolio of projects" is no different than any investment portfolio, the objective is to minimize the risk and maximize the return. Any organization, be it Owner or Contractor has a portfolio of assets (resources) available to dedicate to projects, with the objective being to develop the best "mix" of projects which will generate the most favorable return on those assets. Projects fall into 4 broad categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Management</th>
<th>NGOs and Companies: How to make a partnership work?</th>
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</table>
| "A program is a group of related projects managed in a coordinated manner to obtain benefits not available from managing them individually. Program management is the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to meet program requirements. Organizations with mature program management are far more successful than those without it, according to our research.” | The Avia Street School Program which supports NGOs working with street children in the UK and in 16 other countries.”

"4 types of Program:
- Strategic Program
- Operational Program
- Multi-Project Program
- Mega-Project

For Humanitarian Project:
- Human Asset: Team of Ngo and Company and all stakeholders, like beneficiaries of the project
- Information Asset: database
- Physical Asset: furniture, equipment, communication tools
- Financial Asset: Budget,cost,benefits
- Intangible Asset: Know how of company and NGO, brand and NGO reputation

The long-term partnership between “Les enfoirés”( Les restos du Coeur association) and TF1 (French channel television). This partnership was more than 30 years ago, in addition to the annual concert organized and broadcast on the channel (revenue earned thanks to viewers by TF1), they take advantage of this event to maximize costs and reduce risks by communicating on sales CD or by organizing exhibitions.

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1. Revenue Generating or “Top Line” Projects
2. Cost Containment or “Bottom Line” Projects
3. Mandated Projects
4. Community Service or “Good Will” Projects

We can say that a partnership between an NGO and a company is not just about the excellent image and the financial contribution that each brings.

There are four main types of benefits:

- Sponsorship
- Societal innovation
- Economic cooperation
- Responsible practices

Nevertheless partnerships today have challenges. In fact, as the OCED write in the document, Successful partnership there are 3 principals to respect:

- Define all the actors together, sometimes this part is avoiding and not clearly defined.
- Partners should have an equal right. If it’s not the case, this would be mentioned in the contract.
- How we defined the ownership of the contract?

These principles and reflections lead us to say that certain elements must be clearly defined between partners, that this to avoid any problem within the partnership. These principles are even more important when partners are two different entities, that is the case in our the context, a partnership between NGO and company.

Root Cause Analysis

<table>
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<th>Potential Failure</th>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Probability</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Different Purpose</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contribution (in cause or project) by one of the two parties not up to define the expectation</td>
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<td>2</td>
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</table>

Several problems can arise, objectives not clearly defined is one of the most recurrent problems that has compromised the smooth running of the partnership (such as the case of the company Essent and the NGO WWF). Other problems are likely to occur like an external event which modifies the clauses of the contract, insufficient funds, a project related to the unsuccessful partnership, a partner who does not respect its commitments.

The evolution of its partnerships is rapid and multiplied, the managers of today and especially those of tomorrow will be more and more confronted with this kind of practice. That is why it is essential to draft a contract, to avoid any discord and develop a fruitful partnership between a company and an NGO.

To summarize,

**How contracts between NGOs and companies contribute to developing a strong partnership?**

What do you call your successful contract between an NGO and a company?

How to treat critical points such as Financial issue and Liabilities?

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13 By the Author
METHODOLOGY

1. Problem Resolution

The main purpose of a partnership between NGO and Company is to use each other’s resources and knowledge to serve a cause. This generally altruistic and supportive exchange is based on the goodwill of both parties. “As the Global Environmental Management Initiative (GEMI) points out in the Guide to Successful Corporate-NGO Partnerships in theirs, a Properly Structuring Agreement is needed”\(^\text{14}\). That is why it is essential to avoid any conflict or problems knowing that the goal is to serve a good deed, usually not including personal and financial issues. The importance of achieving a contract with an awareness-raising allows stepping certain risks.

Example: Non-respect of the altruistic and supportive approach (eg profit-making), Different objectives and benefits and Bad definition of the responsibilities of each part (Company and/or NGO).

Step 2: Identification of the feasibility alternatives

These following alternatives are chosen as part of a better structuring of the contract, to overcome the problems mentioned before. The order was chosen according to the structure of a contract, in this case starting with the legal framework and ending with risk analysis.

- “Adequate Partnership Law”\(^\text{15}\)
- “Selecting the Right Partners as Stakeholders”\(^\text{16}\)
- “Revenue sustainability and a solid consortium structure”\(^\text{17}\)
- “Competitive and transparent procurement process”\(^\text{18}\)
- “Extensive technical and financial feasibility of identified projects”\(^\text{19}\)


Step 3: Development for each alternative

- **Adequate Partnership Law**
  Use the appropriate laws to frame the contract between the two partners. Define the legal framework that will enable the implementation of the roadmap of the project(s) related to this partnership. Clearly outlining the project selection criteria, the bidding process, the approval process, and the contracts. The legal framework will then be clearly defined nevertheless it takes time. "All partnerships operate on the basis of a legal construct. This can be a legal entity, for instance, an NGO or a partnership in the true sense of the term where the partners are each accountable in accordance with their own legal basis."  

- **Selecting the Right Partners as Stakeholders**
  Each stakeholder is part of the project, in a non-profit project and with an eco-responsible stake, it is important to choose these stakeholders so that it does not compromise the project and its values. To know the feasibility and the strength of the partnership and the impact of the stakeholders it is necessary to follow a very precise process, as stated in the article «How to Pick the Right NGO Partner» which includes three big points add values thanks to expertise, Led by example and Defined parameters and respect them.

- **Revenue sustainability and a solid consortium structure**
  “Identified by Build Own Operate Transfer (BOOT) concept in Australia”, This part is more about the capacity of the partnership and projects linked to it to generate solid revenues, so it is necessary to study the issue before starting the project. While negotiating a strong agreement to develop these benefits. "Careful partner selection is essential for the partnership approach to be fruitful, to enable effective working relationships, and to ensure that partnership activities are sustainable."  

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▪ The competitive and transparent procurement process
The offer and the criteria of calls for tender must be clearly defined so that the company
and the NGO find their interest and that the stakeholders can be attracted by this
partnership. This clarification gives a comfortable position to each party during
negotiations, because both will be equal. Partnership and partners are honest with each
other for that it is necessary to create a trust relationship and it is not innate, it takes
time. “There has to be strong communication, among the partners – so that there is
maximum transparency both within and outside of the partnership”26

▪ Extensive technical and financial feasibility of identified projects
“Extensive technical studies are required to establish the clear technical feasibility of the
project and identify any engineering uncertainties to be resolved before the project is
put for bidding. Any surprises during the implementation stage could lead to construction
cost overruns and delays. Solid forecasting of the project revenues and the cost estimates
is required to establish the financial feasibility of the project. Overestimation of revenues
and underestimation of the cost would lead to project failure. Sound financial
management allows a partnership plan to be implemented fully and to achieve objectives
and targets. It gives reassurance to the partners and to other stakeholders, including
funders and local communities.”27

▪ Appropriate risk allocation
Risk analysis is an essential criterion, especially for companies that are generally part of
a financial aspect and from their image. “Risks are allocated to the party that could best
manage them at the lowest cost. Some of the key risks that needs to be allocated and
managed to ensure the success of partnership are: Construction and Completion Risk,
Operating Risks, Demand Risk Force Majeure and Change in Law, Political and
Regulatory Risk and Expropriation and Nationalization Risk, Environmental Risk, Tenor
and Refinancing Risk, Currency Exchange Risk, Interest Rate Risk”28

▪ Communicate about Vision
“Having a shared vision between the stakeholders about the target populations, how to
serve them, and the means for achieving these goals is undeniably a key success
factor”29. The vision is the center of interest during an associative project. This
alternative makes it possible to ensure that each stakeholder of the partnership and

https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/key-success-factors-public-private-partnerships-ppp-gcc-baig/
https://journals.openedition.org/factsreports/4104
project related, has the same way of thinking. It also helps to create a relationship between each party and develop the partnership and its benefits.

**Step 4: Selection of criteria**

The criteria were taken from the Guild of Project Controls on managing contract but also from reports made by the Millennium Development Goal over the years. It is important to use criteria that allow for a successful partnership. In fact, the choice of targeting the 8 MDG was justified by the UN on the basis of the same criteria as those for the other MDGs (UN, 2003).

- **“Straightforward/Comprehensible”** -> Easy to understand and to apply it. How the parties will understand the alternatives and be able to apply it?
- **“Risk Analysis”** -> appropriate to the phase being completed. What are the risks of alternatives?
- **“Resource Analysis”** -> appropriate to the phase being completed. What resources are needed to set up this alternative?
- **“Cost Estimate”** -> Within acceptable ranges appropriate to the phase being completed.
- **“Shared Value”** -> When it comes to partnerships, shared values, more than shared goals, will lead businesses to greater long-term success.
- **“Likelihood”** -> What is the probability that this alternative help for the partnership?
- **“Transparency”** -> What is the level of transparency of the alternative? Is everything very clear and precise?
- **“Duration of the alternative”** -> How long does the implementation of the alternative take?

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In addition to these criteria, we used the Smart Goal:\(38\),

**Specific**: It is understandable and clear for anyone in the project.

**Measurable**: Is the project measurable, so the team member can track their progress and stay motivated?

**Attainable**: Is the goal realistic and achievable?

**Realistic**: Is it applicable in the current socio-economic environment?

**Time-based**: A goal should be set within a time frame. With no time frame tied to it, there’s no sense of urgency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Straightforward Comprehensible</th>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Shared Value</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Transparency</th>
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</table>

Table 1: Alternatives features according to their importance in process resolution\(39\)

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39 By Author
## FINDINGS

### Step 5: Analysis and comparison of the alternatives

Let’s now give a note for each alternative regarding a criterion by using this following notation. This will help us to calculate the score of each one and rank them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Adequate Partnership Law</th>
<th>Selecting the Right Partners as Stakeholders</th>
<th>Revenue sustainability and a solid consortium structure</th>
<th>Competitive and transparent procurement process</th>
<th>Extensive technical and financial feasibility of identified projects</th>
<th>Appropriate risk allocation</th>
<th>Communicate about Share Vision</th>
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</table>

Table 3: Ranking of alternatives regarding criteria

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By looking at this table, we can directly delete some alternatives. As comparing them to the criteria chosen, we calculated the score of each alternative. Selecting the Right Partners as Stakeholders, Communicate about Vision and Competitive and adequate partnership law are in the podium. Nevertheless, appropriate risk allocation, and revenue sustainability and extensive technical seem to be the less appropriated alternatives to contribute to the development of a fruitful partnership between an NGO and a company. In fact, these alternatives are not really sure and take time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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Table 4: Additive Weighting technique

**Step 6: Selection of the preferred alternative**

Following the research carried out and the various analyzes made (ADR’s features according to their importance in process resolution, the ranking of alternatives regarding criteria and additive Weighting technique) this is the alternative Selecting the Right Partners as Stakeholders who is chosen. This alternative is far ahead of the others when comparing their results thanks to the scale of ratio we can notice that Selecting the right Partners as Stakeholders is a better alternative than extensive technical by 158% (0,19/0,12=1,58x100=158%) and better than competitive and transparent procurement by 135 % (0,19/0,14=1,35x100=135%).

In addition to developing many advantages, it is not binding in terms of cost and time.

As described by several authors the contracts have an influence on the partners involved, the reciprocal is also true, the commitment of the partners have an influence on the contract, «expect characteristics of the contract (especially flexibility) to have an impact on the degree of (external) stakeholder involvement».

By evaluating, analyzing and choosing its partners can control or limit the harmful effects that they can bring. By selecting partners who have the same values, the same objectives and the right resources, all the elements necessary for the good progress of a partnership in terms of

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objectives, resources (financial) and interests are grouped together. The choice of the actors is thus the determining element to put projects through a partnership between the NGOs and the companies.

**Step 7: Performance monitoring and post evaluation**

The chosen alternative allows us to answer our problems of the beginning in other words, How contracts between NGOs and companies contribute to developing a strong partnership? But we do not know exactly how this alternative once implanted will evolve, that’s why we use Pareto Analysis.” Pareto Analysis is a technique for prioritizing possible changes by identifying the problems that will be resolved by making these changes. By using this approach, you can prioritize the individual changes that will most improve the situation.**43**

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**Before Pareto Analysis**44

**After Pareto Analysis**45

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CONCLUSION

Through this paper, we want to find the alternative that we allow companies and NGO to develop a real long-term partnership including the responsibilities of each part. After an analysis of the subject, the definition of alternatives, the corresponding criteria and the study of these, we have been able to conclude that the most appropriate alternative is Selecting the Right Partners as Stakeholders. With the introduction of this alternative, the likelihood that potential problems within a partnership between an NGO and a company will appear is greatly diminished. Moreover, the Pareto analysis allows us to highlight that this solution is the most appropriate in the short and long term.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


About the Author

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Clémence David is a 22 years old French student (from the south of France), currently pursuing a Master of Science degree in Project and Program Management and Business Development at SKEMA Business School. Being deeply interested in NGOs and humanitarian projects, she has always been involved in associations by volunteering, be it in collection and food aid associations, or more recently by being a member of the board of the humanitarian association of her school: HOPE. Her different professional and personal experiences have allowed her to develop qualities, attributes that represent her today such as openness, the spirit of synthesis and her joy of life.

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