

**EXPLORING CIVIL SOCIETY
ORGANIZATIONS-BUSINESSES
PARTNERSHIPS IN THE
CONTEXT OF ALBANIA**



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Acronyms

ACER	Albanian Center for Economic Research
BCSDN	Balkan Civil Society Development Network
BHRRC	Business and Human Rights Resource Centre
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
NPO	Non-profit Organization
SE	Social Enterprises
WB6	Western Balkan countries

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Executive summary

This research report provides an overview of the challenges and opportunities that the Albanian CSOs face while partnering with the private sector. This research was funded by the Balkan Civil Society Development Network (BCSDN) and developed by the Albanian Center for Economic Research (ACER). Thirty Albanian CSOs were interviewed for the analysis, half of whom had previously formed partnerships with Albanian businesses. These fifteen CSOs have explored a range of relationship opportunities, from philanthropy—a more conventional kind of collaboration—to more strategic alliances.

Desk research and the conducted interviews, produced the following findings and recommendations.

- **There is an underexplored cooperation between CSOs and businesses in Albania.**

The ones that have already established some successful partnerships do still see as the **fundamental motive partnering with businesses the financial gain**. CSOs are looking for new ways to support their operations and execute their activities.

- CSOs-business partnership is not a new concept in Albania. This model has successfully worked in other countries and have shown to work in Albania as well. **What is novel in the context of Albania is the multifaceted opportunities such partnerships produce which are not enough explored.** CSOs and businesses

should move beyond the traditional forms of partnerships and come up with more creative and innovative ways of cooperation, which produces mutual benefits.

- **Building the relationship with businesses, creating mutual trust and respect** are main dynamics of the CSOs-business cooperation. In this regard, it is imperative for partnerships to find the right fit.

- Four are key ingredients of making CSOs-business partnerships succeed: **establishing strong relationship, use formal mechanisms within the partnership, maintain ongoing and clear communication and leverage success both within the partnership and more broadly.**

- **A few CSOs** uses formal mechanism for the partnership, at the outset of the cooperation. Those who admitted to have already used such mechanisms, noted that some consolidation and sophistication of the existing documents is necessary to put more clarities on them.

- Generally, there is a **lack of evaluation** of the partnerships with businesses. Consequently, it is hard for both parties to clearly know the impact this partnership had.

Considering the above findings, this research report lays out some recommendations which aim to directly address the above mentioned challenges of CSOs-businesses partnership.

- **The Albanian CSOs should approach businesses in a strategic way.** Not every business is a good partner which could serve the mission and purposes of a CSOs. Sometimes, this relationship could undermine the purpose of CSOs itself. This way, the Albanian CSOs should first scan the environment and approach the right business to partner with.
- **The Albanian CSOs should work in building/enhancing their internal capacities.** Building and maintaining partnership with businesses, takes time and efforts and a professional team can successfully handle such a process.
- **The Albanian CSOs should use formal mechanisms in establishing and managing a partnership with businesses.** There are cases where these formal mechanisms are in place. However, they are underused in the course of a partnership. This causes misunderstandings and contribute to the failure of the partnership.
- **The Albanian CSOs should gradually increase the communication with their business partners.** An increased and effective communication between parties, improves the relationship and is a key success factor in achieving the objectives of the partnership.

- **The Albanian CSOs should establish and utilize formal results measurement.**

For example, a well-known practice is the use of formal evaluations to measure the results of the partnership.

- To advance the CSOs-business modalities of partnerships, **a portal could be established in the framework of a regional project in the WB6.** This portal should contain information that could easily match the CSOs and business needs and provide a way to stimulate such cooperation. Besides serving as a virtual networking place, this portal should comprise case studies, best practices and other necessary information that could help the CSOs-business partnering. In addition, this portal should contain templates of partnership tools starting from contract documents or partnership agreement template and other helpful materials.

- The Albanian government should design specific incentives to foster CSOs-business cooperation. For example, in Albania social businesses is treated and taxed as a pure business.

- CSOs should improve their current services and enhance social innovation. Instead than just copying products and strategies from the business world, they should forge their own course. They should rethink their purpose and make it one that prioritizes prevention rather than simply problem-solving.

1. Introduction

Civil society organizations (CSOs) plays a critical role in the advancement of democratic principles and human rights.¹ They serve as a conduit between citizens and government, promoting innovation, advocating for change, and holding governments accountable. Besides all efforts and work of the CSOs in contributing to a better WB6 environment, still this latter remains a tough setting for CSOs to operate in, especially given the region's dwindling space for civil society and independent media.² To make the role of the Western Balkan CSOs stronger, a greater support is necessary in the framework of making them more sustainable. EU has made this a high priority and have increased the help towards the CSOs through grant giving and other modalities of support.³ However, relying on donors funds alone, does not make the foundations of the CSOs more powerful in the long term.

As the latest *Monitoring Matrix Regional Report (2020)* confirms, among other problems the WB6 CSOs are facing, is "Weak financial viability and sustainability of the sector" (page 14).⁴ The same issue persist for 2021 as well, according to the preliminary findings of the *Monitoring Matrix Regional Report (2021)*.⁵ Public financing

is still not a sustainable source of income for WB6 CSOs, and it declined further in 2020. Many scheduled calls for proposals were cancelled, halted, or postponed as a result of the Covid-19, thus affecting the quantity of state grants available to CSOs. The majority of the money were allocated to the COVID-19 response, while institutional grants were noticeably scarce. In specific terms for Albania, according to a survey developed in 2019, financial viability of Albanian CSOs continue to be an issue and this regardless CSOs size, location, area of operation or age. In this context, the Albanian CSOs should look for alternative ways in order to diversity their services and increase their sustainability.

Generally, it is permissible for CSOs operating in the WB6 to obtain funds from a variety of sources, however **support from private domestic donors is limited, and CSOs still seldom conduct partnerships with the private sector. Considering this brief CSOs landscape in the WB6, needless to say that this sector immediately needs to diversify its financial sources and joint forces with new actors thus to achieve their missions. One of the most important actor that could contribute on this, remains the private sector.**

¹ The legal frameworks in the Western Balkans include various terminologies to describe CSOs, including references to associations, foundations and NGOs; for the purpose of this report, the terms 'CSO' and 'NGO' are therefore used interchangeably. In Albania, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) "means civil society organizations, which may be non-profit organizations or other civil society entities, which are not registered as NGOs, but which operate in the good interest of the public, respectively with the definition given in Law No. 119/2015 "On the establishment and functioning of the National Council for Civil Society".

² Amerhauser, K., Kemp, W., (2021). Stronger Together: Bolstering resilience among civil society in the Western Balkans. Retrieved from <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/resilient-balkans/#~:text=%E2%80%9CStronger%20Together%3A%20Bolstering%20resilience%20among,the%20GI%20TOC's%20Resilience%20Fund.>

³ Retrieved from <https://webalkans.eu/en/themes/democracy-and-fundamental-rights/civil-society/>.

⁴ Anja Bosilkova-Antovska. (2021). Monitoring Matrix on Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development Regional Report: Western Balkans 2020. Balkan Civil Society Development Network. https://www.balkanecd.net/novo/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/94-5-Regional-Monitoring-Matrix-Report-2020_FINAL.pdf

⁵ Regional Workshop Organized in Belgrade: Joint Action for Promoting Civic Space and a More Resilient Civil Society (June, 2022), Balkan Civil Society Development Network, <https://www.balkanecd.net/bcsdn-regional-workshop-organized-in-belgrade-joint-action-for-promoting-civic-space-and-a-more-resilient-civil-society/?fbclid=IwAR10FJnZcKU2Y88r0XbwIRwnsRHrp2MiDUyYKr776d0UluHuNpq2ErI02IM.>

⁶ Ibid

The Albanian CSOs are increasingly recognizing the value of strategic cooperation with the private sector. As a result, partnerships between CSOs-private sector in Albania are beginning to find a common ground.⁷ However, the mode of cooperation remains far from the strategic exploration of such partnerships. This has been confirmed by findings of a survey developed from Partners Albania where 7 out of 10 CSOs admitted that they had never cooperated with businesses. The remaining accepted that their partnerships have taken place mostly in the form of giving funds and in kind.⁸ The lack of cooperation between Albanian CSOs and businesses is confirmed in another qualitative study, too.⁹ **However, they recognize that by working together the possibility of achieving their respective strategic goals is greatly increased.**

The objective of this research is to provide an overview of the obstacles and possibilities that the Albanian CSOs encounter when collaborating with the private sector. In addition, this research highlights tools and resources that CSOs could use to facilitate successful partnerships with businesses. This research endeavours to answer the following questions:

This study provides a mapping of some of the key characteristics of CSO-business partnerships highlighted in the literature, addressing the following questions:

1. What are the primary factors, patterns, and roles that influence business-CSO partnerships?
2. What are the main partnership characteristics?
3. What is the potential role for donors aiming to support such partnerships?

Albania is taken in this research report as a case study to showcase both success stories and the potentials that do exist in partnering with businesses.

This report is structured as follows. The second section outlines the methodology utilized to write this report. The third section describes a theoretical framework on the modalities that CSOs-business partnerships could take. The fourth section lays out some best practices that the Albanian cases of CSOs partnering with businesses. The fifth section outlines the CSOs-business experiences, challenges encountered and opportunities ahead, all from the perspective of the CSO. This report closes with findings and recommendations.

⁷ Regional Event on CSO-Private Sector Cooperation: Shared Civic Space as Shared Responsibility (March, 2022), Balkan Civil Society Development Network. <https://www.balkanicsd.net/regional-event-on-cso-private-sector-cooperation-shared-civic-space-as-shared-responsibility/>.

⁸ National Resource Centre for Civil Society in Albania. (2019). Capacity and Needs Assessment for Civil Society Organizations in Albania. <https://partnersalbania.org/publication/capacity-and-needs-assessment-for-civil-society-organisations-in-albania/>.

⁹ Wloch, R., & Xhindi, N. (2020). THINK TANKS IN ALBANIA: A CASE OF A FLAWED POWER-KNOWLEDGE NEXUS. *The Copernicus Journal of Political Studies*, (2), 143-160.

2. Methodology

Desk Research

The primary data collected for was complemented with a review of the national and international reports pertaining CSOs in the WB6. The list of consulted reports can be found at the references section. In addition, a review of the relevant legislation in CSOs in Albania was conducted.

Study instrument

To answer the research questions, ACER developed a semi-structured questionnaire which consisted of five sections: (i) Demographic data of the CSOs; (ii) setting up partnerships with businesses; (iii) partnership dynamics; (iv) outcome of the partnership; (v) lessons learnt from the partnership. The questionnaire was designed in a way so to identify all the process of a partnership, challenges encountered and lessons CSOs learnt over this partnership. To make the instrument fully understandable, it was initially tested from three CSOs representative and then reviewed/finalized accordingly. After the finalization of the questionnaire, it was converted into an electronic google form and distributed to the selected sample.

Research sample

In order to have a wide geographic coverage of the Albanian CSOs, we referred to the registry of the Agency for the Support of Civil Society.¹⁰ A total of 662 CSOs operating in Albania received the questionnaire. 68% of CSOs operate in Tirana.

Table 1: The number of CSOs in Albania that received the questionnaire

No.	District	Distributed to
1	Tirane	452
2	Korce	39
3	Vlore	38
4	Elbasan	27
5	Shkoder	20
6	Durres	16
7	Gjirokaster	15
8	Kukes	13
9	Fier	13
10	Diber	11
11	Lezhe	9
12	Berat	9
Total		662

Data collection

To collect as many responses as possible, ACER converted the questionnaire into an online tool and distributed it to 662 CSOs in Albania. Only 30 CSOs responded the questionnaire. To have a regional perspective on the topic, we approached several CSOs operating in other WB6. We interviewed four CSOs operating in Kosovo, one in Serbia, one in Bosnia and Herzegovina and one in North Macedonia. Results of other WB6 respondents are incorporated along the report.

¹⁰ Retrieved from <https://amshc.gov.al/ojf-qe-veprojne-ne-shqiperi/>.

3. Forms of CSOs-Private Sector Cooperation

There is a bargaining literature which explores the variety of relationships that businesses and CSOs can build. In a structured manner, they are categorized into three groups.¹¹

First, complementary relations. This kind of partnership is the classical form of cooperation where each partner serves a different function and their interaction is at the lowest levels. Considering the distinction functions, they are supposed to complement each other on their respective activities.

Second, adversarial relations. This partnership typology takes place when CSOs operate as “watchdogs” or “activists” requiring to keep businesses accountable. Through taking an adversarial approach, CSOs hope to persuade firms to modify existing policies that they believe are socially unwelcome or to establish new practices that they believe are socially beneficial, frequently by exposing companies' activities to the media and the public.

Third, collaborative relations. This type of partnership arises when CSOs work together to achieve a common objective or agenda, which is frequently to address a social issue. These avenues of cooperation vary between purely philanthropic in which CSOs are given financial support from businesses to a more integrative approach of CSOs-business mission, strategy and operations. In sum, this third partnership consist of three sub-categories namely: philanthropic, transactional, or integrative.

To clearly outline the typologies of collaborative relationship between the CSOs and the private sector, a thorough desk research has been conducted. Drawing on the consulted literature,¹² the interaction between CSOs and businesses can take three main forms displayed in the following figure.

- **Philanthropic relationship.** The nature of the connection at the philanthropic stage is essentially that of a charitable contributor and recipient. Most CSOs–business interactions today are like this, but an increasing number are paying increasing efforts to jump to the next level.
- **Transactional relationship.** In this stage, there is a two-way resource exchange. Both CSOs and businesses endeavour to align their purposes and produce mutual benefits. This stage includes services such as cause-related marketing, event sponsorships, and contractual service arrangements.
- **It is the integrative relationship.** This special cooperation form between CSOs and businesses, is the least used in the WB6. In this relationship, a collective action is created. In terms of purpose, strategy, and operations, corporations and organizations become much more strategic and organizationally connected. The partnership resembles a long-term joint cooperation rather than a transaction. In other words, CSO motivations fall into three categories that are often

¹¹ Anheier, H. K., & Toepler, S. (Eds.). (2009). International encyclopedia of civil society. Springer Science & Business Media.

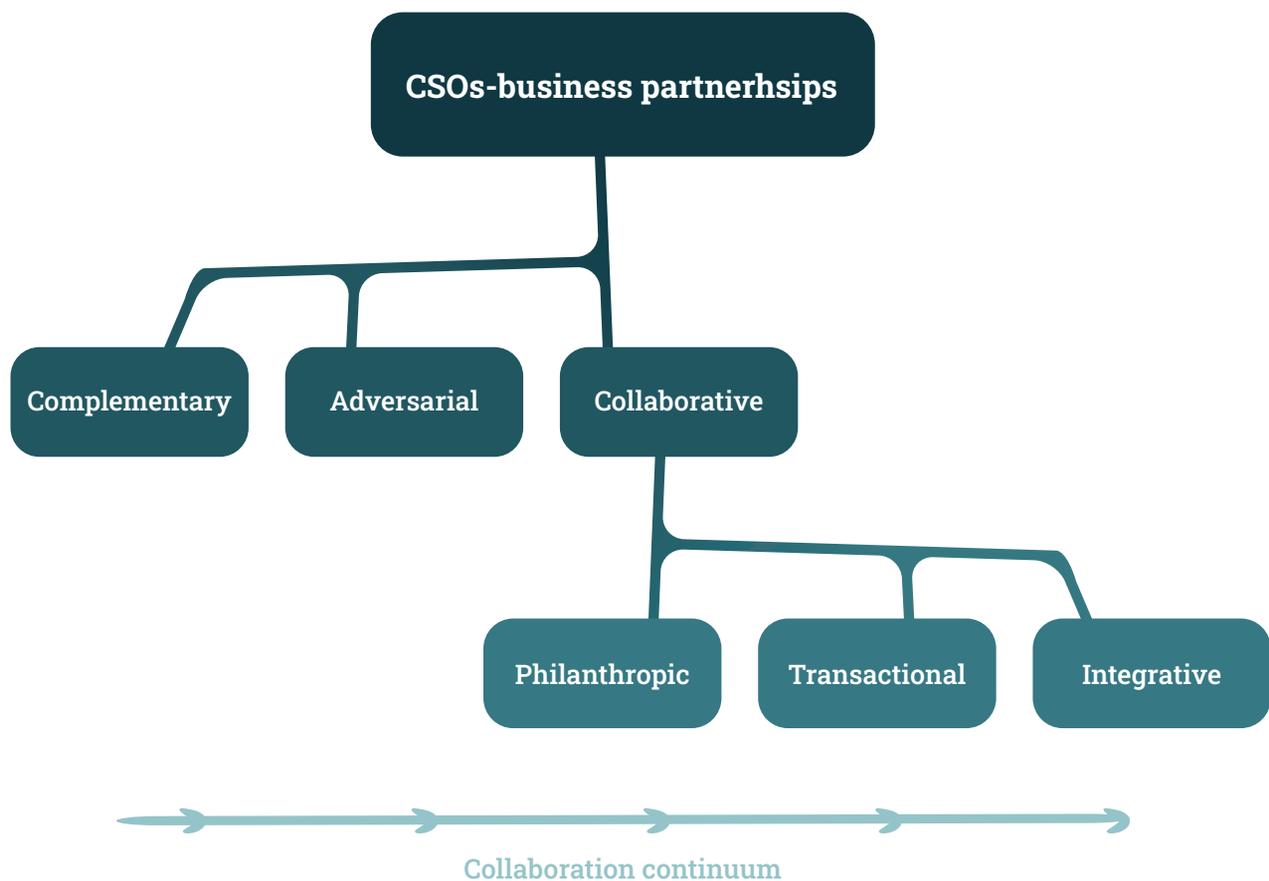
¹² Austin, J. E. (2000). Strategic collaboration between nonprofits and businesses. *Nonprofit and voluntary sector quarterly*, 29(1_suppl), 69-97.

interrelated: funds mobilization, in which partnerships serve as a new source of revenue; capabilities enhancement, in which partnering with corporations allows for the development of better skills and organizational capacities; and mission attainment, which stems from goal

alignment and the capture of synergies that increase scale, scope, or quality.

To the scope of this research report, the following pages will elaborate on all three avenues of the collaborative relations between CSOs-businesses.

Figure 1: Avenues of CSOs-business partnerships



Source: Authors' work based on the desk research

Table 2: Features of CSOs-partnerships typologies

Nature of relationship	Stage 1: Philanthropic	Stage 2: Transactional	Stage 3: Integrative
Level of engagement	<i>Low</i>		<i>High</i>
Importance to mission	<i>Peripheral</i>		<i>High</i>
Magnitude of resources	<i>Small</i>		<i>Big</i>
Scope of activities	<i>Narrow</i>		<i>Broad</i>
Interaction level	<i>Infrequent</i>		<i>Intensive</i>
Managerial complexity	<i>Simple</i>		<i>Complex</i>
Strategic value	<i>Minor</i>		<i>Complex</i>

Source: Authors' work based on the desk research

4. Benefits of CSO-s Business Cooperation

The business model of civil society is a new concept in Albania, far underexplored. Besides some avenues of CSOs cooperation with businesses in Albania, still there is a huge doubt of the functioning of this model. The Albanian CSOs should take as examples the shift and re-invention that the EU CSOs are making over the last couple of years, so to adopt the new era

of development.¹³ The following sections will give the key message that this “CSOs-business partnership” model both “works and does not work” in the context of Albania, due to several reasons. In this section, the benefits of CSOs from one hand and the business on the other do have if they decide to cooperate to each other.

Table 3: Why CSOs and private sector in Albania should cooperate?

No.	Why the CSOs should cooperate with the private sector?	Why the private sector should cooperate with the CSOs?
1	Private sector serves as a source of money and knowledge	Private sector value CSOs understanding of community needs
2	private sector can inject an entrepreneurial mind-set in the CSOs	Private sector appreciate the technical expertise, outputs and research done by CSOs to solve development needs
3	The private sector provides new learning opportunities that contribute to overall efficiency and effectiveness of a CSO by leading to innovative business models	Private sector value NGOs local knowledge of the legal and policy environment and ability to convene at the local, regional, national and international levels to effect change
4	The private sector can provide much needed infrastructure that NGOs need to scale their work e.g. supply chains, marketing	Private sector Companies value NGO ability to provide information to business at the community level
5	The private sector is known to rapidly adapt and innovate to solve problems, these ways of working contribute to the design and implementation of effective and sustainable projects	
6	New actors could be reached by working with the private sector	

5. CSO-business partnership challenges and risks

There is no doubt that CSOs and businesses have mutual interests in partnering, differences in underlying drivers, responsibilities, and attitudes can be difficult to manage in a relationship. **In this respect, there are variety of risks and challenges that the partnership**

between CSOs-business yield, which need to be adequately addressed. Based on the consulted literature, the following table displays the risks and challenges which call for a deeper attention from both CSOs and businesses.

Table 4: The challenges and risks of CSO-business collaboration

Challenges		Risks
Mistrust between CSOs and businesses	Partnerships	Resistance from partners
Organizational immaturity and power differentials		Low impacts
Recurring conflicts of interest		Sudden and unplanned termination of partnership
Lack of coordination and accountability		Reputational risks
Misalignment of strategy, ambition, approach and scope		Low level of scalability
Unclear framework for engagement		Waste of resources
Language, work style, conceptual cultural discrepancies		Stakeholder alienation
Lack of continuous engagement with beneficiaries		
Lack of communication and clear communication plan		
Misalignment of criteria for success and performance measures		

As shown in Table 4, CSOs-business relationships can be a difficult process to establish and manage, necessitating sufficient resources and time to be effective. Most notably, the obstacles appear to be connected to concerns of partnership governance and structure, distrust, organizational maturity, coordination, engagement frameworks, and communication. Besides the challenges occurred, there are some associated risks as well. Low impact, reputational concerns, wasted resources, and unsustainability are all significant issues, underscoring the necessity of learning from governance difficulties.

As the literature highlights, internal mechanisms of the partnerships play a critical role in initiating and maintaining an effective partnership with businesses. Beyond that, there is a bargaining of literature that considers external factors to be as important as internal mechanisms. For example (Beisheim and Liese, 2014) in their research found that *“areas characterised by weak governance in terms of rule of law or anti-corruption policies, prove to have more operational difficulties than their counterparts evolving in areas characterised by strong governance”*.¹⁴ This implies that the context in which CSOs and business operated, plays a crucial role in the success of the partnership.

¹⁴ Liese, Andrea, and Marianne Beisheim. (2011). “Transnational Public-Private Partnerships and the Provision of Collective Goods in Developing Countries.” *Governance Without a State? Policies and Politics in Areas of Limited Statehood*, 115–43.

6. Examples of successful CSOs-business cooperation around the world

There are countless examples of CSOs-businesses cooperation successful cases that proves such a model works. However, the context in which such partnerships are developed, counts for the success of the model. As following, are laid some cases which are worth mentioning and do represent innovative models of cooperation.

A case in point:

Multi Stakeholders Initiatives (MSI) in the textile industry and the importance of ownership

Sectoral MSIs, such as multi-stakeholder initiatives and platforms which aims to address sectorial specific issues, have been increasingly gaining attention. For example, in the textile sector in Germany's Partnership for Sustainable Textile¹⁵ or the Netherlands' Sustainable Garment and Textile Agreement.¹⁶ This approach to responsible business conduct have produced two main benefits:

First, MSIs secures a wide representation of stakeholders in the industry and an effective dialogue and cooperation.

Secondly, they reflect and better integrate interests of the main actors, such as those from the public sector, private sector, civil society, etc.

This is essential if we are to finally arrive at a solution that is viable and attractive for all parties involved. Additionally, via this process, the emphasis is changed from one of do-or-die to one of constructive collaboration and ongoing development.

¹⁵ Retrieved from <https://www.textilbuendnis.com/en/>.

¹⁶ Retrieved from <https://www.textilbuendnis.com/en/https://www.cnvinternationaal.nl/en/business-and-human-rights/dutch-agreements-responsible-business-conduct/sustainable-garment-and-textile-agreement>.

Business Network on Civic Freedoms and Human Rights Defenders- A unique trusted space.¹⁷

The Business Network offers a unique space, where business, investors, and civil society, including human rights defenders (HRDs), routinely share knowledge and insights on business and human rights issues, with a focus on preserving civil rights and HRDs. These actors benefit from this shared space which is established drawing on fundamental common elements. Some of these elements include rule of law and freedom of expression, association and assembly. These are all critical in building a friendly environment for these actors to operate. To make this happen, the coordinating organizations in cooperation with civil society leaders and activists, cooperate thus to identify and uplift areas where companies can engage to remedy human rights threats.

The Business Network is founded on the conviction that a multi-stakeholder approach is necessary to promote the global human rights agenda, encouraging communication and understanding between civil society, the private sector, and governments. The Business Network's added value lies in the ability to convene top corporations and civil society organizations to discuss civic freedoms and the most recent threats and challenges that human rights defenders face around the world. By doing so, they are able to close the gap between these two groups and strengthen their common "Shared Civic Space."

Source: <https://biznetworkcfhrds.org/about/>

¹⁷ Retrieved from <https://biznetworkcfhrds.org/>.

Business & Human Rights Resource Centre (BHRRC)

The greatest online database of information and cases pertaining to corporate human rights problems is the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre (BHRRC). In order to expose and have an impact on the social and environmental repercussions of more than 7000 firms globally, BHRRC works with local communities and international players. This encourages corporate responsibility and transparency.

Since 2005, the Business & Human Rights Resource Center (BHRRC) has asked businesses to react to claims of misconduct raised by the civil society when the BHRRC cannot find any other way for them to address the issues. This procedure encourages businesses to openly address human rights issues and makes the complete allegations and responses of the business available. This procedure sometimes helps in the settlement of the problems. Other times, it has sparked discussions between the complainants and the firm. It has improved transparency in each and every situation.

The BHRRC raises the voices of the marginalized and advocates of human rights in the media, business world, and governmental institutions. Their Regional Researchers, who are dispersed across the globe, visit local areas to learn about how companies affect the local economy and frequently interact with company owners and public authorities. The work of hundreds of advocates from around the world is then synthesized in briefings and analyses, and suggestions for businesses, governments, regions, and industries are made.

BHRRC works with communities and NGOs to encourage businesses to resolve human rights issues and gives businesses a chance to fully explain their answer.

They gather information on the human rights practices and policies of more than 10,000 corporations across 180 nations and make it available to the public.

Source: <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/about-us/>

7. Mapping CSOs-business cooperation in Albania- Some success stories

Partners Albania for Change and Development

is a great case that has been increasingly exploring innovative avenues of partnering with business in Albania. As following, are outlined a variety of such cooperation.¹⁸

- Partners Albania provides capacity building programs, consultancy and dialogue facilitation to the private sector. Since 2005, we have assisted about 1700 employees of various companies, by driving the workforce performances to improve their financial and operating performance and inspiring a culture of lifelong learning.
- PA in partnership with ONE telecommunication, Credins Bank, Tirana Bank, Grant Thornton Albania which contribute financially and pro-bono implements since 2012 the Green Business Competition. It aims to stimulate and encourage innovation for green business ideas at the local level and explores the role of philanthropy in engaging local communities to generate green business ideas that utilize local resources and revitalize disappearing traditional production chains and community-based markets.
- PA in partnership with Credins Foundation, Vodafone Albania, Grant Thornton, launched in 2021 the first CROWDFUNDING PLATFORM - SMILE.AL , an online platform created to enable the gathering of resources from the "crowd" –

from anyone interested, wherever they may be in the world in support of community actions in Albania.

- PA since 2018 organizes the GIVING CIRCLE event - a live crowdfunding event, gathering Albanian businesses, philanthropists, individuals who donate in support of 3 community actions each year.
- PA organizes annually - NPO-Business Speed dating events to bring businesses closer to the nonprofit sector and in support of social enterprises. 281 representatives of SEs, start-ups, CSOs and Businesses have attended the events and built sustainable partnerships.
- The Philanthropy Award Event is an annual event Partners Albania organizes since 2011, to express our gratitude to individuals and business companies who contribute to improving the quality of life in our society. The appreciation and stimulation of this activity is important considering the human and economic dimension it represents. "Philanthropy award", is combined with systematic monitoring of philanthropic activity, providing a synthesis of philanthropic activity in Albania presented as monthly and annual reports. PA cooperates with all businesses that donate on monthly and annual bases and promote their philanthropic activity through the only Magazine in Albania in this regards "The Philanthropy Magazine".

¹⁸ <https://partnersalbania.org/>

The Albanian Center for Economic Research (ACER) is the first NGO in Albania established in 1992.¹⁹ ACER is a think tank which is well known for its professional research studies in socio-economic areas. In 2013, ACER has been the initiator of the project “Albania: Building an effective public-private dialogue”, funded by the Center for International and Private Enterprise based in Washington D.C. In the framework of this project, ACER help to establish the National Business Forum in Albania, a non-formal network comprising 9 leading business associations and chambers of commerce in Albania. This network aimed to establish bridges of communication

with the Albanian government in advocating business issues. In specific terms, chambers and business associations use to consult with their members (businesses) on the most pressing issues that hampers their daily business operations. Then, ACER translate all those inputs into professional policy papers/ position papers/National Business Agenda which serve as tools for advocacy.²⁰ This model of cooperation lasted until 2018. This example implies that this CSOs-business model works. However, the context in which these models operate, are critical for their long term success.

¹⁹ <https://acer.org.al/>

²⁰ <http://new.nbf.al/publications/>

8. RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

In total, 30 interviews were completed during May-June, 2022. CSOs in Albania were asked about the typology of their organization, whether it was a think tank, watch-dog, advocacy organization, consultancy services organization, grassroots organization or any other type. As seen in Table 5, there are not any organization with a pure focus in a specific typology. Instead,

they endeavor to play various roles within the society. This implies for the struggle of the Albanian CSOs to perform different roles, mostly depending on the donors' interests. As confirmed in Table 6, CSOs try to cover different scopes, starting from education, human rights, social services, etc. This shows their lack of specialization in one area.

Table 5: Typology of the CSO (CSOs could choose more than one option).

No.	Type of the organisation	Nr.
1	Think-tank	6
2	Watch-dog	3
3	Advocacy organization	15
4	Consultancy services organization	6
5	Grassroots organization	16
6	Other (Specify)	6

Table 6: Scope of the activity

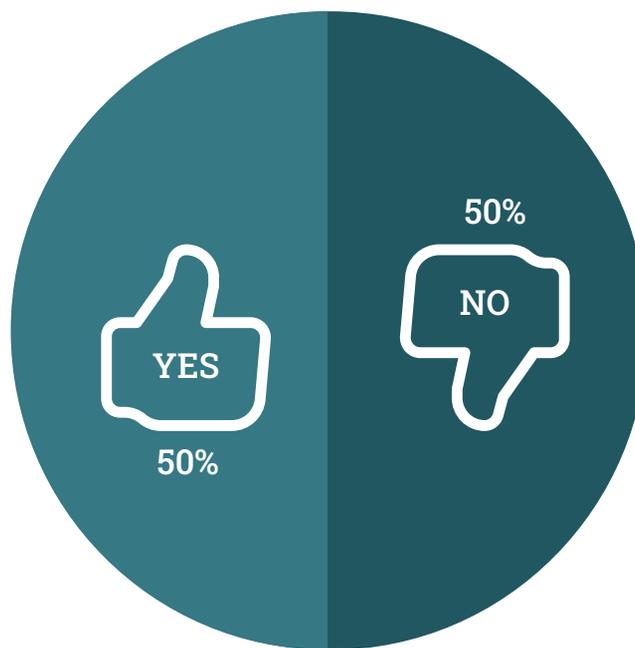
No.	Scope of work	Frequency
1	Education	15
2	Human rights	11
3	Social services	11
4	Governance and democracy	10
5	Economic development	10
6	Children and youth	8
7	Gender issues	7
8	Culture	6
9	Development of civil society	6

10	Environment and sustainable development	5
11	Rule of law	4
12	European integration	3
13	Other (please specify)	3
14	Media	2
15	Public administration reform	0

First, the interviewees were questioned about any prior business partnerships. In order to record the broad spectrum of experiences given by the respondents, the poll purposefully avoided defining the term “partnership”. As displayed

in the following graph, half of the CSOs has had at least one cooperation experience with businesses in Albania. Considering the context, this is a very promising figure.

Graph 1: Has your organization attempted to partner with a private sector business over the past five years?



Source: ACER research study, 2022

The following analysis is performed only considering those half of CSOs which have previously established partnership with businesses in Albania. Due to the low number of

CSOs that are have partnered with businesses, this research report has mostly a qualitative nature.

8. 1. Setting up the partnerships

8.1.1 Key motivations

The interviews developed with the Albanian CSOs revealed a variety of experiences in establishing partnerships with businesses.

The primary driver of such partnership tended to be financial need. Several other factors impacted CSOs decision to collaborate closely with businesses which are listed as following.

- **Access to funds**

Albanian CSOs have been facing limited financial resources.²¹ This is mostly due to their status as “donor driven”. This coupled with the latest developments such as pandemic Covid-19 which stopped most of CSOs operations, made the situation worse. Considering all these constraints, CSOs accepted that one of the key reasons they started to diversity their partners/ services and asking business cooperation was for financial reasons. Considering the longstanding issues of CSOs in Albania and the environment they are operating, “access to funds” as a reason to cooperate with business, is not expected to change in the near future.

- **Long term stability**

As a result of financial stability, CSOs in Albania risk not to have their long-term stability. A quick check on some random CSOs website in Albania, gives the impression that the lack of a strategy (a very few CSOs has published their strategy), is one of the indicators that implies

the short-sight of CSOs. Cooperation with businesses gives CSOs some long term stability.

- **Access to knowledge, expertise and innovation**

CSOs in Albania lack human capital. Due to sources limitation, it is quite impossible to have full time staff, equipped enough with the required expertise.²² This way, CSOs consider the partnership with businesses as a way of gaining some new knowledge and expertise. No needless to say that private sector is the pioneer of change and innovation.

- **Access to contacts for future cooperation**

A few CSOs which have a clear strategy for their organizations, do consider the access to contacts as an underlying reason why to cooperate with businesses. Some new contacts might secure them future potential cooperation. When CSOs were asked about the typology of partnership they have had with businesses, the key finding is that a few large CSOs has established partnership in a strategic way. Some CSOs have been facing with reactive feedback from the business side, while trying to establish bridges of cooperation. For example, there are CSOs which deal with environmental issues that are facing concerns while calling businesses to establish cooperation. Specifically, a local NGO based in Elbasan, has been facing troubles with businesses such as Hydropower plants, restaurants that pollute the Shkumbin River.

²¹ Anja Bosilkova-Antovska. (2021). Monitoring Matrix on Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development Regional Report: Western Balkans 2020. Balkan Civil Society Development Network. https://www.balkanccd.net/novo/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/94-5-Regional-Monitoring-Matrix-Report-2020_FINAL.pdf

²² Bozdo, R. Cause Related Marketing as a Fundraising Instrument for NGOs in Albania.

"We have endeavoured to establish bridges of communication with these businesses so to develop awareness campaigns for protecting the environment but have failed of doing that. The worse thing is that activists of the organization have been indirectly threatened."

Qendra Mjedisore Për Studime dhe Zbatime.²³

8.1.2 Identifying and establishing partnerships

Types of partnerships

As the interviewed CSOs elaborated, the most frequent typologies of partnerships they have established with businesses are as following:

- Philanthropy: This tradition form of cooperation has been long taking place in Albania. Partners Albania is pioneering this initiative and has been advancing the dimensions of such partnership.

For example, Partners Albania organizes the *"Philanthropy Award Event"*²⁴ which is an annual event organized since 2011, to express the gratitude to individuals and business companies who contribute to improving the quality of life in our society. The appreciation and stimulation of this activity is important considering the human and economic dimension it represents. "Philanthropy award", is combined with systematic monitoring of philanthropic activity, providing a synthesis of philanthropic activity in Albania presented as monthly and annual reports. PA cooperates with all businesses that donate on monthly and annual bases and promote their philanthropic activity through the only Magazine in Albania in this regards "The Philanthropy Magazine".²⁵

Another example of using philanthropy is the initiative of "Adopt a Therapy" an initiative by the Down Syndrome Albania Foundation in Tirana which is made possible through philanthropy.

- Capacity building programs, consultancy and dialogue facilitation to the private sector: This typology of partnership is not new in Albania. However, a few CSOs have been working to advance it.

"Since 2005, we have assisted about 1700 employees of various companies, by driving the workforce performances to improve their financial and operating performance and inspiring a culture of lifelong learning". Partners Albania

There are other CSOs which have offered other services such as research services, assist businesses to expand overseas, put them in touch with potential business partners in European and World Markets, etc.²⁶

- Donations: This is a traditional form of cooperation between CSOs and businesses. This form has long taking place in Albania and in the WB6. This is mostly demanded by the CSOs depending on the specific needs. However, there are cases when businesses offer such donations to accomplish their social responsibility policies. "It was an attempt to involve several private companies to support our online mental health service www.nukjvetem.al. Only one company replied and provided a modest financial donation." This is a CSOs initiated request.

- Giving Circle Event:²⁷ Giving Circle is an event that brings together people from many disciplines to pool their skills, time, and financial

²³ Interview with Qendra Mjedisore Për Studime dhe Zbatime.

²⁴ Retrieved from <https://partnersalbania.org/News/partners-albania-announces-the-philanthropy-awards-competition/>.

²⁵ Interview with Partners Albania.

²⁶ Retrieved from <http://www.ippm.al/2020/04/22/rrejet-e-europian-i-ndermarrjeve/>.

²⁷ A giving circle is a form of participatory philanthropy (modern avenue of philanthropy).

resources to support specific initiatives or causes that promote social change in their community. This is for the first time in Albania initiative by Partners Albania.²⁸ The private sector provided donations for specific projects which were then financially supported and implemented.

"Partners Albania since 2018 organizes the GIVING CIRCLE event - a live crowdfunding event, gathering Albanian businesses, philanthropists, individuals who donate in support of 3 community actions each year. PA established partnership with the following private companies - Alpha Bank Albania, ABI Bank, Credins Bank, Credins Invest, KREDO.AL, Balfin Group, ONE telecommunications, NOA finance, FED INVEST, ICEBERG communications, SCAN TV, Grant Thornton, etc."

- **Crowdfunding platform - SMILE.AL**²⁹: This program is a ground-breaking effort in Albanian society to promote social and developmental banking. For the first time in Albania, an online platform has been built to enable the pooling of resources from the "crowd" - everyone interested in social contribution initiatives, regardless of where they are in the globe. This program is initiated from the private sector itself, while has widen the partnerships with the CSOs. The role of the CSOs is key in proposing community projects according to the specified categories of the platform. If the project is selected, then the platform invites for financing in cash of volunteer.

- **CSOs-businesses speed dating**: This is an innovative form to enhance CSOs-businesses

cooperation and find common ground to collaborate. To do so, such speed networking events help actors from the civil society organizations and businesses get to know each other and find common avenues to cooperate with mutual benefits. Such an event has been organizing in Albania, from PA.

"Partners Albania organizes annually - NPO-Business Speed dating events to bring businesses closer to the nonprofit sector and in support of social enterprises. 281 representatives of SEs, start-ups, CSOs and Businesses have attended the events and built sustainable partnerships."

- **Businesses Competition**: This form of cooperation comes as an open call from the CSOs which invite businesses that implement principles of green economy, to submit their applications and win a grant for further advancement of their operations. Such a model has been annually organized by Partners Albania, whose representative outlines:

"We have organized annually since 2012, which has resulted in 125 entrepreneurs being trained and coached by business representatives, 31 social enterprises funded, and 88 individuals being employed."

- **Getting inputs from businesses for policy changes**: This form of cooperation takes place mostly to chambers of commerce and businesses associations which hold the status of CSOs, as per the Albanian legislation. A special form of such partnership has been shared by one of the CSOs interviewed which is elaborated as following.

²⁸ More information can be found here: <https://givingbalkans.org/content/partners-albania-first-giving-circle>.

²⁹ Retrieved from <https://smile.al/en/the-first-crowdfunding-platform-is-launched-in-albania/>.

"In 2013, due to the not well-organized approach of the private sector, ACER- a leading CSOs in Albania, with the support of the Center for International Private Enterprise, undertook the initiative of establishing a non-formal network which aimed to bring together chambers and associations, so to advocate for businesses issues. Hence, in 2013 it was established the National Business Forum, an open network of Business Associations and Chambers of Commerce. Its mission was to represent the interests of businesses operating in Albania in dialogue with the public institutions. ACER was supporting this Forum in developing professional studies with business issues coming from businesses which were members of these associations. This organized way of CSOs and the private sector, produced successful tangible results in terms of policy changes. This initiative is not as active as before. However, this shows that the model works".³⁰

"Businesses may give essential technical expertise and contribute in the establishment of the enabling ecosystem of institutions, human capital development, and governmental regulations that are generally necessary to leverage market-based solutions." CSOs representative.

Selection criteria

Generally, interviewed CSOs admitted that the first criteria they consider while considering any

partnership with businesses, is the business availability to support. This is an expected point considering the underdevelopment of this kind of partnership in Albania. However, in cases where the CSOs has a choice to make, they consider the strategic fit, meaning how they align their business mission/objectives with that of the CSOs.

Values and reputation of the company is the third most important criteria. CSOs are trying to cooperate with businesses with high ethical standards and with positive reputation into the public. CSOs interviewed expressed concerns about cooperation with businesses which might put at risk the mission of CSOs toward their communities. This is a difficult process to manage.

"It is always difficult to manage expectations and to ensure that for both sides the partnership delivers what is needed without compromising the CSOs principles"- A CSOs noted.

8.1.3 Partnerships arrangements

Most partnerships signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or a contract from the outset of the partnerships. This is admitted from all 15 CSOs that have already established a partnership with businesses.

8.2. Managing partnerships

8.2.1 Challenges encountered over the partnership

Interviewed CSOs faced a variety of issues over the course of their partnership experiences, which are elaborated as following.

Investing in the partnership

The interviewed CSOs consider the amount of time and efforts allocated to the establishment of the partnership, as a burden of their daily operations. Due to lack of staff resources some CSOs find impossible to identify, establish and keep cooperation arrangements with businesses as they would have liked. A successful establishment of partnership with businesses requires an intensive networking time and relationship building which generally is lacking in the Albanian CSOs. Another issue which some time prohibits the establishment of the partnership is the red tape of formalizing the relationship, despite all the effort put into the discussions and negotiations.

Increasing mutual understanding of the partnership

Interviews uncovered that one of the factors/challenges in establishing and maintaining an

effective cooperation of CSOs with businesses, is the lack of understanding of mutual benefits of such cooperation. It is hard for businesses to understand the CSOs cause and give support for that cause. There are cases where the private sector has given CSOs the opportunity to initially work on simple things (space sharing, staff training, etc.) and then has advance their partnerships in other strategic partnerships. CSOs noted that the partnership is a learning curve and both of partners need to learn along the way. For example, one organization noted that now it is clear what the businesses are looking for in terms of the cooperation with the CSOs.

Power dynamics

Generally, it was accepted that CSOs found difficult to manage power dynamics and this made it hard for CSOs to achieve their objectives and desired outcome. There is the perception of the businesses that they are “giving for charity” while forgetting the underlying purpose of the partnership. As a conclusion, in Albania it is hard for businesses to clearly understand the benefits of partnership with CSOs, unless this latter pays too much time and efforts in explaining the outcome.

8.2.2 Tools and resources of the partnership

The CSOs were asked about the types of tools and resources established over the course of cooperating with businesses in Albania, which in turn helped them to catch the opportunities or address the challenges. Generally, the following ones were developed:

- letters of invitation and solicitation;
- brochures outlining the value added from the partnership;
- videos and social media tools about the CSOs and its activities;
- networks and databases of potential partners;
- contract documents or partnership agreement templates.

CSOs admitted that would have benefited from the following tools and resources if they had been available throughout their relationship:

- skills development training for fundraising and communication with private organizations;
- organized learning sessions or workshops targeted at small NFPs on approaching and partnering with the private sector, including how to turn an existing commercial relationship into a potential partnership relationship;
- tools to help the NFP identify the right people to speak with in the private partner, especially in organizations with large, complicated structures
- an information database infrastructure;
- an “environment scan” to find out the perspectives of local businesses intermediaries or facilitators of partnership;
- best practices including case studies

8.3. Partnership results

8.3.1 Setting the partnership's objectives

Generally, the interviewed businesses admitted that the objectives of the partnership with businesses have been met. However, there are cases where the partners (CSOs and businesses) did not articulated initially the objectives of such partnership. Even in the cases where such objectives were formulated, an evaluation process to analyse if these objectives were met, does lack. As a conclusion, it is crucial for partners (CSOs and businesses) to formulate the objectives at the outset while pursuing a formal process.

When asked what they would do differently if they were to repeat the business partnership, the majority of respondents said they would focus more on establishing formal structures and responsibilities inside the partnership (i.e., objective setting, contracts, monthly reports, evaluations, impact assessment, professional outputs). Increased contact with partners was also emphasized as a way to develop a high level of engagement that may be "taken to the next level". Gaining a better understating of the business thinking was mentioned as well as important for having an effective partnership with businesses.

8.3.2 Evaluating the partnership

Despite the growing trend of accountability and assessment, the majority of CSOs lacked a structured procedure for evaluating their partnerships with businesses. Only one of the CSOs interviewed employed an annual formal review of these collaborations. The CSOs use to prepare frequent reports and share them

with businesses which have supported specific activities.

8.3.3 Impact of the partnership to the CSOs.

CSOs are asked about the impact the partnership had on various aspects of the organization. The first impact unanimously accepted was the financial gains. All interviewed CSOs accepted that the partnership financially impacted their organizations, namely gaining more resources, deliver programs and leverage further funding. The second impact CSOs consider as a result of the partnerships with businesses, is the extended the number of partners, supporters, collaborators for the implementation of their programs.

Third, partnering with businesses has strengthen the image of CSOs toward their community they serve and toward other potential partners (either businesses or donors).

"It publicly proves that we are able to work with a variety of partners and have the capacity to do so"- A CSO noted.

Fourth, some CSOs considered the partnerships as a catalyst for change within the organization. Considering the pandemic COVID-19 and other unprecedented events (earthquakes), partnering with businesses fostered the adoption of CSOs modelling. This new unexplored term in the Western Balkan 6 (CSOs business model) required a larger attention either from donors but also from CSOs themselves. Partnering with business is a new under-explored dimension of CSOs business model.

8.4. Facilitating successful partnerships

8.4.1 Establishing effective partnership- exploring the factors behind

One of the aspects this study reports aimed to explore is related to the factors that contribute to the successful establishment of CSOs-business partnerships and effective functioning of such cooperation. Hence, CSOs are asked to write down factors that successfully contributed to the effectiveness of such cooperation and other factors that could improve this relationship. Among all factors mentioned, the following ones are considered key in building effective partnerships with businesses.

- Establish a strong relationship with the partner

CSOs admitted that it is critical for the relationship with businesses to work to **establish a positive relationship**. This means that each of the partner should consider the partnership **reciprocal** so to make sure none of the partners consider they are making any favor. Instead, they are contributing for their own purposes. In addition, CSOs emphasized that they should carefully manage this relationship so the partnerships not to undermine CSOs mission and serve only to business needs.

Another factors noted during the interviews which is considered as an ingredient of building the strong relationship, is the **trust between**

partners. Finally, CSOs should be **flexible and try to learn** and understand business needs throughout the partnership. Considering such partnerships are not often happening in the majority of CSOs in the WB6, this is to be considered a learning experience where both parties should express flexibility and eager to learn from each other.

- Use formal mechanisms within the partnership

Having and **employing formal** mechanisms inside the partnership is a critical factor for developing successful partnership with business, expressed all the CSOs in the questionnaire. These formal mechanisms include formal written statements on the objectives of the partnership, deliverables of the partnerships, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of the partnership, memorandums of understanding and written agreements or contracts. All of these should be decided ad agreed at the outset of the partnership. Having these formal mechanisms in place, help both partners to build more clarity to the mutual objectives of CSOs and businesses. As the CSOs expressed, building formal mechanisms at the outset, requires more time and efforts and sometime is considered as a red tape both partners. However, it paves the way of a smooth and effective partnership along the way.

Not surprisingly, when asked what the CSOs would have done differently in their collaboration, many said they wished they had a set of clear written objectives between the two sides before they started working together. Early on in the process of creating these formal processes, the business partner must be involved, and the CSOs must provide proper reporting and follow-up on the partnership's outcomes throughout time. Once the partnership is in place, **continual openness and transparency**, as well as documented assessments, are required to be developed over the course of cooperation.

- Maintain ongoing and clear communication between the CSOs and the business partner

The requirement for continual communication between the CSOs and the business, is a third key factor for having an effective partnership.

This communication pattern must be formed from the start of the relationship. It is critical for the CSOs to learn how to communicate effectively with the business partner. Considering the fast paced changes of the private sector, this latter is so result oriented and requires specific patterns of communication which is generally lacking into the CSOs sector.

- Leverage success both within the partnership and more broadly

CSOs admitted that it is crucial for them to think out of the box. It is crucial not to rely in a successful partnership alone. Instead, it is underlying to leverage that successful partnership for building future partnerships. As one CSOs said, one successful partnership should be considered as a cornerstone for achieving other successful partnerships in the future.

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

This research report analyses the current situation of CSOs-business partnerships in the context of Albania, while identifying the challenges faced and opportunities to leverage such partnerships. To do so, this research draws on information and experiences collected through a semi-structured questionnaire from CSOs in Albania. 30 CSOs filled out the questionnaire in Albania while seven questionnaires were collected from other WB6. Based on the desk research and the qualitative study, the main findings are displayed as below with respective proposals.

- In Albania, **there is space for further CSOs-businesses cooperation**. Those who have in the past created some successful partnerships still view working with businesses solely in terms of financial gain.

- In Albania, **CSOs and business partnerships are not a new model**. This CSOs business model has worked well in other developed countries. In the context of Albania, the plethora of possibilities that such partnerships create—many of which have not yet been completely explored—is new.

- The primary dynamics of the CSOs-business collaboration are relationship-building, mutual respect, and trust. Finding the appropriate fit is crucial for the partnership to succeed.

- Establishing good relationships, using formal processes within the collaboration, maintaining continuing and clear communication, and leveraging success both inside the partnership

and more generally are four critical components of successful CSO-business partnerships.

- At the beginning of the collaboration, a small number of CSOs employ formal mechanisms for the partnership. Those who acknowledged using such methods pointed out that some sophistication and consolidation of the current documents are needed to add greater clarity to them.

- In general, the collaborations with businesses are **not adequately evaluated**. As a result, it is challenging for both sides to understand the full impact of this cooperation.

Considering the above findings, this research report lays out some recommendations which aim to directly address the above mentioned challenges of CSOs-businesses partnership.

- **Albanian CSOs need to approach businesses strategically**. Not every company is a helpful partner that could advance a CSO's goals and objectives. The goal of CSOs themselves may occasionally be compromised by this arrangement. In this manner, the Albanian CSOs should first assess the situation and contact the appropriate business to cooperate with.

- **Albanian CSOs need to improve/build their internal capabilities**. A professional team can successfully manage the lengthy and labor-intensive process of establishing and sustaining commercial partnerships.

- **The Albanian CSOs should use formal mechanisms in establishing and managing a partnership with businesses.** There are cases where these formal mechanisms are in place. However, they are underused in the course of a partnership. This causes misunderstandings and contribute to the failure of the partnership.
- **The communication between Albanian CSOs and their corporate partners has to be steadily improved.** Increased and efficient communication between the parties strengthens the bond between them and is essential to attaining the partnership's goals.
- **Albanian CSOs should set up and use official outcomes measurement.** For instance, a common practice is to employ formal reviews to gauge the partnership's success.
- **A portal might be built as part of a regional initiative in the WB6 to enhance the CSOs-business relationship mechanisms.** This site

should include data that is easily adaptable to CSOs and business requirements and offer a mechanism to encourage such collaboration. This portal could include case studies, best practices, and other important data that might aid CSOs-business collaboration in addition to acting as a virtual meeting place.

- To encourage CSOs and business cooperation, the Albanian government should create particular incentives. For instance, social enterprises are treated and taxed the same as traditional businesses in Albania.

- CSOs should improve their current services and enhance social innovation. Instead than just copying products and strategies from the business world, they should forge their own course. They should rethink their purpose and make it one that prioritizes prevention rather than simply problem-solving.

10. Limitations of this research and future research

This research study is primary limited by the number of Albanian CSOs that were interviewed. A larger sample could generative a clearer landscape of the CSOs-businesses partnerships in Albania. Said that, it is suggested future research on this topic to have a wider coverage of CSOs, not only in Albania but considering all the WB6. In addition, this research study

has seen the CSOs-businesses partnerships as an evaluation from the lens of CSOs alone. Business perspective is not considered in this partnerships. Hence, it is suggested for future research, businesses to be included on sharing their experiences. This would complete the whole view and help better understand the dynamics of these two actors.

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Appendix I: Questionnaire

EVALUATING THE WB6 CSOs-BUSINESSES PARTNERSHIPS

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are contacting you as a CSOs operating in one of the countries of the Western Balkan. The Albanian Center for Economic Research (ACER) based in Albania is conducting a study commissioned by the Balkan Civil Society Development Network (BCSDN). The study aims to evaluate the partnerships CSOs establish with businesses as a way to increase sustainability and accomplish their mission. In a concrete terms, this questionnaire aims to collect examples of successful CSOs-private sector partnerships, challenges, drivers and barriers to such partnerships.

As part of the study, we are conducting this questionnaire where we aim to collect information about CSOs successful experiences in partnering with businesses, challenges and drivers of these cooperation.

You can start the survey by clicking on THIS LINK!

Filling out the questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes. Your inputs are highly appreciated and will be elaborated collectively with other CSOs responses. All information that you provide in the questionnaire will be treated as strictly confidential.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at zef.preci@gmail.com.

Thank you for your cooperation in advance.

Name of the organization: _____

Year of establishment of your organization: _____

Type of your organization: (You can choose more than one option)

- Think-tank
- Watch-dog
- Advocacy organization
- Consultancy services organization
- Grassroots organization
- Other (Specify)

Scope of the organization:

- Governance and democracy
- Rule of law
- Human rights
- Public administration reform
- European integration
- Gender issues
- Children and youth
- Environment and sustainable development
- Education
- Culture
- Media
- Economic development
- Development of civil society
- Social services
- Other (please specify)

SETTING UP PARTNERSHIPS WITH BUSINESSES

1. Has your organization attempted to partner with a private sector business over the past five years?

If no:

- a. Why not?
- b. Have you considered establishing a partnership with a private sector business?

If the first question is NO, please go to Q17.

2. If yes:

- a. How many partnerships were you involved in during the past five years?
- b. What kind of partnership(s)? Can you give me a brief description?
- c. What kind of private sector businesses did you partner with? Can you describe their size and purpose?

3. At the outset,

- a. Who initiated the partnership(s)? How was this done?
- b. Why was the partnership(s) initiated? What were the underlying reasons and motivations?

4. How were partnerships established?

- a. Was there a formal process? Yes, No
- b. Did any challenges arise at this point? Yes, No

5. Please describe the partnership arrangement.

- a. Did you have a formal contract at the outset? Yes, No
- b. Did you develop a formal contract at a later stage? Yes, No

6. Motivating factors

- a. What were the drivers for your organization to seek partnerships with private sector businesses? (You can choose more than one option)
 - Financial or in-kind support
 - Other resources and capacity such as expertise, staff or volunteer time
 - Creating more momentum around an issue or program by working with private sector leadership
 - Others?

PARTNERSHIP DYNAMICS

7. How did the partnership(s) work? What were the roles of the different partners?

8. Relationships

- a. What was the relationship like between the partner organizations? Can you elaborate?
- b. Did the relationship change over time? Yes, No
If so, why?

9. Opportunities and challenges

- a. Did any new opportunities arise during the partnership(s)? Yes, No If so, please elaborate.
- b. Did any issues or problems arise during the partnership(s)? Yes, No If so, please elaborate.
- c. How were these addressed?

10. Resources

- a. What kind of resources, tools or support did you use when partnering with private sector business?
- b. Did you develop any resources or tools that you could share? Yes, No
- c. Are there any resources, tools or other kinds of support that would have helped you during the partnership(s) if they had been available? (You can choose more than one option)

- Skills development training
- Intermediaries or facilitators
- Best practices
- Other?

OUTCOME

11. Objectives

- a. Were objectives established during the planning stage? Yes, No
- b. Were objectives articulated formally or informally? Yes, No
- c. Did objectives change during the partnership? Yes, No
- d. Do you feel that the partnership(s) is meeting/has met its objectives?
 - Yes, this partnership has met its objectives.
 - This partnership has partially met its objectives.
 - No, this partnership has not met its objectives

12. Do you do formal outcome evaluation for your programs and services? Yes, No

13. (If applicable) How did the partnership(s) affect the vulnerable population that your organization serves?

14. How did the partnership(s) affect your organization?

LESSONS LEARNED

15. If you were to repeat the partnership(s),

- a. What would you do differently?
- b. What would you keep the same?

16. Can you describe three key lessons you learned through this experience?

17. In your opinion,

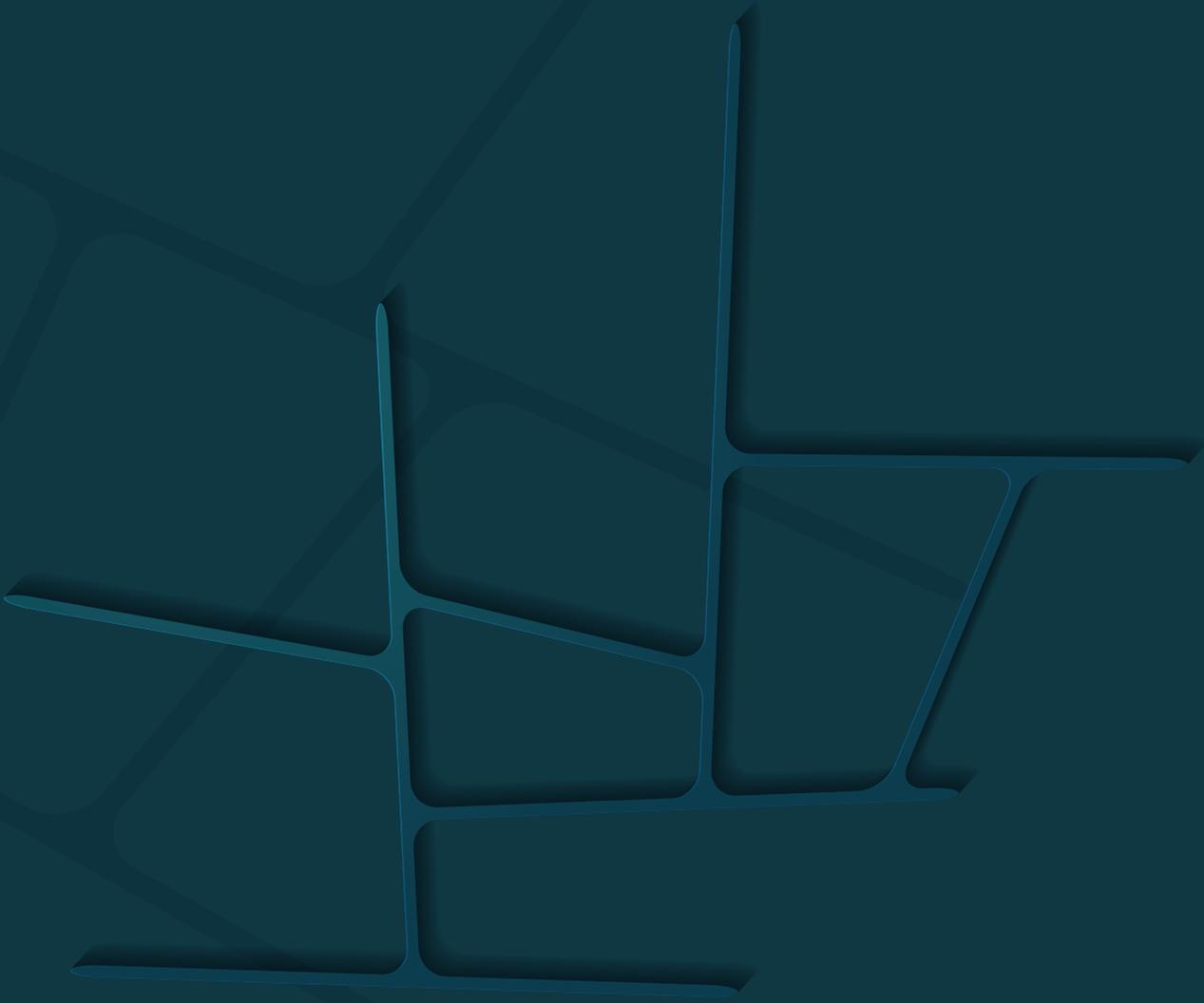
a. What are the ingredients of a successful partnership with businesses? (You can choose more than one option)

- clearly defined goals and objectives by each partner
- clarity around financial, human and/or other resources each side brings to the table
- mutual respect and willingness to learn
- roles and responsibilities well defined
- flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances
- open communication
- other?

b. What are the limitations of partnerships with private sector businesses?

18. Do you plan to partner with the private sector again? Yes, No

19. Are partnerships with the private sector a priority for your organization? Yes, No



**EXPLORING CSOS-BUSINESSES
PARTNERSHIPS IN THE
CONTEXT OF ALBANIA**