

Office of Internal Oversight



Making More of International Partnerships

Independent Evaluation on Working With and Adding Value Through International Partnerships, 2016-2021

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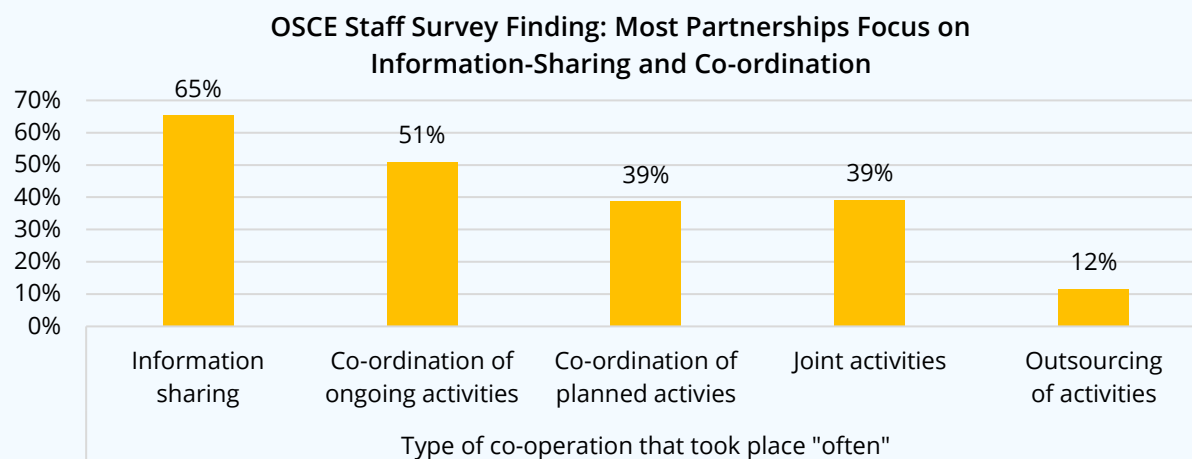
Executive Summary

Introduction

- I. International partnerships are crucial for the OSCE's work on building and sustaining stability, peace and democracy. This evaluation assesses its involvement in partnerships at the country level with international/regional organizations and non-governmental organizations in the period 2016-2021. It aims to provide insights into how the OSCE can maximize the benefits of partnerships.
- II. It is based on data from OSCE documents, including project documents, Executive Structure activity reports, financial records, the Programme Budget Performance Report (PBPR) and related material in the OSCE's information management system (IRMA). It also relies on structured focus group interviews, third party studies and data, and an electronic survey distributed to 999 OSCE program and project staff who work with client facing projects. It was carried out by an evaluation manager at OIO and a subject matter expert consultant, and supported by a reference group.

Type of partnerships

- III. SDG 17 on partnerships covers external coherence between organizations/states with regard to policies and activities. The OSCE has used partnerships to pursue coherence in both areas. Its engagement with international organizations at the country level covers the spectrum from information sharing, knowledge exchange, joint planning, joint activities to transformative partnerships. Most partnerships were ad hoc, of short duration and with limited ambitions in terms of avoiding duplication of work, or simultaneously overlapping of activities. An example is the co-ordination meetings between the OSCE Mission to Montenegro, representatives of the European Union and the embassy of the United States on anti-money laundering assistance. Other and less common partnerships at other end of the partnership spectrum, are instances of long-term, strategic co-operation that involve joint activities, joint policies and/or a division of labour. Examples include the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) established in 2003.



Conclusions and recommendations

- IV. **Conclusion 1. Most partnerships add value and enhance effectiveness and efficiency of the OSCE.** Most of the partnerships enhanced networks and outreach, ensured co-ordination, removed competition among international organizations, and provided the OSCE with additional sources of information and expertise. In addition, partnerships generally increased the OSCE's leverage and the visibility of the OSCE and its projects. They have also in general enhanced effectiveness in terms of higher short- and mid-term outcomes of OSCE projects, and efficiency in terms of easier project implementation, expansion of (project) activities, higher project outputs and overall efficiency gains. Partnerships typically also contributed to gender mainstreaming.
- V. **Conclusion 2. Partnerships are most effective when there is a clear division of labour and partners engage in joint long-term planning and implementation of activities.** Effective partnerships are characterized by a clear division of labour and joint planning, implementation and information sharing at the project and program level. They do not necessarily require a formal partnership agreement, but benefit from a long-term and strategic and non-ad hoc approach that proactively ensures overall alignment between partners and addresses the potential division of labour. However, the evaluation found that long-term and strategic partnerships with international organizations are rare.
- VI. **Conclusion 3. There is no integrated approach to partnerships within the OSCE (lack of internal coherence) and the contribution of country level partnerships to external coherence is limited.** Institutions and field operations have none to very limited knowledge of corporate partnership agreements. Similarly, the Secretariat and thus also the Secretary General have a very incomplete insight into the prevalence and character of OSCE country level co-operation with other international organizations. This means that the Secretariat does not know how or whether to support field missions in their interactions with international organizations, and that in instances where corporate level agreements exist, these agreements might to some extent facilitate or even initiate local level co-operation and also assist in implementing corporate partnership agreements if Institutions and field operations are informed.

The evaluation highlighted three key issues for which recommendations were developed:

- VII. **Issue 1.** The OSCE does not have a partnership strategy, or even a partnership concept, that goes beyond the current broad modalities that focus on ad hoc co-operation.
- VIII. **Recommendation 1.** *Develop a partnership concept that can inform strategic partnerships at the country level. It could include a vision and mission statement for partnerships, and a strategy that outlines the concrete goals to be achieved (SEC/External Co-operation).*

- IX. **Issue 2.** There is limited guidance to OSCE Executive Structures on how to design and manage partnerships at the country-level. In addition, non-Secretariat Executive Structures are uncertain of when and how partnerships need to be formalized by agreements.
- X. **Recommendation 2.** *Develop guidance on types of partnerships for different purposes, necessary ingredients and formal requirements, and how to manage them. The guidance could include items such as such pro-active planning and the development of entry and exit strategies for partnerships (SEC/External Co-operation).*
- XI. **Issue 3.** There is limited insight in and information sharing on Partnerships. The Secretariat has limited knowledge of local level partnerships, while Executive Structures lack information about corporate level partnerships and those of other Executive Structures. This is one of the reasons why corporate level agreements have rarely instigated or supported country level partnerships.
- XII. **Recommendation 3.** *Enhance the information exchange on partnerships between the Secretariat's External Co-operation unit and Executive Structures and periodically assess the continued relevance of existing partnerships (SEC/External Co-operation).*

1. Introduction and Purpose

1. Initiatives to address issues covered by the OSCE's three Dimensions and its cross-Dimension commonly involve or require actors to work together, or co-ordinate their activities. Many issues cannot be resolved by a single actor within a reasonable time-period. Furthermore international and regional organizations are commonly simultaneously represented in many of the countries with OSCE field presence.¹ Sometimes this leads to a crowded donor space that manifests itself in unco-ordinated activities and even competition. At worst, recipient host government entities can sometimes refer to "competition" and actual "conflict" in a crowded donor space and continue current practice(s) until there is agreement among donors and clarity about "best international practices and standards." This raises the need for at a minimum co-ordination and information exchange to avoid, inter alia, duplication of work, or accidentally disrupting each others' activities, and preferably to also enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the OSCE's work to implement its mandate. In general terms, co-ordination falls under the concept of "coherence" which is an important part of the international development agenda as a tool for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of development aid.
2. The OSCE's broad mandate due to its focus on comprehensive security, and its activities across its three Dimensions, mean that the OSCE has a uniquely large number of potential co-operation surfaces vis-à-vis other international organizations. It also means that the OSCE's need for co-ordination is larger than that of its more narrowly focused peer organizations. Since many years the OSCE has co-ordinated or partnered with various international organizations in countries where the OSCE has field operations. The ultimate objective has been to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the OSCE, that is, to enhance performance.
3. The prevalence, let alone whether, how and to what extent partnerships have been of added value in various ways for the OSCE is unknown. In addition, no independent OIO evaluation exclusively on the topic of partnerships has so far been conducted in the OSCE. This evaluation's overall objective is to identify lessons learned and best practices, and formulate recommendations at the operational and at the strategic level that serve to strengthen the performance enhancing effect of the OSCE's country-level partnerships. The *scope* of the evaluation is cross-organizational,

¹ For instance, there are on average 17 UN organizations present in each of the five countries in Central Asia where the OSCE has an office. For data, see <https://unrcca.unmissions.org/un-agencies-central-asian-region-0>. Country level data on the presence of UN organizations focusing on humanitarian relief are available at <https://3w.unocha.org/>. For detailed and historical data, see <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/infographics/infographic-type/3w>.

covering the period 2016-2021, and with senior management and project management and staff as its target group.

4. The evaluation *focuses* on the OSCE's involvement in partnerships at the *country level* with international/regional organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).² Its *purpose* is to describe and evaluate *country level* partnerships in terms of their types (e.g., information sharing, co-ordination, sharing of lessons learned, etc.), the processes of partnering (e.g., formal or informal, the role of the OSCE, level of engagement, etc.), and their overall benefits for the OSCE. It also assesses whether, to what extent and how *country level* partnerships are supported by *organizational level* partnerships.
5. In line with the evaluation criteria offered by the OECD Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation, the evaluation assesses whether and to what extent country level partnering with international and regional multilateral organizations are relevant and of added value in terms of contributing to the efficiency and effectiveness of the OSCE's mandated activities foremost at the country level. It also assesses if and how partnerships have supported gender mainstreaming, which is one of the OSCE's commitments as per the OSCE's Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality endorsed by the Ministerial Council (MC) in 2004 (MC.DEC/14/04) and subsequent OSCE decisions. The detailed evaluation questions, together with information on data sources and measurement, are included in the annex to this report.
6. Section 2 of this report outlines the evaluation's approach and methodology. Section 3 provides a thematic and policy background to the theory and practice of partnership. It also covers the concept of "partnerships", reviews research on the effectiveness of partnerships and provides a typology that will be used throughout this report. Section 4 covers the OSCE's partnership process and summarizes the origins of - and modalities for - its partnership practice. It also provides an overview of the spectrum of various types of partnerships that the OSCE has been engaged in. Section 5 covers the OSCE's partnership record and presents data on its prevalence and character, whereas section 6 focuses on the interplay between partnerships and organizational performance, and presents findings on the relevance, added value of partnerships, and their contribution to the efficiency, effectiveness, and gender mainstreaming of OSCE projects. Based on the survey data, section 7 investigates whether the various partnership characteristics are associated with the outcomes of partnerships in terms of their effect on the efficiency and effectiveness of the OSCE.

² For an inventory and discussion of approaches to evaluating partnerships, see Potluka (2020) and partly also Horan (2019). Some of the approaches involve the standard OECD-DAC evaluation criteria and the input-outcome log-frame/theory of change approach. Two examples of the latter type of systematic, data driven, detailed and structured partnership evaluations is from the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (2017) and European Commission (2017). See also UNWOMEN (2017).

Section 8 summarizes how partnerships have contributed to coherence between OSCE and other international organization. Finally, section 9 provides strategic and tactical level recommendations intended to further enhance the effect of partnerships on the OSCE's performance.

2. Approach and Methodology

7. The evaluation triangulates data from five data sources: [1] OSCE documents, including project documents, activity reports, financial records, the Programme Budget Performance Report (PBPR) and related material in the OSCE's information management systems in terms of the document repository DocIn and the Integrated Resource Management System (IRMA) that inter alia provide financial information; [2] structured focus group interviews with 73 members of OSCE staff from all Executive Structures and Institutions and staff from partner international organizations; and [3] third party studies and data. These data sources were complemented by [4] an electronic survey distributed by OIO to 999 OSCE program and project staff.³ In addition, a reference group [5] was established to provide information and advice, and to comment on draft reports. The evaluation was carried out by an OIO evaluation team leader together with a subject matter expert consultant.
8. In order to map and assess country level partnerships, their types, the processes of partnering, the benefits for the OSCE, and whether, to what extent and how country level partnerships have been supported by the OSCE's organizational level partnerships, data source 4 was used as key source, with data sources 1, 2 and 5 for complementary in-depth information. The same data sources were used to assess whether and to what extent country level partnering with international and regional multilateral organizations is relevant, of added value and contributes to the efficiency and effectiveness of the OSCE. Data source 3 was used for collection of thematic background information.
9. OSCE project level monitoring data on the impact of partnerships is not available. As a substitute, the aforementioned survey asked project staff to provide their assessment based on their experiences from projects with partners. Data from the same survey was also used to address evaluation questions on gender mainstreaming, relevance and added value. Structured interviews of key informants from select Executive Structures and Institutions, and co-operation partners were carried out to further explore issues identified by the survey.

³ The survey covers 999 staff who work with OSCE external actors and may have been involved in various forms of partnerships with them. Consequently, staff within OSCE general or common service units (e.g., management and finance, recruitment, and procurement) are not included.

10. Additional interviews focused on three contrasting cases studies covering the OSCE's three dimensions. These case studies do not per se constitute individual evaluations of the concerned projects, but form part of the overall approach to generate learnings through in-depth analysis of selected interventions⁴.
- a. The OSCE's 1st Dimension: Border Management Staff College (BMSC). Selected because the College has extensively interacted *bilaterally* in an *ad hoc manner* with a *large number of international organizations* in delivering activities.
 - b. The OSCE's 2nd Dimension: Environment Security Initiative (ENVSEC)/ Office of the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA). Selected because it constitutes a *strategic* and *long-term formalised/institutionalized multilateral* partnership that has covered *many years* and *many activities*.
 - c. The OSCE's 3rd Dimension: OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, project/programme on processing/monitoring of war crimes. Selected because it covers many years, involves co-operation and co-ordination with other international actors, and took place in a context where other actors provided large-scale support to the government.
11. For more details, on the approach and methodology, please see the detailed evaluation Terms of Reference, together with the evaluation matrix, in the annex to this report.

3. Partnering: Thematic and Policy Background

3.1 International policy context

12. Reflecting a stated effort to improve aid effectiveness, The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness was signed in 2005. One element committed the signatories to "common arrangements at country level for planning, funding (e.g., joint financial arrangements), disbursement, monitoring, evaluating and reporting to government on donor activities and aid flows." The same element committed them to also "Work together to reduce the number of separate, duplicative missions to the field [...]; and promote joint training to share lessons learnt and build a community of practice." In essence, it was a call for greater coherence of donor activities.
13. The Declaration stressed the importance of establishing partnerships among donors and international organizations to support such harmonisation. The signatories committed to "Make full use of their respective comparative advantage at sector or country level by delegating, where

⁴ Case study reports are available upon request.

appropriate, authority to lead donors for the execution of programmes, activities and tasks", "work together to harmonise separate procedures", and "harmonise their activities."⁵

14. A monitoring scheme was created to track progress against objectives.⁶ Indicator 9 stipulated that aid should be "provided through harmonised programmes co-ordinated among donors" entailing co-ordinated action, simplified procedures and information sharing to avoid duplication of work.⁷ The OECD follow-up surveys of the implementation of the Declaration ended in 2011, with the last survey indicating "moderate progress."
15. Building on the Paris Declaration, the signatories to the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (2011) committed to "greater use of country-led co-ordination arrangements, including division of labour, as well as programme-based approaches, joint programming and delegated co-operation" and "strengthen their participation in coordination".⁸ Also, this agreement included the establishment of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC, "The Global Partnership"), the primary multi-stakeholder forum for driving progress on effective development, including a mechanism to "monitor progress on a rolling basis."
16. Related to this is Goal 17 of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is expected to "strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development." It encompasses 19 targets, most of which refer to specific sectors, such as trade, finance, and science.⁹ Of particular relevance for this evaluation are three SDG17 targets that focus on stakeholder partnerships as a tool for achieving the goals of the Agenda.

⁵ It has been endorsed by 41 of the OSCE's pS. While it is not directly relevant for the OSCE, it is summarized here as it is an important part of the ideational background to the overall idea of partnerships for enhanced performance. The declaration is available at https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/paris-declaration-on-aid-effectiveness_9789264098084-en#page3. Similarly, the 2011 Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation has been endorsed by 43 pS, but not by the OSCE. See <https://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/busanadherents.htm> and <https://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/countriesandterritoriesandendorsementstotheParisDeclarationandaaa.htm>.

⁶ The Declaration's official data monitoring dashboard can be found at <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=SURVEYDATA>. Also the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) has incorporated co-ordination among assistance providers in its evaluation criteria, which falls under the rubric of "relationship management. See "MOPAN 3.1 Methodology" at http://www.mopanonline.org/ourwork/themopanapproach/Methodology_3.1_FinalUnformatted.pdf. Organization specific KPI data in Excel format on co-ordination for 34 assessments carried out over the period 2010-2014 can be found at <http://www.mopanonline.org/analysis/items/mopandata2010-14assessments.htm>. All assessment reports include the raw KPI scores.

⁷ See <https://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/45827300.pdf>.

⁸ The declaration is available at https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/busan-partnership-for-effective-development-co-operation_54de7baa-en.

⁹ For details, see <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal17>.

17. Target 17.17 refers to the need to "Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships", while target 17.6 highlights the need to "Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international co-operation [...] through improved coordination among existing mechanisms." Similarly, target 17.16 refers to the requirement to "Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSP) that mobilise and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources." In this regard the importance of policy coherence and policy co-ordination (SDG 17:13) is highlighted.

3.2 Security, the SDGs and the role of the OSCE

18. Since the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, the OSCE (then CSCE [Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe]) has linked security and development through its comprehensive approach to security. It rests on the recognition that conflicts may arise not only from political and military threats but also from economic tensions, environmental degradation, social insecurity, and deficiencies in the rule of law and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, all relevant for the achievement of the SDGs.¹⁰ Furthermore, since conflict prevention is central to the OSCE's work, the organization makes – across its three dimensions – a contribution to the realization of Goal 16, focused on peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice, and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions. In addition, its activities span also in various ways the other 16 SDGs.

19. The OSCE as the world's largest regional security organization has an important role in assisting its pS with the implementation of the SDGs using its toolbox, expertise, and knowledge on the ground. It also has more than 20 years of experience of creating and fostering partnerships at the country level, and has even longer experience at the corporate level. With its institutions, field operations and activities that reinforce transboundary co-operation, it has capacities to support the SDG's implementation and to foster regional co-operation. In 2019, the OSCE's Security Days¹¹ concluded that the OSCE's role as an enabler and platform to bridge global and national implementation should be accentuated to enhance regional co-operation in the implementation of the SDGs. It also concluded that it should continue to leverage partnerships in the spirit of the SDGs following the good partnering examples of the UN's Inter-agency Coordination Group Against Trafficking (ICAT) and ENVSEC.

¹⁰ OSCE (2019a).

¹¹ For details, see <https://www.osce.org/secdays/2019/OSCE-and-SDGS>.

3.3 The concept of partnership

20. As pointed out by Pattberg and Widerberg (2016: 43) and others, the concept of "partnership" is broad and suffers from "competing definitions", as demonstrated by the fact that "practitioners and scholars have used the term 'partnership' to describe just about any type of collaboration."
21. For instance, UNWOMEN defines "strategic partnership" as mutually beneficial, leading to "force multiplication", including a "long-term commitment", combining the partners' knowledge, experience and capabilities, and contributing to accelerating UNWOMEN's agenda.¹² This may be compared to the definition in UN General Assembly resolutions¹³ in which partnerships are not explicitly viewed as long-term or strategic but rather as "voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both public and non-public, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and, as mutually agreed, to share risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits."¹⁴ Also, the term "partnership" is often linked to one partner providing funding to another.
22. The recent UN SDG Partnership Guidebook provides a definition for 'multi-stakeholder' partnerships explicitly linked to reaching the SDGs, introducing value creation as an essential driver for collaboration: "An ongoing collaborative relationship among organizations from different stakeholder types, aligning their interests around a common vision, combining their complementary resources and competencies and sharing risks, to maximise value creation towards the SDG's and deliver benefit to each of the partners"¹⁵. Although the definition doesn't seem to exclude the notion, it is not clear about short-term and often informal types of co-operation at the working or project level that involves exchanging information to enable co-ordination and avoid duplication of work, but no joint activities.¹⁶
23. Meanwhile, in the terminology of the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, these various types of "co-operation partnerships" fall under the concept of external coherence.¹⁷ It refers to "the consistency of the intervention with other actors' interventions in the same context. This includes complementarity, harmonisation and coordination with others and the extent to which the intervention adds value while avoiding duplication of effort." Coherence was added to the OECD-

¹² For instance, UNWOMEN (2017) shows that despite having been involved in a large number of collaborative relationships, it did not have an organizational concept or definition of "partnership." A concept had instead to be created for the purpose of the mentioned evaluation.

¹³ General Assembly Resolutions 68/234, 66/223, 64/223, 62/211, 60/215, 58/129, and 56/76.

¹⁴ United Nations (2006).

¹⁵ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/The Partnering Initiative (2020).

¹⁶ See <https://www.un.org/en/desa/highlights-report-2019-2020> for detailed data on partnerships that are related to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

¹⁷ See <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/revised-evaluation-criteria-dec-2019.pdf>

DAC evaluation criteria in 2019 to stress the fit of an intervention to the broader system (organization, sector, thematic area, country) and the need for collaboration amongst donors, international organization and governments to support harmonisation and in extension increased aid efficiency and effectiveness.

24. Within the context of this evaluation, effectiveness is not only understood as achievement of outcomes and impact of a specific intervention, but as also related to the question of whether the chosen approach (for instance, through an MSP) has been more effective than other ways of tackling the challenges or intended goals, such as through a single actor approach. Despite the growing recognition of the need for a critical reflection on the modalities and effectiveness of partnerships, collaboration still too often relies on the simple - and yet to be empirically supported - narrative that complex challenges can be more effectively tackled by partnerships.

3.4 State of play

25. The UN definition of partnerships includes different forms of partnerships working at different scales, geographic levels, operational levels (global or local), levels of ambition and formality, etc. It ranges from international networks to bi-lateral arrangements; from multi-sector, multi-issue platforms to single-sector, single-issue interest groups.
26. Some empirical evidence about this diversity is provided by the UN Partnerships for SDGs online platform¹⁸, the largest global registry of initiatives and partnerships contributing to the SDGs. An independent study commissioned by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) in 2019 provides an in-depth analysis of the registered initiatives and partnerships (almost 4.000 at that time) and, with that, a good picture of the current situation. In addition to the registration data of the online platform, the research team conducted an online survey of all registered partnerships and initiatives in early 2019.
27. Amongst others, the report on the survey results describes a broad diversity of partnerships with regard to their deliverables¹⁹ and how they contribute to the SDGs' implementation. It finds that indirect, enabling and supporting deliverables in terms of *activities* and *outputs* (written outputs, events, capacity building) are more common than actual *results* in terms of how projects directly

¹⁸ It is available at <https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships>.

¹⁹ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2019). The following categories of deliverables were identified by the researchers: written technical outputs (e.g., contributions to evaluation and monitoring; reports; indicator development); events/presentations; public/large scale communication/expression (e.g., art or public information); targeted reduction/increase (absolute or proportionate) within a population; capacity-building/training within organizations; policy and governance change; networking/forming a network; developing a plan/strategy/programme/framework; educational course/programme/curriculum; other.

influenced/benefitted the target population. Most partnerships consist of 2 to 10 partners, with the largest group operating at the international level (43%), followed by national (31%) and local level partnerships (26%).

28. However, despite the compelling narrative around the expected added value of collaboration and a growing number of partnership evaluations, there is still limited empirical evidence of the actual impact coming out of partnerships. That has many different reasons. One is that it takes time to establish partnerships and that they often require considerable investments before they start delivering their first results. The earlier cited UN Partnership Platform analysis report concludes that little can be said about the progress of the registered partnerships, as less than ten per cent of the partnerships on the registry had filed updates over the last period. This is in line with other studies stating the limited availability of progress data²⁰.
29. Another reason is that some partnerships are not the right approach for the context, or they are not set up or running as efficiently as needed.²¹ On the other hand, whether a specific collaborative approach is effective or not might to varying degrees be context-specific and might therefore be difficult to answer in a general manner.
30. The SDG Partnership Guidebook also states that working together in a partnership often requires considerable input of financial and non-financial resources. Hence, partnerships should only be formed where there is a good reason to collaborate, and each partner realises what it requires to maximise their impact. Working in partnership is especially challenging when diverse and competing interests, perspectives and values are at stake, and different organizational and cultural contexts are involved. In the words of Brouwer et al²²: “It is not as simple as just sticking people in a room and hoping for the best.” In other words, it's important to ask the question whether working in partnership is the most efficient and effective way to tackle a specific problem or implement a particular task, or whether a more straightforward, transactional approach²³ is more suitable.
31. A common element across many of the current partnership definitions refers to “sharing the benefits” and “value creation”, or co-operation between relevant stakeholders that *aims to improve the relevance of projects, programs, and policies [and] the sustainability of their outputs*²⁴. The UN Partnership Platform analysis report presents some evidence from respondents that partnerships

²⁰ Pattberg & Widerberg (2016), analysing a sample of 340 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) partnerships after more than five years since their inception, conclude that 211 partnerships are inactive, lack any outputs, or fail to match their stated ambitions with their observed activities.

²¹ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/The Partnering Initiative (2020).

²² Brouwer et al (2019a: 9). See also Brouwer et al (2019b).

²³ A partner implementing activities on behalf of another partner or providing service to the other partner.

²⁴ See Potluka (2020: 131), who also reviews approaches for evaluating partnerships and relevant research.

are perceived as generating additional impact or value that “the partners could not have generated alone.” Almost two-thirds of the respondents mentioned the creation of new solutions, further learning, and increased scale as the primary value added. In addition, the resources most extensively shared in the various partnerships are related to experiences, knowledge, and expertise, followed by access to each other's networks. As to be expected, financial resources are mainly provided by the leading (donor) organizations in the partnerships, in this case, primarily the UN and other international organizations.

32. As defined by The Partnering Initiative, in the case of a collaboration between different stakeholders, value creation is an essential driver in any collaboration.²⁵ Each individual partner should consider the contribution of the partnership outcomes to the organizational strategic and high-level objectives, recognising that each partner has got different mandates. In addition, the organizations themselves could benefit directly or indirectly at the operative level from the partnership, for instance by leveraging resources, gaining knowledge, enhanced reputation, enhanced capabilities, networking and connections, social and political capital, etc.
33. Referring to the UN Partnership Platform analysis, finance and resource issues are the most significant challenges (mentioned by 70% of respondents). Another challenge experienced was the context partnerships operate in, including political factors, geographical obstacles or institutional constraints. Time, co-ordination, and momentum are recognised as challenges, too, although not as prominent as the first two. As identified by respondents, enabling factors also reflect these challenges - especially finance and resources. As will be evident from a later section of this report, the OSCE challenges when working through partnerships are overall similar to those of other international organizations.
34. Despite the lack of hard data to settle the debate, there is a growing consensus about the critical success factors for a good collaboration. Pattberg and Widerberg (2016), for instance, identify nine conditions for successful MSPs²⁶, while the MSP guide identifies seven principles that make partnerships effective²⁷. Based on the success factors for collaboration highlighted by multiple organizations over many years, the Partnering Initiative developed four broad building blocks for effective partnering²⁸:

²⁵ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs//The Partnering Initiative (2019).

²⁶ In a meta-review of research, Pattberg and Widerberg (2016) identify conditions for successful partnerships, including partner mix, leadership, goal setting, funding, management, monitoring and evaluation, governance, political and social context, and a partnership structure that is adapted to circumstances.

²⁷ Brouwer et al (2021: 40).

²⁸ Ibid. p. 43. It should be noted that these factors were identified on the basis of case-specific information instead of through a careful statistical analysis of empirical patterns.

1. *The Fundamentals*. Collaboration includes the right partners who have the same goals, and the essential stakeholders are effectively engaged to contribute to the goals.
2. *Partnership relationship*. When relationships are working well, it is easier to handle challenges and to work towards collaborative solutions. Critical elements of partnership relationships are power balance and equity, accountability and commitment and transparency.
3. *Structuring and set-up*. The partnership's structure should be “fit for purpose” and managed well. Collaborations also need resources, both financial and non-financial²⁹ to be able to implement activities and to deliver impact.
4. *Management and leadership*. Results-based management, monitoring, review, joint-learning.

3.5 A partnership typology spectrum

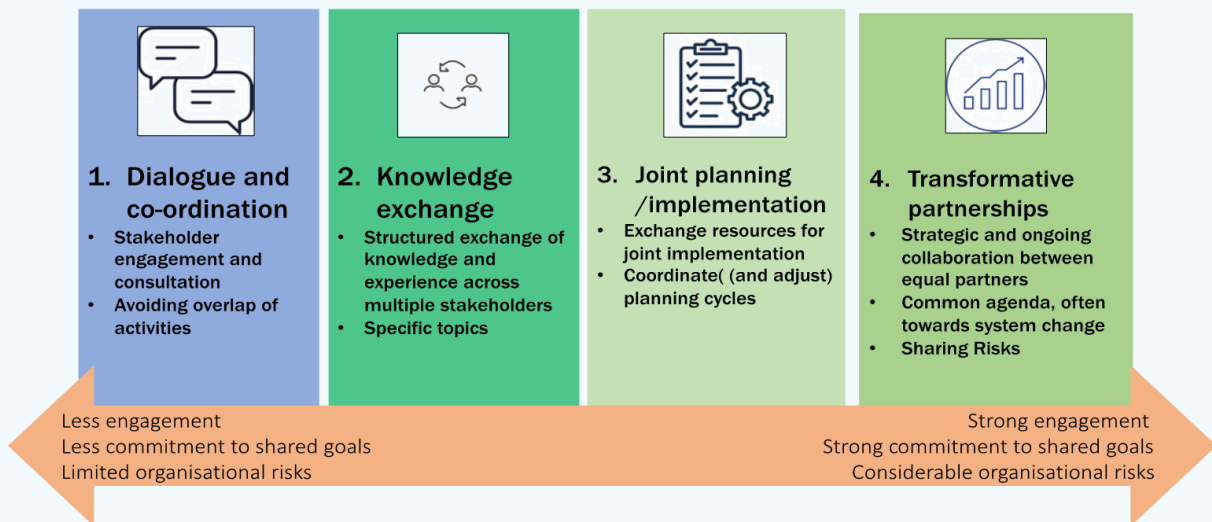
35. As discussed above, partnership definitions are, often on purpose, broad and encompass a variety of collaborative arrangements. Therefore, it is helpful to identify some basic types of partnerships and differentiate them in terms of their aims, outcomes, and how partners engage. This will make it easier to talk about partnerships in a meaningful way and to analyse the different ways in which partnerships can generate value.
36. The closer the partners are working together (level of engagement) and share resources, the more critical it is that partners are accountable, share values and have senior-level support and commitment. For instance, a regular dialogue with other organizations requires less buy-in and commitment to particular goals than collaboration where organizations plan and implement joined/joint projects.
37. There are broadly recognizable partnership types which occupy different parts of a spectrum, as visualized below.³⁰ Less complex challenges, for instance a training need, can be addressed through partnerships focused on exchange, while more complex challenges that require organizational alignment and strong stakeholder engagement, may call for more transformative and adaptive approaches. Partnerships can take different forms within this spectrum, varying from informal interactions based on mutual understanding to collaborations formalised in written (even legal) agreements signed by all partners. Challenges can also be more complex in nature and

²⁹ The contribution of non-financial resources is critical to partnerships but often overlooked, including knowledge, experience, networks, data and information, political influence, visibility, and technical assistance.

³⁰ This is an adapted version of an illustration in United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/The Partnering Initiative (2020: 24).

require organizational alignment and strong stakeholder engagement, and may require more transformative and adaptive approaches.

Illustration I. The Partnership Spectrum



38. Some globally operating organizations have developed partnering strategies, often combined with investment in staff training programs or the provision of practical support to their various organizational entities. As will be evident from the next section of this report, the OSCE does not apply a strategic and organization-wide approach, but rather a decentralized and ad hoc approach which reflects not only the organization’s decentralized organizational structure but also its key policy documents on partnerships.

39. Partnerships or engagement can take different forms within this spectrum, from informal and based on mutual understanding to a collaboration formalised in a written (even legal) agreement signed by all partners. The three case studies carried out as part of this evaluation elaborate further on the different forms of engagement and formality relevant to the OSCE collaborations.

40. Considering that the OSCE describes itself as a forum for political dialogue on a wide range of security issues and a platform for joint action to improve the lives of individuals and communities³¹, it could be helpful to distinguish between these two functions. Whereas the dialogue function could be positioned on the left-hand side of the diagram, partnerships for joint action may require more robust engagement and organizational commitment positioned more towards the middle and right-hand side.

³¹ See <https://www.osce.org/who-we-are>.

41. As the demand for collaboration grows and organizations find themselves involved in an abundance of arrangements - all of them called “partnerships” - that not always effectively use time and resources to produce satisfactory results. For organizations to become more effective in both design and implementation of partnerships requires a more strategic, organization-wide approach. Some globally operating organizations have developed partnering strategies, often combined with investment in staff training programs or providing practical support to their various organizational entities.
42. An example of a practical organizational approach to partnering is the “Partner of Choice” (PoC) program of World Vision International (WVI).³² PoC is a holistic, organization-wide approach to becoming “fit-for-partnering.” The programme boosts WVI Field Offices' partnering capabilities and is vital to succeeding in WVI's global strategic goals: "Collaborating and advocating for broader impact." The programme is a tailored version of The Partnering Initiative's acclaimed “Fit for Partnering” approach and provides four organizational building blocks, including [1] a robust platform for organizational leadership and strategy on partnering, [2] systems that support effective collaboration (including human resources, finance, risk, etc.), [3] staff with increased capabilities and support to broker and manage transformational partnerships, and [4] a culture that promotes collaboration across the organization.

4. The OSCE's Partnerships: Origins, Modalities, and Spectrum

4.1 Origins and modalities

43. In the words of one interviewee of this evaluation, because of the large number of organizations active alongside the OSCE in some countries, “chaos” would ensue if some form of co-ordination/co-operation is not at hand. Stakeholders would also run the risk of being overwhelmed by unco-ordinated projects and project offerings. The latter could in turn make it more difficult for international organizations to get government commitment to – and approval of – assistance projects. In short, co-ordination has potential benefits for stakeholders as well as for international organizations and is born out of a need rather than necessarily a sense of community among peer organizations.
44. The 1999 Istanbul Summit adoption of the *Platform for Co-operative Security* constitutes the formal basis for co-operation between the OSCE and other international organizations and sub-regional groupings. It aims to “strengthen the mutually reinforcing nature of the relationship between those

³² See <https://www.wvi.org/publications/our-partners/partner-choice>.

organizations and institutions concerned with the promotion of comprehensive security within the OSCE area".³³ For the OSCE, the stated goal of partnerships is to assist in implementing its tasks (i.e., enhancing the OSCE's effectiveness) while at the same time avoiding "duplication and waste of resources" (i.e., enhancing the OSCE's efficiency).³⁴

45. It was followed by the adoption of the 2001 Bucharest Ministerial OSCE Declaration in which OSCE pS renewed their commitment "to close co-operation [...] between the OSCE and other international organizations, institutions and sub-regional groups, in accordance with the Platform for Co-operative Security." In 2003 the OSCE issued the *Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the 21st Century*, which "seeks to expand its relations with all organizations and institutions that are concerned with the promotion of comprehensive security within the OSCE area, and has established regular patterns of consultation at both the technical and the political levels with a number of them, inter alia, the UN, EU, NATO and the Council of Europe."³⁵
46. Whereas the *Platform for Co-operative Security* highlights the need to focus on comprehensive security, the *Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the 21st Century* provides a lengthier and more detailed narrative of the threats to security and stability that are part of the comprehensive security concept. In that regard it no longer highlights only "conflict prevention and crisis management" as of "particular relevance" - as stated in the *Platform for Co-operative Security. Partnerships* - with other international actors are described as a part of the strategy and response to these threats, while at the same time it calls on the OSCE to "intensify interaction at the political and working level" and to strengthen co-operation and co-ordination on "practical matters and projects [...] across the whole spectrum of threats covered by the Strategy [...]."
47. The ad hoc modalities for partnerships have remained largely unchanged since the *Platform for Co-operative Security*. In concrete terms, the Platform mentions regular contacts, practical co-operation, liaison officers, cross-representation at meetings (including at the political and the executive level) and "other contacts" as the process through which partnerships can be implemented. More specifically, it outlines regular information exchanges and meetings, joint needs assessments, secondment of experts by other organizations to the OSCE's projects and field operations as well as joint training efforts. Contacts and co-operation should also be "transparent

³³ Zannier (2013: 383), which reviews the formal basis and OSCE decisions related to the issue of partnerships. See also Paunov (2015) for review with a focus on the EU-OSCE relationship. OSCE (2000, 2001) provides the formal background to partnerships and detailed annual accounts of partnerships.

³⁴ OSCE (2000: 8).

³⁵ Zannier (2013: 384).

to [OSCE] participating States” and “consistent with the modalities appropriate to the OSCE and those organizations and institutions.”

48. There have only been few and limited initiatives to adjust the OSCE’s partnering approach. The 2005 OSCE Panel of Eminent Persons recommended that “the relationship with the UN should be further developed” and “pragmatic and even-handed co-operation should be enhanced between the OSCE and regional and sub-regional organizations”³⁶, but appears to have focused on the contents and number of partnerships. Similarly, a review commissioned by the 2012 Irish Chairperson-in-Office focussed on the substance (i.e., issue areas) of partnering rather than on the process of partnering, that is, how partnering is organized and implemented.³⁷ Among other things the report suggested that the OSCE should focus on a set of priority organizations and that co-operation should be developed on a multiannual perspective. OIO has not been able to identify any process within the OSCE to follow-up on the recommendations of the 2012 report or the suggestions of the 2005 Panel.
49. While a basic partnership framework is in place, there are no concrete goals, milestones or benchmarks for corporate level partnerships with a related strategy and implementation plan. Interview information show that the OSCE relies on a decentralized, flexible ad hoc co-operation and partnership approach where partnering is independently pursued by the individual ES. In the words of one interviewee, and consistent with the gist of the *Platform for Co-operative Security*, “we focus on where the needs are.” Whereas a few years back the Secretariat initiated work on a “partnership paradigm” for the OSCE, it has not been finalized at the time of writing this report.

4.2 Spectrum

50. The partnership typology spectrum (report section 3.5) shows increasing degrees of engagement, from co-ordination at the left-hand endpoint of little engagement, to knowledge exchange, joint planning, and finally transformative partnerships at the right-hand endpoint of strong engagement. The OSCE’s engagement with international organizations and countries at the country level has covered the entire spectrum, as well as the OSCE’s three Dimensions and its cross-dimensions.³⁸
51. As an example, the partnership between NATO and the OSCE in implementing the 1995 Dayton agreement shows strong collaboration. It involves a long-term, strategic and extensive country level and corporate level partnership that extends beyond the particular project level. As such it is

³⁶ OSCE (2005: 10).

³⁷ OSCE (2012).

³⁸ For a brief overview of OSCE partnerships, see also Boisson de Chazournes and Gadkowski (2019).

a so-called transformative partnership. Whereas NATO was assigned the military elements of the agreement over the period 1995-2005, the OSCE was assigned almost all the non-military elements, and the two organizations partnered and divided the labour in implementing the tasks.³⁹ Another case is the Kosovo war in 1999, after which the OSCE was assigned the democratization and institution building pillar through OMiK, which became an integral part of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).⁴⁰

52. Closer to the middle of the spectrum, as it is less transformative and mostly characterized by joint planning, the OSCE has entered into long-term strategic partnerships at the country project level that sometimes involve outsourcing the implementation of entire project tasks or even entire projects to other international organizations. One example is the Montenegro Demilitarization Programme (MONDEM), which involved the OSCE and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) as multi-year strategic partners, and through which the OSCE transferred more than €1.000.000 to UNDP for implementing an OSCE project that contributed to one element of MONDEM.⁴¹
53. An example closer to the left of the spectrum in terms of limited engagement are the co-ordination meetings between the OSCE Mission to Montenegro, the EU and the embassy of the United States on anti-money laundering assistance to Montenegro. Rather than joint planning, joint activities and a long-term strategic partnership, the interactions were confined to information exchange intended to avoid duplication of activities. Through evaluations in recent years, OIO has found that this type of short-term and needs-based collaboration is predominant at the country level.
54. A second example of project/programme level partnership is the Security Infrastructure Upgrade of Bosnia and Herzegovina Ammunition and Weapons Storage Sites (SECUP) project (2011-2016). It was implemented by the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina in partnership with EUFOR, NATO, the European Union, the United States Embassy, and UNDP, and served to enhance the security and safety of conventional ammunition and small arms and light weapons.⁴²
55. A third example is ENVSEC, which is also one of the case studies for this evaluation. Created in 2003, it is a long-term, formalized and strategic partnership of the OSCE, UNDP, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and

³⁹ Simonet (2018).

⁴⁰ Ibid. and OSCE (1999).

⁴¹ OSCE Project number 2700240, see also OSCE (2016a). In addition, the mission implemented other projects that contributed to the disarmament process in Montenegro.

⁴² OSCE project number 2200268. Alongside the partners the OSCE contributed to implementing a national plan for, inter alia, creating safe and secure ammunitions storage sites. See also OSCE (2016b).

the Regional Environment Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC).⁴³ The signatories committed to “contribute through its expertise and capacities to the implementation of the initiative in line with its mandate and comparative advantages.” It led, inter alia, to the delivery of 93 OSCE projects (as of 2018) as part of the OSCE’s role in the agreement.⁴⁴

56. Co-operation can also be un-related to projects or to broader partnerships, covering practical items such as information-sharing, policy co-ordination, joint statements, and dialogue activities. This type of collaboration is located at the left-hand endpoint of the partnership spectrum. The OSCE has in that regard been part of donor councils, co-ordination groups, expert groups, or just shared information with other international organizations. Such co-operation also covered policy (statement) co-ordination and joint advocacy, which reflects that the OSCE also has a political mandate and role.⁴⁵

5. The OSCE’s Partnership Record: Prevalence and Character

5.1 Corporate level

57. The Secretariat has created a compilation of past and current mostly corporate level MoUs, agreements, letters of intent and joint actions plans between the OSCE and international and regional organizations. It shows that over the period 1993 – 2020 the OSCE entered into 77 agreements of various depth.⁴⁶ Some agreements are/were of limited depth in that they express an ambition to have regular consultations on, for instance, “all matters of common interest”. These agreements were non-programmatic as they did not refer to implementation of programmatic activities. Other agreements were more ambitious, with varying degrees of specificity aimed at strengthening, promoting, and developing co-operation, sometimes even referring to a “strategic

⁴³ The first MoU signed in 2003 expired in 2006 and was succeeded by an MOU covering 2007-2017. A third MoU covering 2019-2021 was signed in 2019, see https://unece.org/DAM/ENVSEC/MOU_signed_by_all_4_partner_organizations.pdf. See also ENVSEC (2013) and OSCE (2019) for evaluations of the Århus Centre Network, which is a core element of the ENVSEC partnership.

⁴⁴ For details of the OSCE’s contribution of the ENVSEC partnership, see OSCE (2019). Note that the number of projects refers only to the OSCE’s support to the Århus Centre network and does not any other ENVSEC-related projects.

⁴⁵ The most extensive and well-documented non-programmatic co-operation found during the course of this evaluation is at the corporate level and between the OSCE and the Council of Europe. It is based on an agreement from April 2000 that contains a detailed a co-operation framework that includes joint regular meetings as well as addresses to each other’s decision-making bodies a various levels for a number of 3rd Dimension Themes (Council of Europe, 2000). An annual co-ordination group meeting structure was created in 2004 (PC.DEC/637/04; PC.DEC/670/04; CIO.GAL/69/04; OSCE, 2005; OSCE/Council of Europe, 2005; Council of Europe, 2011), and the co-operation was further detailed and strengthened in 2012 (Council of Europe, 2012a; 2012b; OSCE, 2013). Detailed reports from the biannual co-ordination meeting are found in DocIn.

⁴⁶The number includes agreements as well as extension or follow-up agreements. See OSCE (2020a).

partnership.” Still others were concrete in that they involved detailed joint actions plans. Almost all agreements were bilateral.

58. Interview information suggests that the OSCE has mostly reacted to invitations rather than instigating corporate-level agreements. From the OSCE Secretariat’s perspective the main purpose is/was to expand OSCE resources, thereby enhancing the OSCE’s ability to deliver on its mandate. The same interviewees informed that while time consuming to establish, the agreements often did not lead to “anything concrete” in terms of activities. The reason might be related to the information provided by one interviewee who mentioned that “some [corporate] level agreements are entered for political reasons rather than for operational reasons.” In addition, the potentially negative impact of the OSCE’s lack of legal status for entering partnerships has been a topic of intra-OSCE and academic discussions.⁴⁷ As for agreements or working arrangements with NGOs, OSCE interviewees expressed hesitancy and limited interest because these might involve reputational risks in terms of compromising the OSCE’s reputation for impartiality and being an honest broker.
59. Interviews show also that Institutions and field operations have none to very limited knowledge of corporate partnership agreements. Programmatic staff unanimously expressed an interest in receiving such information as it might assist them in entering country-level partnerships with the concerned organizations’ country offices. In particular, staff were not aware of the existing list of past and current corporate agreements.
60. Similarly, OIO observed that the Secretariat and thus also the Secretary General have an incomplete overview of the prevalence and character of OSCE country level co-operation with other international organizations. In turn, since the Secretariat does not have an overview of co-operation and partnerships at the field level, interviewed Secretariat staff mentioned that they did not know how or whether to support field missions in their interactions with international organizations.

5.2 Country level

61. The Secretariat has compiled a list of 232 local-level and corporate level agreements, follow-up agreements and extension agreements over the period 1993 – 2020. The agreements cover

⁴⁷ The absence of an internationally recognized legal personality has not stopped the OSCE from entering into various types of partnership agreements, but might have caused “reluctance” among some organizations and institutions to enter into partnerships with the OSCE (Boisson de Chazournes and Gadkowski, 2019: 204, 211). The net negative effect in terms of the additional country-level and corporate level partnerships that could have been created if the OSCE had had an internationally recognized legal personality, cannot be assessed.

administrative items such as local fuel agreements and cost-sharing agreements, programmatic items such as project implementation, long-term strategic partnerships, or even joint field operations. OIO has been unable to determine the extent to which this list constitutes a complete account of these various types of formalized agreements. A similar cross-organizational record of non-formalized instances of such partnerships does not exist.

62. Whereas interviewees commonly mentioned the existence of co-operation that was not focusing on the implementation of specific projects but rather concerned general information sharing, policy co-ordination, or other kinds of activities, including dialogue activities, this type of limited and anecdotal information does not allow for reliable estimates of its overall prevalence in the OSCE. OIO's organization-wide survey data provide a more solid basis for such estimates by focusing on a large number of individual level experiences.⁴⁸ It must meanwhile be stressed that survey data referring to individual level experiences of co-operation [1] does not equate the prevalence of co-operation per se, and [2] constitute personal perceptions rather than carefully and systematically collected data.
63. Graph I shows that 57% of the survey respondents had been personally involved in non-project related partnerships or co-operation with other international organizations that covered general information sharing, policy co-ordination, or other kinds of activities, including dialogue activities. The same respondents informed that such co-operation was "common" (34%) or "very common" (14%). Interviews show that on occasions the OSCE was part of a donor council with various types of constellations including other international organizations and embassy staff, co-ordination councils on specific issues, expert groups, or just shared information as a routine with other organizations. Co-operation also covered policy (statement) co-ordination and joint advocacy.
64. An example is the OSCE's Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine's (PCUk) multi-year co-operation with the Council of Europe (CoE).⁴⁹ It is regulated by a formal letter of exchange and involves, inter alia, the two entities aligning themselves on recommendations regarding election legislation, and organizing joint lessons learned events following elections. Another example is the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights' (ODIHR) participation in various committees of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), of which it is a member.⁵⁰ ODIHR also participates in the European Commission High Level Group on Addressing Racism, and exchanges information on a regular basis with the UN and EU. Yet another example is the Representative of

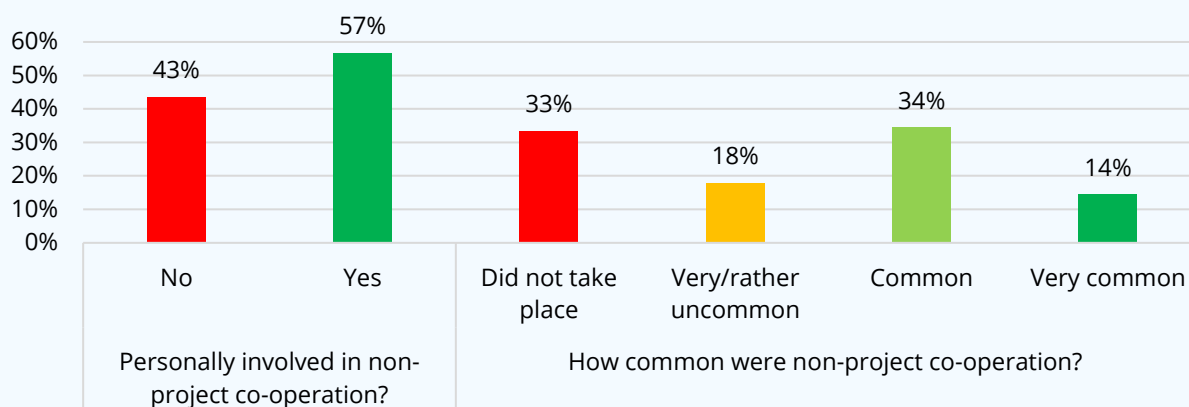
⁴⁸ For survey details, including sample margin of error and confidence levels, see the annex to this report.

⁴⁹ Interview information.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (FRoM), which is a member of expert groups and committees led by the CoE, all of which are informal.⁵¹ A final example is OMiK, where its Head of Mission has regular policy co-ordination meetings with international organizations.

Graph I: Prevalence of Non-Project Co-operation



65. Interviews show that programmatic co-operation directly related to OSCE projects, has been a standard practice for many years. Information at various levels of granularity concerning co-operation for each Executive Structure at the country level as well as for the corporate level, can be found in project documents, monthly activity reports of Executive Structures, the annual Programme Budget Performance Report (PBPR), and the OSCE’s annual report.⁵²
66. These information sources confirm interview information in that they show an extensive amount of country-level co-operation extending to all OSCE Executive Structures and Institutions. Based on these sources, OIO found that over the period 2015-2020 various forms of co-operation - foremost related to capacity-building or project implementation - with organizations or units residing in the UN system or the EU had taken place on 198 occasions, 88 of which OIO could link to a specific project. Judging from the collected information, the other instances were likely also connected to project implementation, but OIO could not identify the specific project numbers.⁵³ Considering that the project documentation in DoCIn is often incomplete and does not by default contain narratives on co-operation, these figures underestimate the actual level of co-operation to a potentially large degree.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² The 2000 and 2001 (OSCE 2000, 2001) annual reports on interactions with international organizations are very detailed. Over the years information on co-operation provided in the OSCE’s annual reports has become increasingly less detailed.

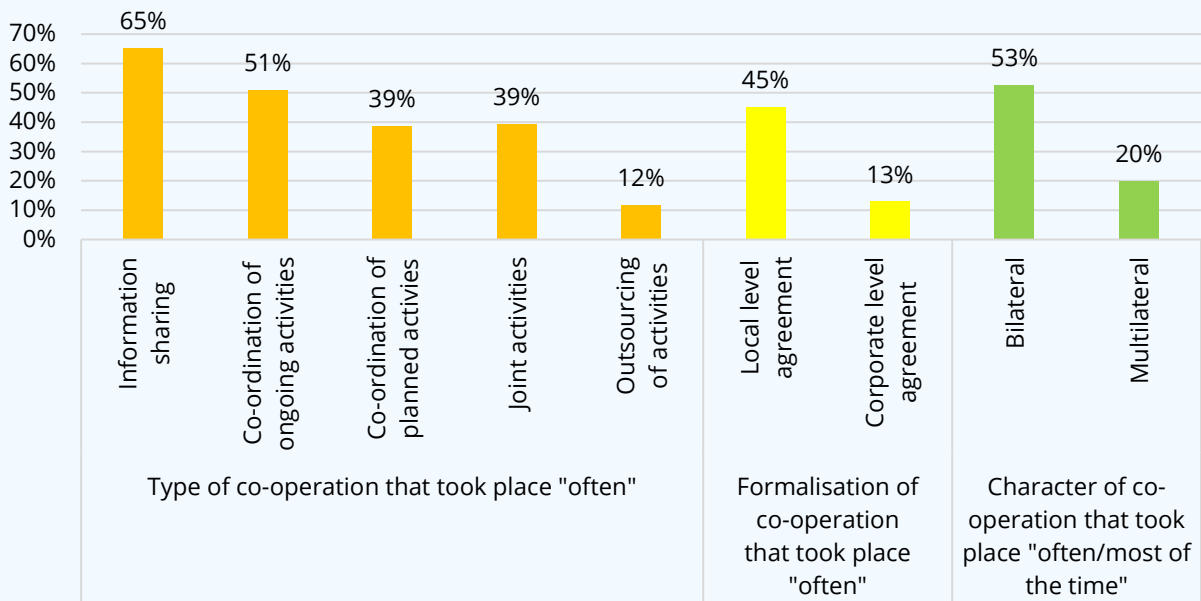
⁵³ Considering that the OSCE initiated 1.162 client facing UB projects over the period 2016-2020, these figures indicate that at least 20% of all OSCE projects involved some type of co-operation with other international organizations.

67. One example is the War Crimes Capacity-building Project (WCCP) delivered by the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina over the period 2014 - 2017. By building capacity among lawyers, judges, prosecutors, and investigators who process war crimes, it intended to support the implementation of the National War Crimes Processing Strategy (NSWCPS), the purpose of which was to reduce the war crimes case backlog. While the focus of most donor funding was state-level institutions, the strength of the WCCP was its support to the lower-level prosecutors' offices, an area often excluded from the more extensive national donor programme support.
68. The project contributed to the co-ordination between different international actors by sharing its plans and co-ordinating, including with UNDP, the United Nations Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF), Track Impunity Always (TRIAL) International, US Department of State's Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance and Training's (OPDAT), US Department of Justice's International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP), and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). The purpose was to avoid overlap/duplication of activities, obtain added value for the available funds, and to ensure judiciary benefits from continuous co-ordination of various capacity-building initiatives.
69. Another and more elaborate example is ENVSEC, which is an instance of a so-called transformative partnership (see section 3.5).⁵⁴ Created in 2003, it is a long-term, formalized and strategic partnership of the OSCE, UNDP, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Regional Environment Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC). Each signatory committed to "contribute through its expertise and capacities to the implementation of the initiative in line with its mandate and comparative advantages." The Initiative provided assessments of environment and security risks. It addressed environmental legacies of conflicts through strengthening national and regional capacities, institutions, and co-operation, leading to substantial investments in remediation and clean-up activities.
70. ENVSEC had a clear structure and set-up, with co-ordination at both the strategic and the implementation level. Its organizational framework consisted of a management board, a small secretariat and regional focal points. The management board was the key decision-making body and composed of representatives from each of the partner organizations, with an annually rotating chair. It provided direction to the Initiative on overall strategy, regional priorities, the work program and budget. It also provided guidance on key strategic, policy, and regional issues, and support and biannual Donors' Fora with the participation of both active and potential donor organizations.

⁵⁴ See ENVSEC (2013) and OSCE (2019b).

71. Implementation of ENVSEC activities was co-ordinated by its secretariat, consisting of a co-ordination unit hosted by UNEP at its Regional Office for Europe in Geneva and four regional desk officers, one per region. The desk officers were responsible for developing, monitoring and reporting on the implementation of regional work programs and information sharing among different actors through regional co-ordination meetings organised once a year. Next to that, ENVSEC established an advisory board, composed of representatives of donor countries, recipient countries, and other stakeholders, with a focus on ensuring civil society participation in the decision-making processes.
72. OIO's survey data provide complementary and detailed insights into the prevalence of programmatic co-operation by focusing on individual level experiences (Graph II). It shows that programmatic co-operation is a common practice for OSCE staff: less than 1% of the survey participants replied that information sharing related to project implementation "never" took place with other international organizations, whereas 65% replied that it took place "often."
73. Perhaps not surprisingly, the data also show an inverse linear relationship between the depth of co-operation and its prevalence: 65% and 51% of the respondents replied that information sharing, and co-ordination of activities, respectively, took place "often." The corresponding figures for co-ordinated planning of activities and joint activities were both 39%. Only 12% of the survey respondents informed that partnership "often" involved international organizations outsourcing activities to one another. While the data is at the individual level rather than at the project level, this piece of hard data – as illustrated in Graph II below – shows that the prevalence decreases the farther one moves to the right-hand side on the partnership typology spectrum, i.e., towards transformative partnerships.
74. Interviews indicate that formalized programmatic co-operation is roughly as common as informal co-operation. This is confirmed by survey data that shows that co-operation was "often/most of the time" (45% of the respondents) formalized in terms of local level written agreements, MoUs, etc., that either expressed intentions to co-operate (17% of the respondents) or specified the co-operation goals and activities (28% of the respondents). In general, co-operation was rarely (13% of the respondents) linked to corporate level co-operation agreements. It was also mostly of a bilateral character (53% of the respondents) rather than of a multilateral character (20% of the respondents).

Graph II. Type and Character of Project-related Co-operation



Enablers of co-operation

75. Interviews with OSCE staff, and staff of co-operation partners, identified a series of general enablers for co-operation, whether formalized or not. Virtually in unison, interviewees highlighted the OSCE's comparative advantage in terms of its regional and thematic expertise as due to its long-term field presence, its reputation as a neutral and honest broker, and its political level contacts and political capital. The goal of more efficiently and effectively delivering activities was also shared with co-operation partners. Rarely was the access to funds seen as a rationale for working with the OSCE, primarily because it seldom has extra funds available. It also appears that partners were less motivated than the OSCE by a desire to avoid overlapping and possibly conflicting activities and competition.
76. A case in point is the Border Management Staff College (BMSC) that through various constellations has co-operated with 24 organizations and countries since 2009, including the Austrian Ministry of Interior, UNDP, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the EU funded Border Management Programme in Central Asia (BOMCA). Apart from sharing goals around border management, from the OSCE's perspective partnerships were motivated by the expected cost savings from joint events, and the funds and expertise provided by the various partners, including by the BMSC.
77. For the partners, in this case BOMCA, interview information showed that enablers for co-operation not only included shared goals and similar activities, but also the OSCE's expertise, and the need to avoid overlap/duplication of activities. Other enablers included the BMSC's/OSCE's political level

contacts, the visibility that comes from working with the BSMC, and that by carrying out joint events with the BSMC, the financial burden could be shared while partners could benefit from the BSMC's course facilities.

78. Another example is the ENVSEC initiative, where the UNECE benefitted from the OSCE's role as a key partner for raising awareness of the Århus Convention through the OSCE's support to the Århus Centre network. In addition, according to interviewees from a partner organization, "UNECE needed the OSCE badly" since UNECE was not allowed to address the link between environment and security, while the OSCE could play such a role in the partnership.

Barriers against co-operation

79. Compared to the number of general level enablers for co-operation, the interviews and the survey responses show the presence of an even larger number and more specific barriers against co-operation, whether formalized or not. For the past two years, COVID was mentioned as a large barrier since it overall made project implementation more difficult and led to delays⁵⁵, while at the same time increasing the need for co-operation.

80. OSCE-internal rules (decision memos, clearance process, etc.) for implementing joint project activities, and small numbers of staff members were described as among the largest barriers. In addition, and according to survey data and interviews, the fact that OSCE projects commonly have limited human resources further complicated co-operation, including the ability to absorb funds that might emanate from co-operation. Other responses highlighted the negative impact of a series of internal factors:

- the annual budget cycle leads to annual UB projects that conflict with longer-term co-operation, and the often multi-year plans of potential co-operation partners. Thus, the issue is one of the OSCE and partners working with different time horizons.
- small OSCE project budgets reduce the interest of other international organizations in co-operating with the OSCE. Due to its commonly small project budgets, it is furthermore challenging for the OSCE to partner with more resource rich organizations, as in – in the words of interviewees - risks ending up in a "junior" role with a little influence, which in turn limits the OSCE's visibility. This latter issue was often highlighted by interviewees and in survey responses. Large project budgets, on the other hand, would turn the OSCE into a more relevant and important partner for international organizations, provide more flexibility for entering into partnerships and enhance its visibility. The issue of available

⁵⁵ OIO (2021a).

funds is common for ExB funded projects in that ExB funds are earmarked for specific activities, while the UB budget does not provide room for ad hoc initiatives, including various types of partnerships.

- late UB approval delays project implementation and compounds the effect of small budgets on the ability to co-operate with international organizations. OIO observes that the OSCE pS' approval of the annual UB budgets has been more delayed during the past 8 years than during the preceding period, in one instance (2022) not having been approved before the budget of the following year was being discussed by pS. This means that this barrier against partnerships has increased. At the same time, the organization's UB budget has decreased in size, which has further reduced the OSCE's ability to co-operate with international organizations. At the same time, a smaller budget means that the need for co-operation and burden-sharing with other organizations has become even more important for the OSCE.
- ExB funded projects are often only partially funded, which sometimes delays activities while the OSCE is trying to solicit additional funding. This might lead to "stop-go-stop" project implementation that creates challenges for partner organizations whose projects are fully funded. Related to this is the fact that ExB projects are regulated in detail by donor agreements, which means that in contrast to UB projects, they are not easily adjustable in terms of timeline or content to allow for co-operation with international organizations. One example is the Security Infrastructure Upgrade of Bosnia and Herzegovina Ammunition and Weapons Storage Sites (SECUP) project (2011-2016). It was implemented by the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina in partnership with the European Union Force (EUFOR), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union (EU), the United States Embassy, and UNDP, and served to enhance the security and safety of conventional ammunition and small arms and light weapons.⁵⁶ Like many other OSCE ExB projects, SECUP was launched while full funding was still not available. The project had to delay its activities, and consequently the partner organizations had to delay their inter-related activities, while the OSCE worked to identify additional funding.
- OSCE staff turnover/rotation means that personal contacts disappear and that co-operation – which is often dependent on personal connections and expertise – is undermined.

⁵⁶ OSCE project number 2200268. Alongside the partners the OSCE contributed to implementing a national plan for, inter alia, creating safe and secure ammunitions storage sites. See also OSCE (2016b).

- the OSCE's need to safeguard its reputation for impartiality, which is an important intangible resource for the OSCE. As a consequence, some partnerships have been avoided, when a potential partner's policy stance might compromise the OSCE's neutrality and its reputation as an honest broker.

81. Interviews show that the BMSC was exposed to several of these barriers. First, and regarding co-operation between the BMSC and the BOMCA program, the former had a small budget, which according to BOMCA made it difficult to develop co-operation with the BMSC as unplanned activities could not be funded. Furthermore, the BMSC was required to stay closely aligned with the plan of activities approved by the donors. In addition, as an ExB project the BMSC needed to spend management time and effort to solicit funding, which diverted human resources from its primary purpose of delivering quality content. Second, the BMSC's status as an ExB project limited its flexibility to co-operate more strategically with organizations working in the same field. In effect, the BOMCA program and BMSC worked next to each other instead of with each other for ten years, with the BSMC trying to avoid overlaps instead of co-operating with BOMCA, while BOMCA on the other hand tried to co-operate with the BMSC rather than just to avoid overlaps.

82. Another example is the War Crimes Capacity-building Project (WCCP). On one hand, the project brought together bilateral donors, jointly supporting the different project activities. The interviews show good relationships with some local embassies. Meanwhile, internal exchange and co-ordination with other related ongoing projects and activities in BiH and the region depended to a large extent on the project staff and their personal relationships with counterparts. In addition, and in contrast to ENVSEC, the WCCP partnership was more informal and involved less frequent communication. For instance, WCCP representatives only met Japan – one of the major donors for addressing war crimes issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina – once every nine months, and only for information exchange purposes.

83. Although common in the OSCE, starting an ExB project like the WCCP with a roughly 50% funding gap for activities and even staff salaries distracted valuable project staff resources from the activities necessary to reach the project goals. In the words of an interviewee connected to this project, "starting an ExB project that's not fully funded is just a losing proposition." Related to that, for ExB projects, co-ordination with other stakeholders, especially international organizations, commonly starts only after a project has been formulated (project proposal) and initiated, and therefore concentrates on the project's implementation phase rather than also on the design and

planning phase.⁵⁷ At this advanced stage of project development, co-ordination is often mainly reactive and focuses on avoiding duplication of activities, rather than aligning activities beforehand. In the words of one partner interviewee, “you might be invited to a meeting [...] once a month [to share information] but you didn’t try to co-ordinate activities, [...] as] there wasn’t any real communication.” and “it was just unfortunate that there wasn’t more consultation in advance or discussion” before joint training events. Co-operation was also undermined by the crowded donor space which sometimes led to competition among the partners, and akin to over-funding of the BiH authorities in the area of post-war justice. The latter created additional barriers against co-operation such as weakening stakeholders’ interest to co-operate due to the large menu of sometimes conflicting and/or unco-ordinated funding offers.

84. A final example is ENVSEC, where the OSCE’s staff rotation/turnover caused problems for co-operation. The reason, according to interviewees from a partner organization, was that the OSCE did not “have a real handover” process to ensure that new staff were informed about past and current co-operation.
85. Interviews with non-Secretariat staff identified also a series of barriers against formalization of co-operation. First, and as mentioned before, the OSCE’s Executive Structures rarely have knowledge of the OSCE’s corporate agreements and almost exclusively learn about them by accident. In cases where corporate level agreements exist and are known, a common opinion was that they can facilitate initiation and formalization of local level co-operation.
86. Whereas corporate level agreements could be helpful in facilitating local-level co-operation, it was commonly stated by interviewed field operations staff that such agreements might not be decisive, since decisions on co-operation are generally taken at the local, personal level, and that information sharing with other international organizations at the country level usually takes place regardless of whether corporate umbrella agreements exist or not. In the words of one interviewee, the existence of a corporate agreement “would hardly have mattered anyway [...], [since] co-operation is very much [taking place] on the personal level and basis.” Nevertheless, interviewees expressed a virtually unison interest in receiving a ledger of corporate level agreements to help them identify areas for potential country-level co-operation with organizations that are already parties to corporate agreements.

⁵⁷ The reason is that ExB projects are dependent on donor funding. Unless donor funding has been secured (which is commonly less than certain) interviewed staff were of the view that it would be premature for the OSCE to request that other organizations co-ordinate their planned and ongoing projects to what constitutes de facto *potential* OSCE projects.

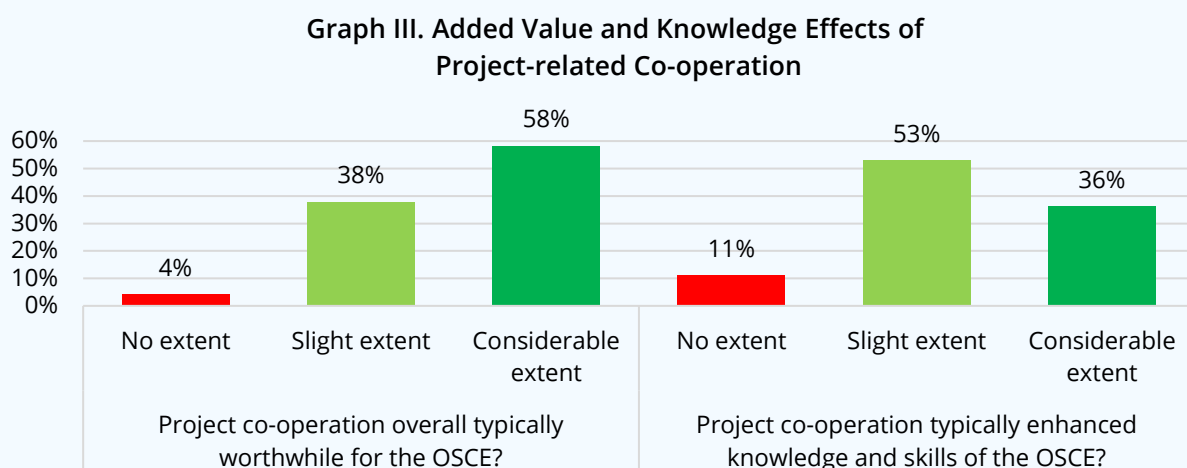
87. The absence of access to information on corporate level agreements might to some extent account for the above noted infrequency with which local level co-operation is linked to corporate level co-operation agreements. In some instances, co-operation might also have been deeper and/or wider had the concerned Executive Structures been aware of corporate level agreements. As also mentioned above, interviews with Secretariat level staff showed that corporate level agreements rarely lead to tangible co-operation. A possible and partial reason for this might be the information deficit at the field operation level, which undermines the country level implementation of corporate agreements.
88. In multilateral co-operation at the country-level it is also inherently more difficult to reach a consensus on agreement texts, which was an issue raised during many interviews. In addition, and apart from instances that involve financial implications such a transfer of funds between parties, there is often only a limited practical need for formalized co-operation. At the same time, the OSCE's MoU rules are often not aligned with those of other organizations⁵⁸, which further reduces the prevalence of such agreements and makes it time-consuming to reach a consensus. In addition, it commonly takes time for each organization to finalize agreements since they need to be processed by several units, including legal affairs. There were also mixed interviewee views on whether co-operation should be formalized. Some interviewees and survey respondents argued that long-term local-level MoUs should be created to ensure, regulate, and detail co-operation. Others felt that given the often short-term and limited size of co-operation, there was in most cases no need for formalization.
89. However, it was commonly requested by interviewees that the OSCE should develop a guidance note – but not an inflexible “instruction” – on when agreements should be created, and a standardized format for contractual arrangements for entering into partnerships or co-operation with international organizations. It was common among the interviewees to voice that they did not have sufficient knowledge of how to draft agreements, or even when such agreements are required. The OSCE's current Implementing Partner Agreement (IPA) solution was not seen as suitable for working with international organizations in cases that involved transfers of funds, as it was designed for outsourcing activities to NGOs rather than working with international organizations. IPAs also have an upper limit on the volume of funds that OSCE staff often finds to be too low for international partnerships.

⁵⁸ An example is the BMSC that had to work with an exchange of letters with each partner, since some partners were not able to sign MoUs.

6. OSCE Partnerships and Organizational Performance: Findings

6.1 Partnering relevance and added value

90. As mentioned earlier, the OSCE's core rationales for co-operation at country level are mainly practical and focussed on different levels of co-ordination. They involve a combination of at a minimum avoiding overlapping activities ("de-conflict projects"), competition and conflicting concepts between organizations, and enhancing the exchange of ideas and information. More ambitious goals include the creation of synergy effects and identification of additional project funding and non-financial resources. Overall, the goal is to assist the OSCE in delivering its programmes and mandates more efficiently and effectively, i.e., to enhance the OSCE's performance. Goals of a transformative character were rarely mentioned by the interviewees.
91. Illustrated in the left part of Graph III below, a survey finding is that when asked to compare the effort invested in a partnership with the – unspecified – benefits of the co-operation, the survey respondents perceived that the co-operation was "overall worthwhile" to a "considerable extent" (58%) and to a "slight extent" (38%) for the OSCE. Only 4% of the respondents perceived that the time and money invested in co-operation was not worthwhile. Whereas 58% of the respondents highly valued partnerships as they assisted in delivering the OSCE's mandate, this number indicates that there is room for improvement, as still 42 % of the survey respondents believed that the benefits from partnerships were limited or even absent.



92. One of the perceived benefits of working in partnerships is enhanced staff knowledge. This relates to the interviewees' goal of co-operation to "enhance the exchange of ideas." Indeed, and as shown in the right part of Graph III, 53% and 36% of the survey participants responded that co-operation had a capacity-building effect on OSCE staff "to a slight extent" and "to a considerable extent", respectively. Only 10% responded that this was "to no extent" the case. This is in line with the data

provided by the SDG's online platform, where the exchange of knowledge and learning is indicated as one of the main benefits of partnering, following the benefit of additional resources. In that regard, the experiences of the OSCE is similar to those of other international organizations.

93. Open ended survey responses and interviewees provided additional information on the perceived added value of co-operation. For instance, it was highlighted that co-operation:

- enhances outreach through the partners' networks to relevant project target groups – and thus a larger audience - who might otherwise be difficult to reach.
- removes competition between international organizations.
- provides the OSCE with additional sources of information and expertise, as the OSCE taps into partner networks.
- enhances the OSCE's and partner's flexibility as project tasks can be divided between them to offset administrative constraints that one organization has in carrying out specific tasks.
- increases the OSCE's leverage as countries' interest in working with the OSCE increases when they observe that international organizations work on the same issues and have a common stance and coherent messaging with the OSCE.
- increases the visibility of the OSCE and its projects, although sometimes the partner is perceived to take most of the credit at the expense of the OSCE.
- enables the implementation of some projects. An example is the uranium legacy project in northern Tajikistan, which according to interviewees would not have been possible to implement had the OSCE not partnered with the UNDP.
- avoids overwhelming beneficiaries with various un-coordinated assistance projects and a multitude of intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) working in similar thematic areas.

94. The survey and interviews also identified a series of barriers against the added value, efficiency, and effectiveness of partnerships. Some of them are similar to those that were identified as barriers against co-operation per se. Overall survey and interview data foremost highlighted the lack of long-term and strategic planning at the program – or even at the OSCE – level, small project budgets, and annual budget cycles.

95. Whereas according to the PBPB guidelines the OSCE programmes should have multi-year plans, this is not always the case across the organization.⁵⁹ In this regard many interviewees and survey respondents called for longer-term strategic planning at the ES programmatic level – or even at

⁵⁹ OSCE (2021b).

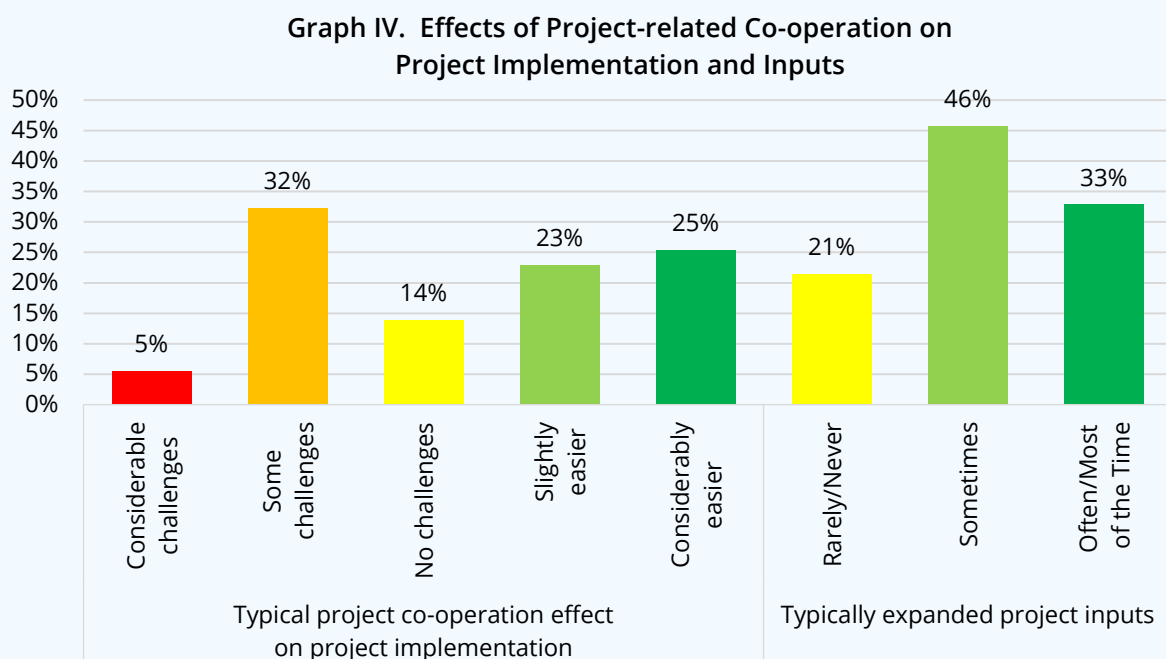
the OSCE corporate level – as a pre-condition for long-term strategic joint programme-level partnerships, instead of the common short-term, often one-off, project or activity level co-operation. Virtually by definition, co-operation cannot become strategic unless the OSCE has a long-term approach to its own programmes. It was also suggested that OSCE long-term plans should be developed in communication with potential partner organizations to proactively enable overall alignment, and in effect strategic and long-term partnerships. The current non-strategic and ad hoc type of co-operation inherently reduces the added value and attractiveness of co-operation and does not build long-term relationships with international organizations.

96. ENVSEC is illustrative for the various types of added value that partnerships can bring to all those involved. It contributed to the development of the environmental mandate of the OSCE as part of its second – economic and environmental – Dimension, co-ordinated by OCEEA. At the same time ENVSEC was instrumental in supporting and developing the Aarhus Centres network, which is one of the OSCE's flagship activities, likely also its longest running, and the one that has generated most projects: the OSCE created 93 projects (as of 2017) to support the establishment and activities of more than 50 Aarhus centres across all the OSCE regions of activity.
97. Further, ENVSEC brought together the mandates of the participating organizations. It provided a comprehensive and co-ordinated response to the environmental challenges in specific countries, aligned with the already ongoing activities of the individual organizations. The structured approach of ENVSEC increased the effectiveness and efficiency of the different projects; activities were designed with input from all stakeholders, including civil society, assigned to the organization (s) best placed to implement them; co-ordinated through the ENVSEC collaboration structure and results were broadly disseminated. In addition, it addressed the challenges from a long-term programmatic perspective rather than via isolated short-term projects.
98. From the interviews emerged an additional value creation mechanism from ENVSEC, namely that the strong alignment of the international community on the issues of environment and security ('the willingness to deliver as one') created a weight of action that further facilitated pS to join the collaboration and deliver impact. ENVSEC tackled some critical environmental and security issues that were, certainly in the early years, neglected by most donors and agencies and which would unlikely be resolved by participating countries alone. An example mentioned is transboundary pollution caused by closed and open mining facilities in Eastern Europe.

6.2 Efficiency

99. 5% of the survey respondents were of the view that co-operation “led to a considerable amount of project implementation challenges”, and 32% responded that co-operation “led to some project implementation challenges” (Graph IV below). In comparison, 46% replied that co-operation made project implementation “slightly easier” or “considerably easier”, while 14% responded that it did not make any difference. While on balance co-operation was more likely to make project implementation easier, partnerships created various implementation challenges to perhaps a surprisingly high degree.

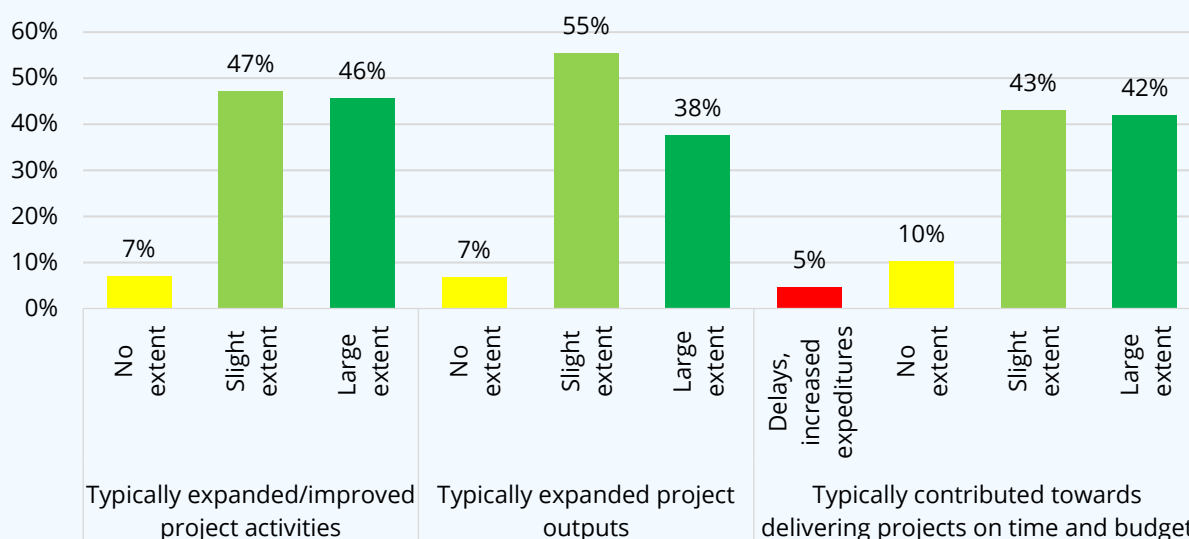
100. While challenges were common, 79% of the survey participants replied that for “some projects” and “often/most of the projects” co-operation expanded project inputs (staff and funds) in terms of co-funding of events, co-organizing events, or providing speakers, which are of often the rationales for the OSCE when entering partnerships. Only, 21% replied that co-operation “rarely/never” expanded project inputs. The conclusion is that while often challenging to work through partnerships, it often paid off as they were often associated with benefits such as expanded project outputs.



101. The survey also shows that co-operation had a positive impact on efficiency: a total of 93% replied that co-operation had a positive impact on efficiency with regard to project activities “to a slight extent” or “to a considerable extent” (Graph V). This means that project efficiency increased since the OSCE projects increased their activities per budget unit. In contrast, 7% replied that co-operation contributed “to no extent” to expanding and/or improving activities.

102. The survey shows another positive effect on efficiency. First, 93% replied that partnerships commonly contribute towards expanding project outputs “to a slight extent” or “to a considerable extent” (Graph V). This means that outputs per budget unit increased. Second, 85% of the respondents viewed that co-operation contributed towards delivering project activities on time and on budget “to a slight extent” or “to a considerable extent”, while 10% responded “to no extent” and an additional 5% responded that partnerships caused delays and extra costs. This means overall that according to OSCE staff, a smaller proportion of partnerships should in hindsight not have been pursued at all.

Graph V. Effects of Project-related Co-operation on Project Efficiency



103. A concrete example is ENVSEC. The OSCE’s inclusion in the initiative enabled it to solicit funding more effectively for the Århus projects, which in turn increased the number of activities and outputs, and even overall number of projects.⁶⁰ Another example is the WCCP. It can be concluded from the interviews that the contributions to its activities by its many formal and informal partners were instrumental in producing more and better activities and outputs than the WCCP would have been able to do on its own. In addition, some training events were conducted in co-operation with international partners, including ICTY, UNDP, UNICEF, TRIAL International and the governments of the United States and the United Kingdom. This synergy – though not perfect – could be described as the primary value creation for the OSCE/WCCP.

104. Similarly, the BMSC’s co-operation with other organizations enabled it to deliver more activities and thus also generate more outputs than would have been the case otherwise. The large majority

⁶⁰ OSCE (2019b).

of BMSC events were co-organized with one or several international organizations or countries. For instance, experts from UNHCR participated in almost all the BMSC's staff courses. In addition, by working in partnership, BMSC lived up to donor expectations while also demonstrating the importance of BMSC to donors and prospective donors. Nevertheless, from BOMCA's perspective more collaboration - and hence more activities and outputs - could have been achieved by extending collaboration to OSCE field operations in the region. However, because each field operation has its own plans, it was not possible to create a BOMCA-OSCE co-operation plan covering the field operations. Instead, BOMCA had to approach each field operation separately. From a partner's perspective, the OSCE is "fragmented", which undermines its ability to engage in partnerships.

105. In summary, and as mentioned earlier, the OSCE's core rationales for co-operation involved, inter alia, ambitions to identify project resources (both financial and non-financial) and to assist in delivering its programs and mandates more efficiently, i.e., to enhance the OSCE's performance. The survey findings show that in the view of the OSCE's programmatic staff, these rationales were overwhelmingly realized through partnerships, despite the afore-mentioned barriers in the areas of "structuring and setup" (fit-for-purpose structure and operational systems, funding, and resources) and "management and leadership (results-based project management, monitoring and review, joint-learning).

106. The variation in efficiency related benefits - though on balance in favourable - needs to be considered in further detail. In section 7 of this report an analysis is carried out to identify the factors that undermine or strengthen efficiencies. Nevertheless, it needs to be recognized that some of the partnerships were not created for the purpose of enhancing project efficiency or create other types of added value, such as learning. Instead, they were created for the sole purpose of avoiding detrimental effects from lack of co-ordination. Such instances covered narrow co-ordination efforts, and their success is in effect manifested by survey responses that stated that co-operation "to not extent" increased project input, enhanced project activities, expanded project outputs, or contributed to delivering projects on time and budget. Thus, some survey responses of this type do not undermine the overall value of partnerships, but merely reflect the actual and limited purpose of some partnerships.

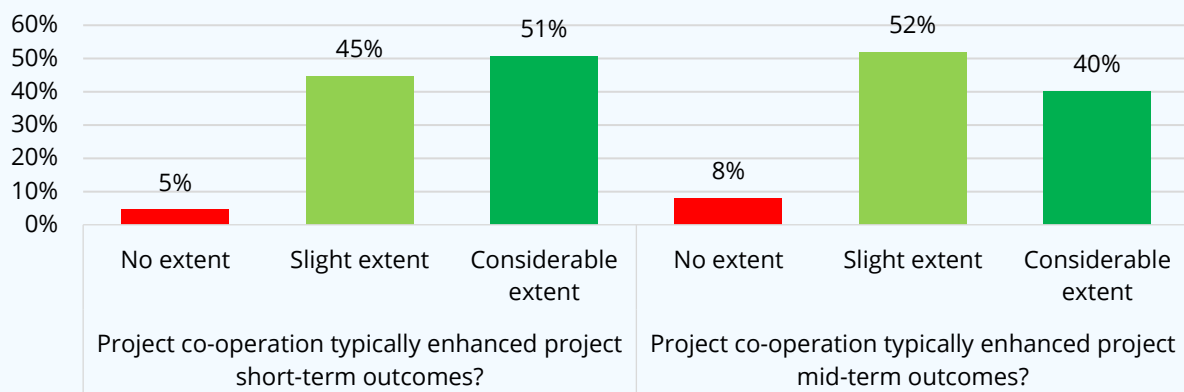
6.3 Effectiveness

107. The ultimate rationale for the OSCE or any organization to enter into partnership is to enhance performance in terms of more effectively achieving organizational goals. All other partnership benefits, such as enhanced efficiency and no duplication of work, are merely means towards that

end. The survey results on project effectiveness mirror those relating to project efficiency: on balance, the positive effects were considerable, partnerships were valuable for the OSCE, while there still exists room for further improvement.

108. During interviews, to the broad question of “What types of main benefits from the co-operation did you observe”, the interviewees typically did not highlight enhanced outcomes. Rather, the replies focused on issues related to added value and efficiency. This may be because projects often do not collect data on short-term and mid-term outcomes, and would likely not have been able to identify the influence of partnerships in any great detail. However, since survey information as well as interview information found that activities and outputs increased and were enhanced by partnerships, it follows from standard project logic that also the resulting short-, mid-, and long-term outcomes might have improved to some extent.

Graph VI. Effects of Project-related Co-operation on Project Outcomes



109. The survey's pointed questions received more specific responses, and provide empirical support to the above logic. To the question of whether co-operation typically enhanced project short-term outcomes (e.g., skills and knowledge among training participants) only 5% responded “to no extent” while 45% and 55% responded “to a slight extent” and “to a considerable extent.” This finding suggests that there might also exist an effect on mid-term outcomes, since they are influenced by short-term outcomes. This is also confirmed by the survey findings. To the question of whether co-operation typically enhanced project mid-term outcomes (e.g., changed policies/practices of a stake-holder agency), 8% replied “to no extent”, while 92% responded “to a slight extent” or “to a considerable extent.”

6.4 Gender mainstreaming

110. The 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality promotes equal rights and treatment of men and women and sets out that the OSCE should mainstream gender in its activities to promote these goals. To the broad question of “What types of main benefits from the co-operation” did you observe, the interviewees did not highlight that gender mainstreaming of projects or gender equality were enhanced beyond existing levels.
111. Meanwhile, the more pointed questions asked by the survey identified some interesting patterns (Graph VII). The survey showed that co-operation typically contributed to integrating a gender equality responsive perspective in projects “to no extent” (14%) “to a slight extent” (48%) and “to a considerable extent” (37%). 1% of the survey respondents replied that gender mainstreaming was undermined. This means that partnerships’ positive impact on gender mainstreaming in projects is similar to the overall impact on short-term and mid-term outcomes. It is meanwhile unknown how many of the various types of partnerships that addressed gender issues⁶¹ One example is the corporate level partnership with UN Women that was formalized in an MoU for the period 2018-2021, with an option for a four year prolongation.⁶² The MoU specified co-operation at the global, regional and country level to “improve information sharing and seek synergies”; exchange of knowledge good practices and lessons learned “to enhance shared messages and approaches”; and support OSCE pS “in implementing commitments to promote gender equality.” It also spelled specific areas for joint work, including ending violence against women.

A second good example of partnerships, is the OSCE project “OSCE Survey on Women’s Well-being and Safety” with a budget of more than €2.500.000 over the period 2015-2019 that was co-funded by, inter alia, UN Women, EU (including its Fundamental Rights Agency), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). This project was related to one of the areas in the 2018 MoU.⁶³ A third and more recent example is the OSCE project “WIN for Women and Men — Strengthening Comprehensive Security Through Innovating and Networking for Gender Equality” over the period 2019-2024 with a prospective budget of almost €5.800.000. It entails a multilateral partnership that includes, inter alia, IGOs, UN Women,

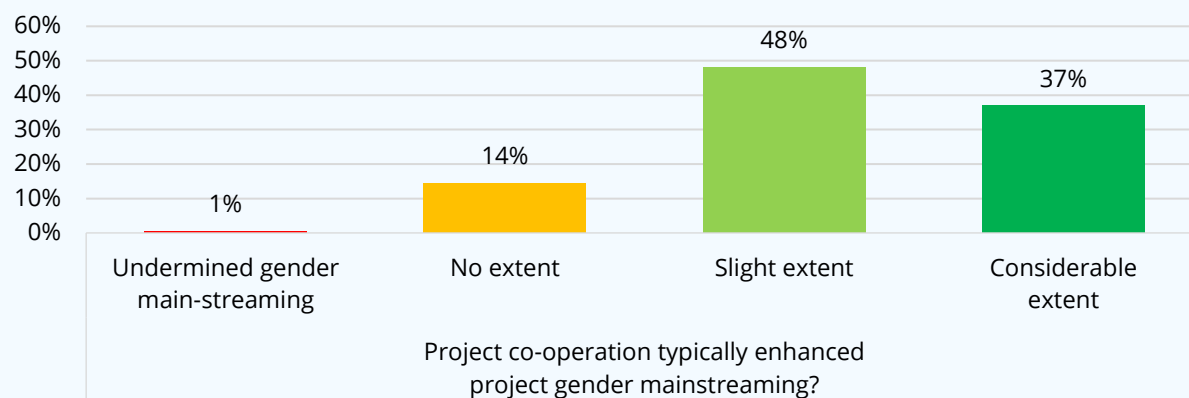
⁶¹ One reason for this is that many partnerships are not formalized through an agreement, which would make it easier to identify such instances. Another reason is that within the OSCE there does not exist a reliable compilation of formalized and non-formalized partnerships established by non-Secretariat ES. For instance, one of the ES interviewed for this evaluation had initiated a process to map their own partnerships with other organizations, and thus did not have an overview of their own partnerships at the time of the interview. For this reason, there exists also no reliable data on the prevalence of partnerships in the specific thematic areas of the OSCE.

⁶² OSCE document SEC.GAL/153/18.

⁶³ For an evaluation of this project, see OSCE (2020b).

European Institute for Gender Equality, and NGOs such as the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, and the European Women’s Lobby. Also this project’s theme was related to the 2017 MoU with UN Women. Funding has so far been provided exclusively by Japan and a number of OSCE pS, and not the partnership organizations.

Graph VII. Effects of Project-related Co-operation on Gender Mainstreaming



7. Partnership Characteristics and Partnership Performance

112. The previous section summarized findings of the prevalence of partnerships, their character, and the outcomes or results of partnerships regarding the extent to which partnerships influenced the efficiency, effectiveness, and gender mainstreaming of OSCE projects. On balance, survey participants found partnerships associated with enhanced efficiency and effectiveness of projects.

113. While the previous section focused on *whether* partnerships enhance the performance of OSCE projects, this section focuses on the complementary question of *under what conditions* that partnerships have such beneficial effects. An important question in that regard is whether and to what extent the character of partnerships as identified by the survey – and commonly considered to constitute important conditions for successful partnerships – is related to the perceived efficiency and effectiveness of partnerships.⁶⁴ Should negative and positive relationships exist, then they potentially constitute broad lessons learned (what does not work well and should be

⁶⁴ The raw data used for the multivariate statistical analysis is available on request and allows for replication of the findings in this section’s table I. The data collected by the survey is perception data and should be regarded as the best assessments by experienced OSCE staff, and equivalent to large-scale structured interview data. It is the collected wisdom and observations of OSCE staff. To the best of OIO’s knowledge, this report section is also the first instance of large-scale empirical analysis carried out on the conditions for efficient and effective partnerships that goes beyond collections of a limited number of case specific anecdotes and findings, the generalizability of which is unknown (e.g., Brouwer [2021] and Pattberg and Widerberg [2016]).

avoided) and best practices (what appear to have worked well and should be repeated) to be considered for future partnerships.

114. The matrix table at the next page of this report section summarizes the findings of a statistical analysis of the relationship between survey responses on partnership characteristics and the responses on partnership outcomes. It provides a birds-view and indicates in what areas of efficiency and/or effectiveness a particular partnership characteristic might - or might not - add value, where synergy effects might exist, and whether various partnership characteristics complement and substitute each other in their effect on efficiency and effectiveness.⁶⁵
115. Meanwhile, caution is required when interpreting and reflecting on the findings in the table. The reason is that even when considering all the partnership characteristics together, the overall ability of the various statistical models to correctly predict the efficiency and effectiveness characteristics is on average around 70%. Whereas the predictive accuracy of various partnership characteristics is surprisingly high, it nevertheless means that the findings – just like any statistical findings or case study findings – should be interpreted in a tempered manner and considered as suggestive background information, rather than definitive prescriptions for action. Program and project managers need to use project specific sound judgement to decide whether and to what extent the findings in the table speak to a project at hand, and thus also what impact on project efficiency and effectiveness to expect from various partnership characteristics for a specific project.
116. One observation from the table is that for any particular partnership benefit, there are few to no partnership characteristics that are associated with their outcomes. For instance, “enhanced [project] output” from partnerships is positively associated only with bilateral partnerships, while negatively associated with the presence of a corporate level agreement. Another observation is that almost all partnership characteristics matter for project efficiency and effectiveness, but in different ways and to different extents. They also matter in a selective manner, in that most are associated with between one and three partnership outcomes. This means, perhaps not surprisingly, that no single partnership characteristic is decisive for enhancing project efficiency and effectiveness. Rather, most of them need to be considered and pursued in tandem.

⁶⁵ In short, if history is a guide to the future, and if we believe that there exist recurring patterns, then the table might be used by project managers to assist in anticipating whether and how certain partnership characteristics might influence project efficiency and effectiveness. In contrast, if it is believed that history is not a guide to the future, that there does not exist recurring patterns, and that all cases are unique then any evaluation or lessons learned study would be futile as it would not be possible to draw any forward-looking conclusions.

Table I. The Effect of Partnership Characteristics on Partnership Benefits

Perceived partnership benefits / Partnership character	Expanded resources	Expanded/improved activities	Expanded output	On time/ budget	Enhanced short-term outcomes	Enhanced mid-term outcomes	Gender mainstreaming	Overall worthwhile
Information-sharing	+	0	0	0	+	0	0	0
Co-ordinated activities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Joint Planning	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0
Joint activities	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0
Local concrete agreement	0	+	0	+	0	0	+	0
Local non-concrete agreement	0	0	0	-	0	0	-	0
Corporate agreement	0	0	-	0	+	-	0	0
No written agreement	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0
One organization	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0
Two or more organizations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

117. The table shows also that two of the partnership characteristics – co-ordination of already [individually] planned activities and multilateral partnerships – are unrelated to any of the partnership outcomes. However, since the analysis examines whether a partnership characteristic has none to positive effects, and since the purpose of co-ordination is to avoid negative effects on efficiency and effectiveness instead of increasing efficiency and effectiveness, the result on co-ordination of already planned activities might not be surprising.

118. The finding in the table that multilateral partnerships do not condition either project efficiency or effectiveness, whereas bilateral partnerships do, is an important one. A possible reason is that in multilateral co-operation it is inherently more difficult to reach a consensus on agreement texts, which was an issue raised during many interviews. Whereas this is a general pattern, the case studies of this report indicate that there are important exceptions, which include the ENVSEC

partnership and the WCCP partnership.⁶⁶ However, the statistical analysis suggests that these instances of successful multilateral partnerships are less common than instances of multilateral partnerships that did not assist in enhancing efficiency and effectiveness. The implication is that, in general, bilateral partnerships should be considered as a first option, and multilateral partnerships as a second option.

119. Meanwhile, the degree of information-sharing is associated with one element of efficiency (expansion of project resources) and one element of effectiveness (enhanced short-term outcomes), but not with other elements. Another observation from the table is that the prevalence of joint planning is associated with the delivery of projects on time and budget, but not with any of the other aspects of either efficiency or effectiveness.
120. The matrix table indicates a single item that project managers should in particular take into account as it appears to be detrimental to project efficiency as well as effectiveness: non-concrete local agreement or letters of intent that outline that co-operation should take place, but do not specify in what areas – and how – co-operation should be carried out. In contrast, local concrete agreements are positively associated with expanded/improved project activities, delivery on time and budget, and improved project gender mainstreaming. Hence, whereas non-concrete local agreements should be avoided and constitute a lessons learned, local concrete agreements should be pursued as they appear *in general* to constitute a best practice.
121. A plausible proposition, and as implied by the standard project logframe, is that outputs lead to various types of outcomes. The implication is that even if the various partnership characteristics are commonly associated with between only 1 and 3 elements of project efficiency and effectiveness, they will meanwhile have a cascading effect through the logframe elements. Expressed differently, whereas for instance partnership joint planning is positively associated with only project outputs, the outputs might/should according to standard project logframe logic in turn to some extent and indirectly trickle down to also project outcomes. The implication is that joint planning has not only a direct effect on project outputs, but potentially also a [smaller] indirect

⁶⁶ This does not mean that there does not exist instances where such impact on project effectiveness was not at hand. It only means that such instances were too rare, and too case specific, to be discoverable in a statistical analysis. In short, to the extent that such agreements enhanced project effectiveness, they were (too) rare events. Expressed differently, instances where bilateral or multilateral agreements had a positive impact on project effectiveness were so rare that knowledge on whether such agreements were at hand would not aid us in correctly predicting whether project effectiveness was enhanced *in general*.

effect on project outcomes, via its impact on project outputs. Hence, the at first glance sometimes limited impact of some partnership characteristics should not be dismissed.⁶⁷

122. Most interviewees regarded the partnerships as “overall worthwhile” to a “considerable extent” (58% of the respondents) and to a “slight extent” (38% of the respondents), when considering the time and effort invested in partnerships in comparison with the benefits of partnerships. However, none of the partnerships characteristics included in the statistical analysis were associated with whether OSCE staff regarded partnerships where overall worthwhile “to a considerable extent.” A possible explanation is that no single characteristic was seen by the survey respondents to have such a decisive or outsized role, but rather that the various characteristics contribute to various degrees to making partnerships overall worthwhile to a considerable degree.

123. Overall, the findings summarized in the table suggests several lessons learned and best practices. First, a major lessons learned in that the least productive scenario to be avoided is a partnership that is [1] multilateral, [2] based solely on co-ordination of already individually planned activities, and is [3] steered by agreements or letters of intent, or corporate level agreements that do not specify activities and division of labour as tools to formalize partnerships instead clearly specifying activities and the division of labour.

124. Second, a first best practice is that when entering into partnerships, the OSCE should consider to pursue either a concrete agreement that specifies activities are division of labour, or no written agreement at all (and thus address the details of activities and division of labour informally). A second best practice is that projects should combine joint planning with joint activities and information-sharing, and avoid mere co-ordination of activities as a tool for managing the partnership. Ideally, all the elements of the first and second best practices should be pursued in tandem. A possibility to consider in that context are synergy effects, in that the sum of effects from various partnership characteristics might be greater than just a simple summation up their individual effects.

8. Partnerships’ Contribution to External Coherence

125. SDG 17 on partnerships explicitly covers so-called external coherence between organizations/ states with regard to policies and activities. This report’s survey and interview data show that the OSCE pursued coherence in both areas. The ENVSEC flagship partnership is perhaps the most

⁶⁷ Another issue is that some of the various partnership characteristics are highly correlated with one another. For instance, the survey responses on “joint activities” are to 65% correlated with the survey responses on “joint planning.” This, in turn reduces the ability of a statistical analysis – or any kind of analysis – to parse out and identify individual effects.

extensive example of long-term policy co-ordination combined with co-ordination of activities, but it is for the same reason also an outlier. The evaluation found other instances of joint advocacy or messaging vis-à-vis stake-holders, but they did not involve efforts at policy alignment, as in those cases the policies must have been sufficiently aligned to begin with. It also found that policy co-ordination sometimes took place separately from co-ordination of activities. For instance, an OSCE Head of Mission might be engaged in policy co-ordination with local peer international organizations, but this might only be loosely related to the menu of actual OSCE projects and more connected to joint messaging and showing a common front. In addition, interviews showed that policy co-ordination was common at the country-level.

126. Meanwhile, several inter-related factors might make it more difficult for the OSCE to work towards coherence of policies. First, the large majority of OSCE projects are of limited duration and size, which – in the absence of an overall long-term partnerships strategy and policy – make it more practical and meaningful to focus on coherence of activities rather than policies, not least since efforts to align policies are time-consuming and likely stretch beyond the timeline of individual projects. Second, the limited duration and size of projects also mean that the actual need to align policies is limited.

127. Third, partnerships were often not created for the purpose of creating coherency or other types of added value, but for the limited purposes of avoiding detrimental effects from lack of coherence. This is also reflected in the survey data that show that co-ordination efforts often did not – and were not intended to – lead to increased project input, enhanced project activities, expanded project outputs, or contributed to delivering projects on time and budget. Fourth, the OSCE's core rationales for co-operation were practical in terms of identifying project resources and to assist in delivering its programs and mandates more efficiently. Policy co-ordination was not among those stated rationales or ends, but only sometimes a means to an end.

128. Fifth, the OSCE's founding documents on partnerships focus explicitly on ad hoc co-ordination of activities. For instance, the *Platform for Co-operative Security* focuses on co-ordination of activities and does not mention policy co-ordination. Similarly, the OSCE's *Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century* highlights the need for “co-operation and co-ordination on practical matters and projects” but does not highlight the importance of policy co-ordination and thus also policy coherence. The absence of a discussion of policy coherence and policy co-ordination, while focusing on co-ordination of activities, is also identified in the 2012 review on OSCE partnerships commissioned by the 2012 Irish Chairperson-in-Office. This applies also not only to the extensive and long-held co-operation between the Council of Europe and the OSCE, the founding documents of which focus on co-ordination of activities in pre-determined

thematic areas, but also the many OSCE corporate level partnership agreements that are very much focusing on activities.

129. The importance of policy co-ordination was also highlighted earlier in this report, in that project assistance recipient host government entities sometimes refer to “competition” and actual “conflict” in a crowded donor space. By pointing out that donors do not agree among themselves, government entities might reject the OSCE’s offers of assistance projects and continue current practice(s) until there is agreement among donors and clarity about “best international practices and standards.”

9. Key Conclusions, Issues and Recommendations

9.1 Key conclusions

130. Overall, partnerships enhanced networks and outreach, ensured co-ordination, removed competition among international organizations, and provided the OSCE with additional sources of information and expertise. Among the enablers for partnerships were the OSCE’s regional and thematic expertise through its long-term field presence, its reputation as a neutral and honest broker, and its political level contacts and political capital. The goal of more efficiently and effectively delivering activities was also shared between the OSCE and co-operation partners. Rarely was the access to funds seen as a rationale for working with the OSCE, primarily because the OSCE seldom has extra funds available.

131. Effective partnerships are characterized by a clear division of labour and joint planning, implementation and information sharing at the project and program level. Effective partnerships do not necessarily require a formal partnership agreement, but benefit from a long-term and strategic and non-ad hoc approach that proactively ensures overall alignment between partners, discuss the potential division of labour. Regarding barriers against the added value of co-operation, the main causes reside overwhelmingly in the areas of “structuring and setup” and “management and leadership”. Regarding the former, [1] co-ordination with partners was sometimes not at the desired level, [2] field operations commonly did not have staff resources to absorb funds from partners for unplanned activities, and [3] non-Secretariat Executive Structures were uncertain of the conditions that require partnerships to be formalized, and of how such agreements should be designed.

132. Another important finding is that there is no integrated approach to partnerships within the OSCE and the contribution of country level partnerships to external coherence is limited. Institutions and field operations have none to very limited knowledge of corporate partnership agreements.

Similarly, the Secretariat and thus also the Secretary General have a very incomplete and fragmented insight into the prevalence and character of OSCE country level co-operation with other international organizations. This means that the Secretariat does not know how or whether to support field missions in their interactions with international organizations, and that that in cases where corporate level agreements exist these agreements might to some extent facilitate or even initiate local level co-operation and also assist in implementing corporate partnership agreements if Institutions and field operations are informed.

9.2 Issues and recommendations

Issue 1. The OSCE does not have a partnership strategy, or even a partnership concept, that goes beyond the current broad modalities that focus on ad hoc co-operation.

Recommendation 1. *Develop a partnership concept that can inform strategic partnerships at the country level. It could include a vision and mission statement for partnerships, and a strategy that outlines the concrete goals to be achieved. (SEC/External Co-operation).*

Issue 2. There is limited guidance to OSCE Executive Structures on how to design and manage partnerships at the country-level. In addition, non-Secretariat Executive Structures are uncertain of when and how partnerships need to be formalized by agreements.

Recommendation 2. *Develop guidance on types of partnerships for different purposes, necessary ingredients and formal requirements, and how to manage them. The guidance could include items such as such pro-active planning and the development of entry and exit strategies for partnerships (SEC/External Co-operation).*

Issue 3. There is limited insight in and information sharing on Partnerships. The Secretariat has limited knowledge of local level partnerships, while Executive Structures lack information about corporate level partnerships and those of other Executive Structures. This is one of the reasons why corporate level agreements have rarely instigated or supported country level partnerships.

Recommendation 3. *Enhance the information exchange on partnerships between the Secretariat's External Co-operation unit and Executive Structures and periodically assess the continued relevance of existing partnerships (SEC/External Co-operation).*

10. Management Response and Recommendation Implementation Plan

133. Noteworthy, while the OSCE has throughout the years diversified its partnerships and strengthened cooperation with an array of regional and international organizations/actors, the focus of this report is on the evaluation of OSCE partnerships in the area of programmatic activities. Yet, in doing so, some of the system-wide challenges and shortcomings were identified and three key recommendations to the SEC/EXCO were developed accordingly.
134. The report suggests how the OSCE could benefit considerably by developing a strategy/general concept for partnership, focusing on institutional actors. While cognizant of the complexities in relation to this and noting the decentralized approach of the OSCE, looking ahead as to how the management of partnership could be improved or evolve in the coming years, an internal operational document would be a useful instrument to harmonize and align approaches for cooperation with IO/ROs ["one OSCE"] and thus deliver better on its mandate. Developing cooperation with the private sector remains outside the scope of the OIO report and management's response, but should nonetheless be explored at a later stage as part of a broader resource mobilization discussion.
135. Ensuring coherence in the implementation of partnerships with international organizations remains particularly challenging when it comes to co-ordination/consultation with the field level as structures differ in sizes, mandates and resources. An internal guiding document/Standard Operating Procedures could thus provide support in outlining the responsibility for developing and updating the modalities of partnerships, consultation process with the Secretariat to take better consolidated decisions, identify benefits and avoid duplication currently spread across departments, and the organization's executive structures. In this context, OSCE's executive structures would therefore benefit from a common set of guiding principles and standards for implementing and engaging in partnership with other organizations, taking into consideration their specificities priorities and previous experiences.
136. One of the key findings of the report is that information is not shared systematically and mainly on ad hoc basis. More can be done to improve and foster cooperation and information sharing at the Secretariat level and with executive structures, including with field operations. For example, in short to –midterm, in order to improve co-ordination, EXCO could identify focal points within the executive structures [e.g. the Head of Mission Office] which would also help to maintain more regular and direct information flow [including having co-ordination meetings [e.g. twice year]. In addition, [depending on resources and ICT constraints) an internal OSCE external cooperation platform/database [using JARVIS access] could be established where updates/future MoUs could

be placed which could contribute to the overall awareness and coherence in this area of work ["whole of OSCE approach"]

137. The report also identifies that short-term and needs-based collaboration with international organizations is the predominant approach for partnership at the country level. With a guiding mechanism for partnership in place, this could contribute to more predictability/or efficiency, particularly when it comes to emergency and crisis response mechanisms, as well as in-kind contributions or operational co-operation. While keeping the flexibility of arrangements for executive structures - rather than "instructions"-, a more coherent strategy and less fragmented approach to partnerships can add to the visibility of results of the OSCE's work and has a potential to leverage the OSCE with partners at the country level if also supported by the Secretariat, and thus inter-alia contribute to frameworks of co-operation at the strategic level [Secretariat-to-Secretariat level].

Area	Issue	Recommendation	Client	Accept Yes/ No/ Partially	Implementation Plan (if not accepted, add management comments)	Implementation date (estimate)
Partnership strategy	1. The OSCE does not have a partnership strategy, or even a partnership concept, that goes beyond the current broad modalities that focus on ad hoc cooperation.	1. Develop a partnership concept that can inform strategic partnerships at the country level. It could include a vision and mission statement for partnerships, and a strategy that outlines the concrete goals to be achieved.	SEC/External Cooperation	Partially	SEC/EXCO will support the development of Standard Operating Procedures that will be shared with OSCE Executive Structures and Field Operations. This will help contribute to the development of a common vision for the Organization and promote a more efficient corporate approach in addressing and developing partnerships at the country level. However, it is important to point out that Field Operations will continue maintaining ownership in developing priorities at the country level.	2024
Partnership guidance	2. There is limited guidance to OSCE Executive Structures on how to design and manage partnerships at the country-level. In addition, non-Secretariat Executive Structures are uncertain of when and how partnerships need to be formalized by agreements.	2. Develop guidance on types of partnerships for different purposes, necessary ingredients and formal requirements, and how to manage them. The	SEC/External Cooperation	Yes	As part of the partnership concept, a set of recommendations will be developed and shared with OSCE Executive Structures and Field Operations. This will help ensure a coherent and consistent approach in designing and managing partnerships.	2024

		guidance could include items such as such proactive planning and the development of entry and exit strategies for partnerships.				
Information exchange	3. There is limited insight in and information sharing on Partnerships. The Secretariat has limited knowledge of local level partnerships, while Executive Structures lack information about corporate level partnerships and those of other Executive Structures. This is one of the reasons why corporate level agreements have rarely instigated or supported country level partnerships.	3. Enhance the information exchange on partnerships between the Secretariat's External Cooperation Section and Executive Structures and periodically assess the continued relevance of existing partnerships	SEC/External Cooperation	Yes	The exchange of information has already been developed and strengthened in recent years, in part due to a partially completed "Mapping Exercise", The exercise facilitated the flow of information between Secretariat Departments, Executive Structures and Field Operations. This exercise will be completed this year and serve as a basis for the periodic evaluation and assessment of partnerships based on relevance. The results will be shared with Executive Structures on a regular basis and will ensure better cohesiveness between country level dialogues and Secretariat level dialogues with a wide range of IOs/ROs.	

Annexes

Annex I. Glossary

BMSC	Border Management Staff College
BOMCA	Border Management Programme in Central Asia
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ENVSEC	Environment-Security Initiative
EU	European Union
EUFOR	European Union Force
ExB	Extra-budgetary
ICITAP	<i>International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program</i>
ICITAP	US Department of Justice's International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
IGO	Intergovernmental Organization
IPA	Implementing Partner Agreement
MONDEM	Montenegro Demilitarization Programme
MSP	Multi-stakeholder partnerships
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NSWCPS	National War Crimes Processing Strategy
OCEEA Activities	Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental
OECD	Organisation for Economic Development and Co-operation
OMiK	OSCE Mission in Kosovo
OPDAT	Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance and Training
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PBPB	Performance Based Programme Budgeting
PBPR	Programme Budget Performance Report
REC	Regional Environment Centre for Central and Eastern Europe
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SECUP	Security Infrastructure Upgrade of Bosnia and Herzegovina Ammunition and Weapons Storage Sites
TRIAL	Track Impunity Always International
UB	Unified Budget
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children Emergency Fund
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
WCCP	War Crimes Capacity-building Project
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

Annex II: Evaluation Terms of Reference

1. Background

1. Goal 17 of the United Nations “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” is expected to “strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.” It encompasses 19 targets, most of which refer to specific sectors, such as trade, finance, and science.⁶⁸ Of particular relevance for this evaluation are three SDG17 targets that focus on stakeholder partnerships as a tool for achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda. Target 17.17 refers to the need to “Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships”, while target 17.6 highlights the need to “Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation [...] through improved coordination among existing mechanisms.” Similarly, target 17.16 refers to the requirement to “Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources.”
2. As pointed out by Pattberg and Widerberg (2016: 43), the concept of “partnership” is vague and suffers from “competing definitions” as demonstrated by the fact that “practitioners and scholars have used the term ‘partnership’ to describe just about any type of collaboration.”⁶⁹ UNWOMEN defines “strategic partnership” as mutually beneficial, leading to “force multiplication”, includes a “long-term commitment”, combines the partners’ knowledge, experience and capabilities, and contributes to accelerating UNWOMEN’s agenda.⁷⁰ This may be compared to the definition of General Assembly resolution 60/215 in which partnerships are not necessarily viewed as long-term or strategic as they are defined as “*voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both public and non-public, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and, as mutually agreed, to share risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits.*”⁷¹ A similar and wide definition is provided by the United Nation Partnering Initiative (TPI) that defines partnerships as “*An ongoing working relationship between different organizations. Partners align their interests, share risks, and combine resources and competencies to maximize the achievement of agreed partnership objectives while delivering net value to each individual partner*”⁷². This definition may not be broad enough to encompass informal and short-term co-

⁶⁸ For details, see <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal17>.

⁶⁹ For instance, UNWOMEN (2017) shows that despite having been involved in a large number of collaborative relationships, it did not have an organizational concept or definition of “partnership.” A concept had instead to be created for the purpose of the mentioned evaluation.

⁷⁰ UNWOMEN (2017).

⁷¹ United Nations (2006).

⁷² See <https://thepartneringinitiative.org/publications/toolbook-series/creating-value-through-partnerships-guidebook-working-draft/>.

operation at the working or project level that does involve the exchange of information to enable co-ordination and avoid duplication of work, but no joint activities.⁷³ Meanwhile, in the terminology of the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, these various types of “partnerships” fall under the broad concept of “external coherence.”⁷⁴

3. Quoting Potluka (2020), and for the purpose of this evaluation, “partnership” is defined as

*a cooperation among relevant stakeholders, including public, public-private, private, and civil society organizations (for example, non-profit organizations, associations). Such a cooperation aims at improving the relevance of projects, programs, and policies, and the sustainability of their outputs*⁷⁵.

2. The OSCE's Partnership Record

4. Efforts to address issues covered by the OSCE's three Dimensions and the cross-Dimension commonly involve or require actors to either work together, or co-ordinate their activities. Many of these issues are such that a single actor cannot resolve them alone in a reasonable time-period, hence the need for collaboration. Furthermore, international and regional multilateral organizations are commonly represented in many of the countries with OSCE field presence, each with its own mandate and activities.⁷⁶ This raises the practical need for at a minimum co-ordination and information exchange to avoid, inter alia, duplication of work, or accidentally disrupting each others' activities.

⁷³ See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/browse/> for detailed data on partnerships that are related to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. See also United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2019) for a very detailed descriptive analysis of the data and findings from a survey. The latter data source was used to collect data on, inter alia, the added value of the partnership, such as additional resources (funding, expertise, etc.) or increased impact of activities, and the prevalence of communication among partners. The survey covered also issues such as barriers and facilitators of partnerships.

⁷⁴ The term refers to “the consistency of the intervention with other actors' interventions in the same context. This includes complementarity, harmonisation and co-ordination with others, and the extent to which the intervention is adding value while avoiding duplication of effort.” See <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dacriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htmX>. This evaluation criterion has only recently been added to the OECD-DAC evaluation guidelines despite constituting the core of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (2011) that were convened by the OECD and stressed the need for establishing partnerships among donors and international organizations to support harmonisation and in extension increased aid efficiency and effectiveness.

⁷⁵ See Potluka (2020: 131), who also reviews approaches for evaluating partnerships and relevant research.

⁷⁶ There are on average 17 UN organizations present in each of the five countries in Central Asia. For data, see <https://unrcca.unmissions.org/un-agencies-central-asian-region-0>. Country level data on the presence of UN organizations focusing on humanitarian relief are available at <https://3w.unocha.org/>. For detailed and historical data, see <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/infographics/infographic-type/3w>.

5. The 1999 Istanbul Summit adoption of the *Platform for Co-operative Security* constitutes genesis and the formal basis for co-operation between the OSCE and international organizations and sub-regional groupings, and aims to “strengthen the mutually reinforcing nature of the relationship between those organizations and institutions concerned with the promotion of comprehensive security within the OSCE area”.⁷⁷ It was followed in 2003 by the adoption of the *OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the 21st Century*, which “seeks to expand its relations with all organizations and institutions that are concerned with the promotion of comprehensive security within the OSCE area, and has established regular patterns of consultation at both the technical and the political levels with a number of them, inter alia, the UN, EU, NATO and the Council of Europe.”⁷⁸
6. The OSCE Secretariat has created a compilation of mostly – with a couple of exceptions in terms of field operation level agreements – organizational level MoUs, agreements, letters of intent and joint actions plans between the OSCE and international and regional organizations. Most of the agreements have been bilateral and involve a variety of intended planned activities and outputs. It is meanwhile unknown to what extent the OSCE’s country level co-operation has been preceded by organizational level co-operation agreements, or to what extent organizational level agreements have led to country level co-operation.⁷⁹ It is also unknown to what extent field missions are even aware of the organizational-level agreements, and whether and to what extent the various forms of partnerships have contributed to enhancing the country level performance of the OSCE, as intended by the Istanbul Summit and more recent OSCE decisions.
7. Through recent years of independent evaluations, OIO has observed that the OSCE commonly co-operates at the country level with international, regional and sub-regional multilateral organizations, including various United Nations entities, the European Union, the Council of Europe, and NATO. In essence, various forms of partnerships have become an intrinsic element of the OSCE’s modus operandi. A cross-organizational meta-evaluation commissioned by OIO in 2020⁸⁰ found “strong coherence and co-ordination with other actors and interventions” at the

⁷⁷ Zannier (2013: 383), which reviews the formal basis and OSCE decisions related to the issue of partnerships.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 384.

⁷⁹ This type of information can be compiled by triangulating data from the detailed narratives of the annual OSCE’s Programme Budget Performance Reports (PBPR), monthly activity reports of OSCE executive structures, project documents, and the DocIn page “OSCE Contacts with Other International Organizations” at <https://docin.osce.org/docin/llisapi.dll?func=ll&objId=20712017&objAction=browse&sort=name> that contains annual information.

⁸⁰ OSCE (2020).

country project level. Meanwhile, and for natural reasons, the 2020 meta-evaluation covered only a select number of projects.

8. OIO has also observed that country level co-operation with other regional and international organizations has covered themes residing in all of the OSCE Dimensions and cross-dimension, and ranged from co-ordination, information sharing, joint planning and at some instances also various degrees of joint activities. It has sometimes been formalized in terms of MoUs (or corresponding) and carried out in a formal manner at regular intervals, and sometimes been based on personal contacts and carried out in an informal and ad hoc occasional manner on a needs-basis. It has involved multilateral as well as bilateral constellations and ranged from long-term and institutional-level consultations at the level of the OSCE Secretariat, to formal and institutionalized strategic partnerships combined with joint activities at the field operation level. At the other end of the spectrum there has been short-term, non- formalized and operational co-operation at the OSCE field operation level where the OSCE delivers projects in co-ordination, and for the purposes of information sharing, and occasionally joint planning and joint activities with local or regional offices of international or regional multilateral organizations.
9. The partnership between NATO and the OSCE in implementing the 1995 Dayton agreement is located at one end-point of the partnership spectrum in terms of a long-term, strategic and extensive country level and corporate level partnership that extends beyond the particular project level. Whereas NATO was assigned the military elements of the agreement over the period 1995-2005, the OSCE was assigned almost all of the non-military elements, and the two organizations partnered and divided the labour in implementing the tasks.⁸¹ Another example is the Kosovo war in 1999, during the aftermath of which the OSCE was assigned with democratization and institution building through OMIK, which became an integral part of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).⁸² A third example is the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC). Created in 2003, it is a long-term and strategic partnership of the OSCE, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Regional Environment Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC).⁸³ Signatories committed to “contribute through its expertise and capacities to the implementation of the initiative in line with its mandate and comparative advantages.” The

⁸¹ Simonet (2018).

⁸² Ibid. and OSCE (1999).

⁸³ The first MoU signed in 2003 expired in 2006 and was succeeded by an MOU covering 2007-2017. A third MoU for the period 2019-2021 was signed in 2019, see https://unece.org/DAM/ENVSEC_MOU_signed_by_all_4_partner_organizations.pdf. See also OSCE (2019) for an evaluation of the Århus Centre Network, which is a core element of the ENVSEC partnership, and ENVSEC (2013).

agreement led, inter alia, to the delivery of 93 projects (as of 2018) by the OSCE as part of its role in implementing the agreement.⁸⁴

10. Similarly, and in the middle of the partnership spectrum, the OSCE has entered into partnerships at the country project/programme level that have sometimes involved the OSCE outsourcing the implementation of entire project tasks or even entire projects to other international organizations. One example is the Montenegro Demilitarization Programme (MONDEM), in which the OSCE and UNDP were multi-year strategic partners and through which the OSCE transferred more than €1.000.000 to UNDP for implementing an OSCE project that contributed to one element of the MONDEM programme.⁸⁵ A second example of project/programme level partnership, but which did not include transfers of funds, is the Security Infrastructure Upgrade of Bosnia and Herzegovina Ammunition and Weapons Storage Sites (SECUP) project (2011-2016). It was implemented by the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina in partnership with EUFOR, NATO, the European Union, the United States Embassy, and UNDP, and served to enhance the security and safety of conventional ammunition and small arms and light weapons.⁸⁶
11. An example at the other end-point of the partnership spectrum in terms of limited co-operation are the co-ordination meetings between the OSCE Mission to Montenegro, representatives of the European Union and the embassy of the United States on the topic of anti-money laundering assistance to Montenegro. Rather than joint planning, joint activities and a long-term strategic partnership, the interactions were confined to information exchange for avoiding duplication of activities, and co-ordination so that activities do not overlap in time. Through evaluations in recent years, OIO has found that this type of short-term and needs-based collaboration is predominant at the country level, while more elaborate partnerships are rare.⁸⁷
12. This spectrum of co-operation could be captured in a diagram like the one below, based on how partnerships generate value.⁸⁸ Although this might need adjustment for OSCE, the diagram identifies some basic types of partnerships. In any case, a typology doesn't constitute a value

⁸⁴ For details of the OSCE's contribution of the ENVSEC partnership, see OSCE (2019).

⁸⁵ OSCE Project number 2700240, see also OSCE (2016a). In addition, the OSCE Mission to Montenegro implemented other projects by themselves that contributed to the disarmament process in Montenegro.

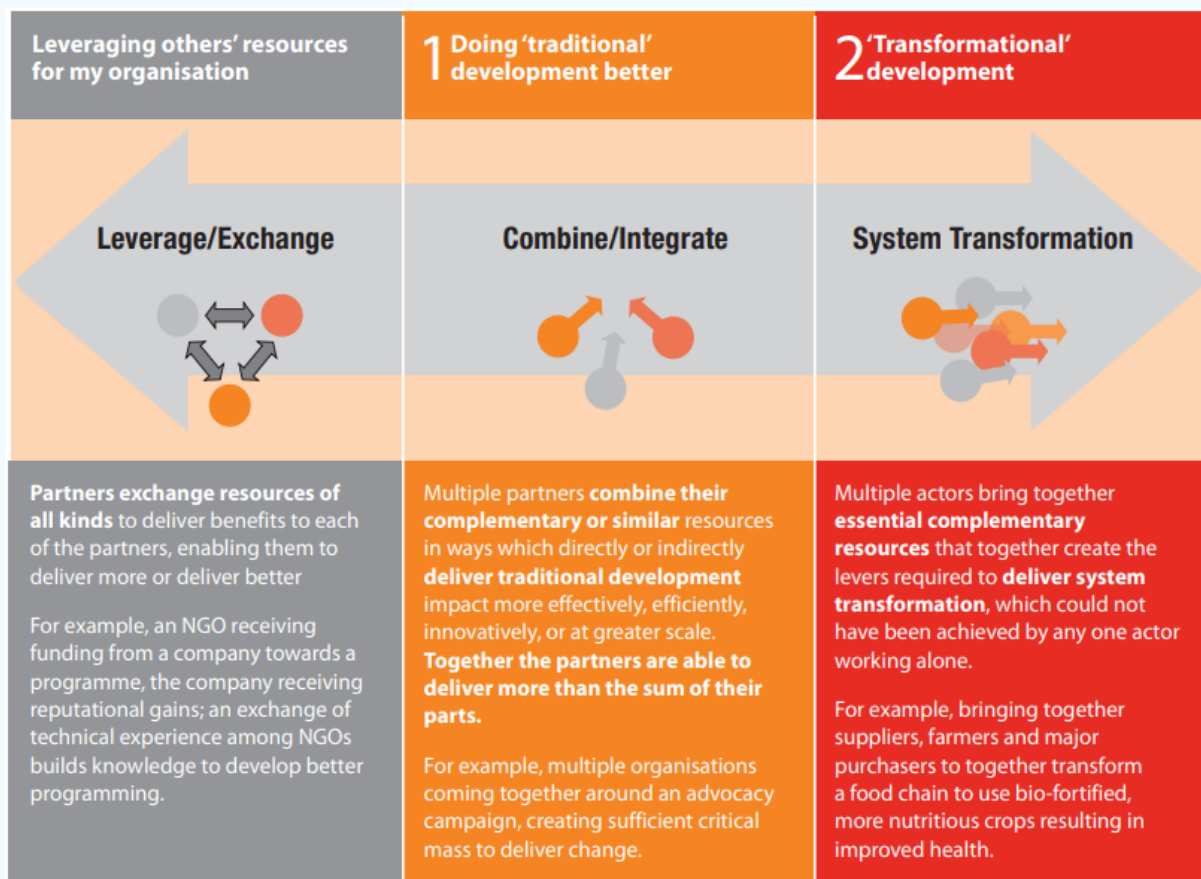
⁸⁶ OSCE project number 2200268. Alongside the partners the OSCE contributed to implementing a national plan for, inter alia, creating safe and secure ammunitions storage sites. See also OSCE (2016b).

⁸⁷ It deserves to be mentioned that that there exist co-ordination/partnership platforms that OSCE leads or co-leads, such as the anti-trafficking platform (<https://www.osce.org/combating-human-trafficking>), and a range of similar co-chairing platforms at the country level. These are usually 'long-term' platforms, and it is something where OSCE brings an added value to the partnership effort.

⁸⁸ The diagram is from UNDESA (2021: 2)

statement. It assist in talk about partnerships in a meaningful way and assess country level partnerships in OSCE.

13. On the left-hand side, the partners work together to address *a defined problem*, exchanging resources (financial, non-financial) often within a limited time frame. This includes dialogue and co-operation meetings. In this typology, the partners are the primary 'beneficiaries'. In the middle of the spectrum, partnerships are created to deliver more than the sum of their parts, combining or even integrating resources, with increased outcomes and impact of the organizations' activities as the main drivers. The right-hand side, the multi-actor approach, is about organizations aligning organizational objectives to use levers to *change a system*. This last category, if at all, might be mainly relevant at the 'corporate' OSCE level, much less at the country level.



14. It is foreseen that most of the OSCE partnerships will fall into the first two categories, where it could be considered to provide more detail (dialogue -> information exchange -> joint planning -> joint implementation -> etc.). Organizations' engagement in collaboration is related to the required commitment to shared goals, if and how they share resources and the level of trust. The closer partners are working together and start sharing resources, the more critical it is that partners are accountable, share specific values and have senior-level support and commitment. Dialogue and

consultation require less buy-in and commitment to particular goals than partnerships where partners identify, fund, and implement joined projects or programs.

15. For this partnership evaluation, it might also be helpful to distinguish the dialogue and coordination meetings function of the OSCE from the platform function. The Partnering Initiative distinguished the following typology of multi stakeholder platforms, as illustrated in the diagram below:⁸⁹



16. Although this might need adjustment for OSCE, the four platform typologies differ from the left to the right regarding their level of engagement, required commitment to shared goals and trust needed to work together. This typology doesn't constitute a value statement and describe the hierarchy in functions common in platforms: platforms for knowledge exchange, for instance, will always have an element of dialogue, while joined activities require the exchange of knowledge, etc.

3. Evaluation Scope, Focus, and Purpose

17. The evaluation's overall objective is to identify lessons learned and best practices, and based thereon formulate recommendations at the operative and at the strategic level that serve to strengthen the OSCE's country-level partnership activities. The spatial and temporal *scope* of the evaluation is cross-organizational and 2016-2021, respectively, and with OSCE program managers and higher staff categories as its target group.

18. It *focuses* on the OSCE's involvement in partnerships at the *country level* with international/regional organizations and international NGOs.⁹⁰ In this regard the importance of also organizational level

⁸⁹ Ibid. p4.

⁹⁰ For an inventory and discussion of approaches to evaluating partnerships, see Potluka (2020) and partly also Horan (2019). Some of the approaches involve the standard OECD-DAC evaluation criteria and the input-

partnerships will be considered in terms of whether and how they influence country level partnerships. Its *purpose* is to assess *country level* partnerships in terms of their types (e.g., information sharing, co-ordination, sharing of lessons learned, etc.), the processes of partnering (e.g., formal or informal, the role of the OSCE, etc.), and their overall benefits for the OSCE. It will also be assessed whether, to what extent and how *country level* partnerships were supported by the *organizational level* partnerships. For this purpose the partnerships will be categorized according to a typology that will be developed, the prevalence of the various types of partnerships will be mapped, and the data disaggregated at the OSCE Dimension level.

19. With regard to the issue of partnership benefits for the OSCE, the core and sole rationale for any international organization to enter into partnerships is to enhance their performance in terms of more efficiently and effectively delivering activities and achieving organizational goals. In line with the OECD Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation evaluation criteria, the evaluation will assess whether and to what extent country level partnering with international and regional multilateral organizations is relevant and is of added value in terms of contributing to the efficiency and effectiveness of the OSCE's mandated activities. It will also be assessed whether and to what extent partnerships have supported gender mainstreaming, one of the OSCE's commitments as per the OSCE's Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality was endorsed by the Ministerial Council (MC) in 2004 (MC.DEC/14/04) and subsequent OSCE decisions. The detailed evaluation questions, together with information on data sources and measurement, are included in the annex to this ToR.

4. Approach and Methodology

20. The evaluation will triangulate data from five data sources: [1] OSCE documents, including project documents, Executive Structure activity reports, financial records, the Programme Budget Performance Report (PBPR) and related material in DocIn and IRMA, [2] structured focus group interviews of OSCE staff from all Executive Structures and Institutions and staff from partner international organizations, and [3] third party studies and data. These data sources will be complemented by [4] an electronic survey that will be distributed by OIO to OSCE program and project staff.⁹¹ In addition, a reference group [5] will be established to provide information and

outcome log-frame/theory of change approach. Two examples of the latter type of systematic, data driven, detailed and structured partnership evaluations is United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (2017) and European Commission (2017). See also UNWOMEN (2017).

⁹¹ The survey only covers staff who work with OSCE external actors, and may have been involved in various forms of partnerships with OSCE external actors. Consequently, staff within OSCE general or common service units (e.g., management and finance, recruitment, and procurement) will not invited to respond to the survey.

advice throughout the evaluation process and comment on draft reports. The evaluation will be carried out by an evaluation manager at OIO together with a subject matter expert consultant.

21. Related to the first purpose of the evaluation (i.e., map and assess country level partnerships, their types, the processes of partnering, the benefits for the OSCE, and whether, to what extent and how country level partnerships have been supported by the organizational level partnerships), data source 4 will be used as key source, with data sources 1, 2 and 5 for complementary in-depth information. The same data sources will be used to address the second purpose of the evaluation (i.e., assess whether and to what extent country level partnering with international and regional multilateral organizations is relevant, of added value and contributes to the efficiency and effectiveness of the OSCE). Data source 3 will be used for collection of thematic background information.
22. OSCE project level monitoring data on the impact of partnerships is not available. As a substitute, the aforementioned survey will ask project staff to provide their assessment based on their experiences from projects with partnerships. Data from the same survey will also be used to address evaluation questions on gender mainstreaming, relevance and added value. Structured interviews of key informants from select Executive Structures and Institutions, and co-operation partners will be carried out to explore issues identified by the survey.
23. Interviews will in applicable instances focus on three contrasting case studies of the evaluation covering the OSCE's three dimensions. These case studies do not per se constitute individual evaluations of the concerned projects, but rather form part of the overall approach to generate learnings through in-depth analysis of selected interventions.
 - a. The OSCE's 1st Dimension: Border Management Staff College, Programme Office in Dushanbe. Selected because the College has extensively interacted *bilaterally* in an *ad hoc* manner with a *large number of international organizations* in delivering activities.
 - b. The OSCE's 2nd Dimension: ENVSEC, OCEEA. Selected because it constitutes a *strategic* and *long-term formalised/institutionalized multilateral* partnership that has covered *many years* and *many activities*.
 - c. The OSCE's 3rd Dimension. OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, project/programme on processing/monitoring of war crimes. Selected because it covers many years, involves co-operation and co-ordination with other international actors and took place in a context where other actors provided large-scale support to the government.

5. Output and Communication Strategy

24. The evaluation will generate a cross-case evaluation report that seeks to identify general lessons learned, best practices, and recommendations. Findings will be communicated through OIO's evaluation newsletter *OSCEval News*, and through presentations at selected OSCE events open to OSCE staff and OSCE p States. The evaluation report will be shared internally and via the OSCE website.

6. Timeline

25. The evaluation, including its initial in-house data collection phase, is carried out over the period May 2021 to January 2022, as outlined in the time plan in Annex I to this document.

7. Tasks and Qualifications of Expert Consultant

26. One or two subject matter expert consultants will be hired to work together with the evaluation team leader. The detailed tasks are described in a document accompanying this ToR.

27. The consultant is required to meet the following competency profile:

- At least a first-level university degree in social sciences, economics, public policy, law, evaluation, business, management or related field(s) from an accredited university;
- A minimum of 10 years documented professional experience from evaluations and/or research on international organization partnership issues;
- A minimum of 10 years documented evaluation experience, which could include managing and/or conducting evaluations of development projects or programmes with an international organization, an NGO, with a government department, research experience with a university or academic institution;
- Documented experience in qualitative and/or quantitative analysis;
- Demonstrated gender awareness and sensitivity, and an ability to integrate a gender perspective into tasks and activities;
- Documented experience in analysing survey data;
- Computer literate with practical experience using Microsoft applications. Ability to use relevant software and other applications, ideally including but not limited to survey software, statistical software (e.g., STATA, SPSS, SAS, and R) is desirable;
- Excellent report-writing skills and the ability to convey complex information in a logical, clear and concise manner as demonstrated by previous evaluation reports;
- Professional fluency in English.

8. Reporting

28. The report is a team effort and should not exceed 35 pages (excluding annexes). OIO's standard report template shall be adapted to the evaluation's requirements.

Title and opening pages

Table of Contents

- I. Executive summary
1. Introduction and Purpose
2. Partnerships: Thematic and Policy Background
3. The OSCE's Partnership Record: Prevalence and Character
 - 3.1 Corporate/organizational level
 - 3.2 Country level
4. The OSCE 's Partnership Process
 - 4.1 Origins and Modalities
 - 4.2 Activities
 - 4.3 Outputs
5. OSCE Partnerships and Organizational Performance: Survey Learnings
 - 5.1 Relevance and Added value
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 - 5.3 Effectiveness
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 - I Glossary
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Annex II: Evaluation Questions and Evaluation Matrix

Partnering process

- Partnership *origin and modalities*
 - o What actor initiated the partnership?
 - o What actors were included and at what stage?
 - o Why did the OSCE enter into the partnership?
 - Was it initiated partly/fully because of a corporate level partnership agreement?
 - o What is the OSCE role in the partnership: initiator-invitee; leader/convener – participant – observer?⁹²
 - o Was it a bilateral or multilateral partnership?
 - o Was the partnership formal(-ized) or informal?
 - o What is/are the goal(-s) or purpose of the partnership?

- Partnership *activities*
 - o Were meeting/contact formats and intervals, formalized and regular, respectively?
 - o Did the partnership involve information sharing, co-ordination, joint planning, participation in each other's activities, and/or joint projects/activities? Any other types of activities of relevance for the OSCE that extend beyond project implementation?
 - o What is the OSCE's main contribution to the partnership?

- Partnership *outputs*
 - o Has a partnership strategy and/or workplan/implementation plan been created?
 - o What other types of concrete outputs did the partnership generate (e.g., new projects, new activities)?

⁹² For a typology of partnership roles, see Yan, Lin and Clarke (2018).

Partnering and OSCE Performance

Issue	Primary evaluation question	Sub-question(-s)	Primary evaluation question indicator; frequency/timing of measurement	Baseline	Target	Data source/ instrument
Relevance and added Value	EQ1: Is the partnership of thematic relevance for the OSCE (ES)?	Does the partnership contribute to the E.S. commitments or targets? Are they aligned/coherent with OSCE/ES priorities?	To no extent – to a limited extent – to a considerable extent	N.a.	Considerable extent	OSCE staff survey and interviews (all questions in this section)
	EQ2: Did the local level partnership contribute towards expanding staff and funds (input) available for projects?	Did partnership provide access to partners, for instance? Did partners contribute with expertise, staff (e.g., speakers), organization, etc.?	Ibid	N.a.	Ibid.	
	EQ3: Did the local level partnership contribute towards expanding and/or improving activities of projects?	What were the key	Ibid.	N.a.	Ibid.	
	EQ4: Did the local level partnership contribute towards expanding project outputs?	barriers/facilitators?	Ibid.	N.a.	Ibid	
	EQ5: What were the most significant benefits/ drawbacks of the partnership for the OSCE?	Would OSCE have achieved the same results outputs without partnership? E.g., overcoming financial resource constraints, avoiding duplication of work, synergy effects of some sort, external coherence, etc.		N.a.	N.a.	
Organizational performance: Efficiency	EQ6: Did the partnership contribute towards delivering project activities on time and on budget?	What were the key barriers/facilitators?	To no extent – to a limited extent – to a considerable extent	N.a.	Considerable extent	Ibid.
	EQ7: Was the partnership efficient in terms of the required staff time for communication/ co-ordination/planning as weighed against the added value and effectiveness of the partnership? <i>This</i>	What were the key barriers/facilitators?	Ibid	N.a.	Ibid.	

	<i>question refers to the transaction or operational costs of partnerships.</i>					
Organizational performance: Effectiveness	EQ8: Did the local level partnership contribute towards enhancing short-term project outcomes (e.g., knowledge and skills)?	What were the key OSCE-internal barriers/facilitators? Where some types of partnerships more effective than others?	To no extent – to a limited extent – to a considerable extent	N.A.	Considerable extent	Ibid.
	EQ9: Did the local level partnership contribute towards enhancing mid-term project outcomes (e.g., policies/ practices)?	What were the key OSCE-internal barriers/facilitators? Where some types of partnerships more effective than others?	Ibid.	N.A.	Ibid.	
Sustainability and Gender Mainstreaming	EQ10: Did the local level partnership integrate a gender equality responsive perspective?	To what extent did the partnership contribute to project gender mainstreaming?	To no extent – to a limited extent – to a considerable extent	3.	Considerable extent	Ibid.
	EQ11: Did the local level partnership integrate a gender equality responsive perspective?	To what extent did the partnership contribute to the sustainability of project results?	Ibid.		Ibid.	

Annex III: Reference Group Terms of Reference

Role

An evaluation reference group consists of key evaluation stakeholders who review and provide feedback on evaluation outputs. It is established at the start of the evaluation for its entire duration.

The reference group forms an integral part of the quality assurance system of the evaluation. The group members act in an advisory capacity and do not have management responsibilities for the evaluation, or responsibility for the evaluation report contents. Responsibility for approval of evaluation outputs rests with the evaluation manager (OIO).

Tasks

1. Review and provide comments on the evaluation ToR;
2. Provide feedback through-out the evaluation process whenever solicited or on the group member's initiative;
3. Review and comment on draft evaluation reports, including early section drafts.

Composition

- Lorenzo Rilasciati, Senior Economic Officer, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, OSCE Secretariat
- Vera Strobachova Budway, Senior Co-ordination Officer, Gender Section, OSCE Secretariat
- Margaret Osdoby Katz, Strategic Planning and Resource Mobilisation Co-Ordinator, Executive Management, OSCE Secretariat
- John MacGregor, Head of Centre, OSCE Centre in Ashgabat
- Jelena McCoy, Head of Programme Co-ordination , OSCE Presence in Albania
- Philippe Tremblay, Head, External Co-operation, OSCE Secretariat
- Dania Cossa, External Co-operation Officer, External Co-operation, OSCE Secretariat
- Jasna Dobricik Head, Human Dimension Department, Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Ihar Kuzminich, Chief, Training and Education, Border Management Staff College

Annex IV: References

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Annex III. On-Line Survey Information

Population size, sample size, and sample margin of error

1. The survey focuses on OSCE staff who directly work with the implementation of ExB and UB projects in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd and cross-dimension that involve assistance to external stakeholders. As of 2021-03-16, the OSCE's staff list contained 3.608 names. Staff who directly work with the implementation of projects were identified through the staff list's job titles.
2. All staff with job titles including "project" and "program", such as "project officer", "project assistant", "programme officer" and "program manager" are included in the survey. In addition, the survey includes all staff who worked in a programmatic unit within the 1st, 2nd, 3rd or cross-Dimension in a field operation (excluding Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine and the OSCE Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk), HCNM, ODIHR or the Secretariat and had the following terms in their job titles: "adviser", "officer", "chief", "head", "deputy head" or "director", "legal assistant", "media monitoring assistant", "monitoring assistant", "police training assistant", "rule of law monitoring assistant", "senior governance training assistant", "senior legal assistant", "senior training assistant", "training assistant", and "senior translator/interpreter assistant." Finally, the members of the OSCE Evaluation Network were included.
3. The survey was open from the end of December 2011 to mid-January 2022. The OSCE has a high staff turnover, and while the survey was distributed on the basis of a nine-month-old staff list, this did not undermine the integrity of the survey. The reason is that any new OSCE staff recruited after March 2021, would not have been able to form an opinion on the OSCE's work through partnerships over the period 2017-2021.
4. 38 email addresses bounced, thus reducing the population from the estimated 999 to 961. The inclusion criteria generated an over-inclusive survey population. For instance, the OSCE Evaluation Network includes some individuals who do not directly – but indirectly - work with project implementation but were still included in the survey population. To assure that the survey population is not over-inclusive, the survey included the screening question 6, "During the period 2017-2021, have you been involved in client facing OSCE UB or ExB projects (that is, projects intended to directly benefit external stakeholders such as government counterparts or civil society organizations)?".
5. This question was answered in the affirmative by 265 (74,2%) individuals, and in the negative by 92 (25,8%) individuals. If it is assumed that the 357 individuals constitute roughly a random sample from the initial estimated survey population of 961 names, then it may be concluded that the

original survey population to roughly 25% includes individuals who have not been involved in client facing OSCE project over the period. The actual relevant survey population is in that case around 713 individuals (sample margin of error $\pm 4,8\%$ at a 95% confidence level).

6. 408 individuals initiated the survey by answering at least the first questions. After the screening question the sample size was 265, of which 222 individuals completed it up until the last compulsory question (21).⁹³ Given an actual survey population size of 713, the sample margin of error is around $\pm 4,8\%$ by question 7, and around $\pm 5,5\%$ by the last compulsory question 21, for a 95% confidence level.
7. The analysis in the report is based on aggregate response data since disaggregation of the data across gender or Executive Structure would have resulted in sample margins of error too large to draw useful conclusions. Moreover, the % figures in any graphs of the report reflect the exclusion of responses "Do not know / prefer not to say" as they are de facto non-responses. For instance, for question 10, the % rates of the responses were calculated against the number of respondents (209) remaining after deducting the 19 responses "Do not know / prefer not to say / not applicable."

On-line survey questionnaire (Number of responses in parenthesis)

1. What is your gender? (408)

- Female (201)
- Male (185)
- Prefer not to say / Other (22)

2. In which OSCE Dimension do you work? (408)

- 1st Dimension (101)
- 2nd Dimension (42)
- 3rd Dimension (126)
- Crossdimension (66)
- Not Applicable (e.g., general services and central services) (32)
- Prefer not to say (41)

3. In what OSCE entity do you work? (408)

- Secretariat (42)
- ODIHR (8)
- High Commissioner on National Minorities (16)
- Representative on Freedom of the Media (3)
- Mission in Kosovo (72)

⁹³ Of the initial respondents, 49,3% were women, 45,3% men, while 5,4% of the respondents answered "prefer not to say / Other."

- Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina (85)
- Mission to Serbia (28)
- Presence in Albania (13)
- Mission to Skopje (46)
- Mission to Montenegro (7)
- Mission to Moldova (6)
- Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine (15)
- Programme Office in Nur-Sultan (4)
- Centre in Ashgabat (6)
- Programme Office in Bishkek (15)
- Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan (5)
- Programme Office in Dushanbe (26)
- Prefer not to say (11)

4. During the period 2017-2021, have you been involved in some type of partnership or co-operation with either an international organization and/or a multilateral regional organization, and/or an international non-governmental organization (NGO), that was neither directly nor indirectly related to the implementation of an OSCE project? The co-operation might have involved information sharing, policy co-ordination, or other kinds of activities, including dialogue activities.? (357)

- Yes (202)
- No (155)

5. How common were those types of non-project related partnerships or co-operation? (357)

- Not applicable: non-project related partnerships or co-operation did not take place (107)
- Very / rather uncommon (57)
- Common (110)
- Very common (46)
- Do not know / prefer not to say (37)

6. During the period 2017-2021, have you been involved in client-facing OSCE UB or ExB projects (that is, projects intended to directly benefit external stakeholders such as government counterparts or civil society organizations)? (357)

- Yes (265)
- No (92)

7. ... how often did different types of co-operation take place during project implementation? (380)

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Do not know / prefer not	Total

					to say / not applicable	
Information-sharing of project activities	1	17	58	143	8	227
Co-ordination of already planned project activities	2	23	83	112	4	224
Joint / co-ordinated planning of each organization's individual project activities (to avoid duplication of activities, or overlap of activities in time)	11	39	83	84	7	224
Jointly carrying out activities, or one party contributing to another party's activities. An example is when the OSCE contributes with presenters at a workshop organized by organization X, or where organization X contributes with lecturers to activities organized by the OSCE. Another example is when one organization directly contributes financially towards the cost of an activity carried out by another organization.	9	33	91	86	8	227
Outsourcing an activity or even an entire project to another organization. For instance, the OSCE might use an Implementing Partner Agreement to outsource the implementation of an entire project to another organization, or an organization might outsource the implementation of its projects to the OSCE.	79	67	64	25	10	225

8... how often was the co-operation formalized? (228)

	Never	Rarely	Sometim es	Often / Most of the time	Do not know / prefer not to say / not applicable	Tota l
A local agreement / MoU / Letter of intent, including clearly defined goals, activities, and inputs from each of the organization.	51	44	53	58	16	222
A local high-level agreement / MoU / Letter of intent describing the intentions of the co-operation but without specifying any concrete details.	63	50	48	33	26	220
A corporate level (OSCE-wide) level agreement / MoU / Letter of intent	71	45	45	24	32	217
No written agreement / MoU / Letter of intent.	49	43	37	54	33	216

9. ... how many organizations were typically included in any co-operation? (228)

	Rarely / Never	Sometim es	Often / Most of the time	Co- operation did not take place	Do not know / prefer not to say / not applicable (co- operation did not take place)	Tota l
One international or regional organization. That is, the co-operation was bilateral.	15	82	108	1	13	219
Two or more international or regional organizations. That is, the co-operation was multilateral.	57	96	38	3	16	210

10. ... how was project implementation most commonly affected by co-operation? (228)

- It led to a considerable amount of project implementation challenges (11)
- It led to some project implementation challenges (65)

- It did not lead to project implementation challenges (28)
- It made project implementation slightly easier (46)
- It made project implementation considerably easier (51)
- Not Applicable: co-operation did not take place (8)
- Do not know / prefer not to say (19)

11. ... did co-operation contribute towards expanding the resources of the project (that is, staff and / or funds)? For instance, an organization might have contributed directly towards costs of a project activity (e.g., contributing to lodging or meal costs, travel costs, etc.), assisted with organizing an event, or contributed indirectly by providing, for instance, speakers or trainers for seminars, workshops, etc.? (228)

- Rarely / never (45)
- Sometimes (96)
- Often / most of the time (69)
- Not applicable: co-operation did not take place (3)
- Do not know / prefer not to say (15)

12. ... did the co-operation typically contribute towards expanding and/or improving the activities of the project? For instance, a co-operation partner may have given advice on how to improve an activity, or shared the costs of an activity, thus allowing for more ambitious activities than originally planned? (228)

- To no extent (14)
- To a slight extent (95)
- To a considerable extent (92)
- Not applicable: co-operation did not take place (7)
- Do not know / prefer not to say (20)

13. ... did the co-operation typically contribute towards expanding the output (e.g., more training participants, awareness raising campaign reaching a larger audience, etc.) of the project? (228)

- To no extent (14)
- To a slight extent (112)
- To a considerable extent (76)
- Not applicable: co-operation did not take place (8)
- Do not know / prefer not to say (18)

14. ... did the co-operation typically contribute to increased knowledge, learning or skills of your organization? (228)

- To no extent (23)
- To a slight extent (110)
- To a considerable extent (75)
- Not applicable: co-operation did not take place (6)
- Do not know / prefer not to say (14)

15. In your opinion, what was the most important added value of the co-operation? If co-operation did not take place, add "N.a."?

Free-text reply

16. ... did co-operation typically contribute towards delivering project activities on time and on budget? (224)

- No, the co-operation typically delayed project implementation and/or increased expenditures (10)
- To no extent (20)
- To a slight extent (83)
- To a considerable extent (81)
- Not applicable: co-operation did not take place (9)
- Do not know / prefer not to say (21)

17. ... was co-operation typically worthwhile in terms of the required staff time for communication / co-ordination / planning as weighed against the added value of the co-operation? (224)

- To no extent (8)
- To a slight extent (74)
- To a considerable extent (114)
- Not applicable: co-operation did not take place (10)
- Do not know / prefer not to say (18)

18. ... enhancing project short-term outcomes (e.g., enhanced knowledge and skills among training participants) as compared to if co-operation had not taken place? (223)

- To no extent (9)
- To a slight extent (87)
- To a considerable extent (99)
- Not applicable: co-operation did not take place (9)
- Do not know / prefer not to say (19)

19. ... enhancing mid-term outcomes (e.g., changed policies / practices of a stake-holder agency) as compared to if co-operation had not taken place? (223)

- To no extent (15)
- To a slight extent (97)
- To a considerable extent (75)
- Not applicable: co-operation did not take place (9)
- Do not know / prefer not to say (27)

20. ... integrating a gender equality responsive perspective in the project? (222)

- No, the co-operation typically undermined the integration of a gender equality perspective (1)
- To no extent (27)
- To a slight extent (90)
- To a considerable extent (69)
- Not applicable: co-operation did not take place (11)
- Do not know / prefer not to say (24)

21. ... enhancing the sustainability of project outcomes? This question concerns whether gains and benefits (as included in the survey section on effectiveness) arising from a project can be sustained in the absence of future assistance. (222)

- No, the co-operation typically undermined the integration of a gender equality perspective (2)
- To no extent (13)
- To a slight extent (107)
- To a considerable extent (67)
- Not applicable: co-operation did not take place (8)
- Do not know / prefer not to say (25)

22. In your assessment what factors typically served as barriers against client facing UB and ExB project-related co-operation? This might include the financial size of OSCE's UB and ExB projects, the annual budget cycle, internal procedures, absence of strategic long-term planning within the OSCE, staff time constraints, limited flexibility to respond to external developments, etc. If you have not been involved in such co-operation, just add "N.A." in the response field. (

Free-text reply

23. In your assessment what factors typically served as enablers of client facing UB and ExB project-related co-operation? This might include OSCE expertise, reputation, flexibility, etc. If you have not been involved in such co-operation, just add "N.A." in the response field.

Free-text reply

24. In your assessment, what would be your 3 top recommendations for increasing the added value, efficiency and effectiveness of client facing UB and ExB project-related co-operation with international and/or multilateral regional organizations. If you have not been involved in such co-operation, just add "N.A." in the response field.

Free-text reply

Annex IV: List of Interviewed Individuals

OSCE Partner representatives

Ms. Abeer Hasan, Legal Officer, Sarajevo Field Office, International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals

Mr. Aleksandar Kontic, Advisor, International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals Prosecutor

Ms. Annette Fath-Lihic, Chief Political Adviser/Executive Coordinator of the EU Special Representative in Kosovo

Ms. Fiona Marshall, Environmental Affairs Officer, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Ms. Lillian Langford, Independent consultant, former Head, Rule of Law Section, Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mr. Marco Keiner, Director, Environment Division, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Ms. Maryna Yanush, Environmental Affairs Officer, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Ms. Svetlana Rakic, Programme Co-ordinator, International Organisation for Migration

Mr. Vladimir Zaguzovs, Deputy Project Coordinator, Border Management Programme in Central Asia

Mr. Zbigniew Wojdyla, Head of Mission, Sarajevo Field Office, International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals

OSCE Executive Structures

OSCE Mission in Kosovo

Ms. Caroline Hoi Key Law, Deputy Head, Office of Central Co-ordination

Mr. Childerik Schaapveld, Director, Democratization

Mr. Edward Anderson, Director, Department of Security and Public Safety

Mr. Josip Ivanovic, Senior Communities Adviser, Protection, Communities Section

Ms. Julia Vitanova, Senior Communities Advisor

Ms. Kavya Rajan, Director, Human Rights and Communities

Ms. Maria Paschou, Chief, Law and Justice Section

Mr. Maurizio Mitrano, Chief, Police Development and Monitoring Section

Ms. Meghan McCormack, Chief, Governance Section

Ms. Sabrina Salis, Chief, Property, Cultural Heritage and Inter-Faith Dialogue Section

Ms. Shpresa Muharremi, National KAPS Officer

Mr. Ulrich Bolten, Chief, Serious and Organized Crime Section

Mr. Zoran Mitrevski, Chief, Section/Deputy Director, Community Safety Development

OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mr. Anthony London, Senior Planning Officer

Mr. Michael Schuetz, Head, Rule of Law

Mr. Muris Brkic, National Project Officer, Human Dimension/Rule of Law/War Crimes Monitoring Programme

Mr. Nikolaos Kavallaris-Ladis, Chief, Policy and Planning

Mr. Zlatan Music, National Programme Officer

OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Mr. Cristi Mihalache, Senior Advisor on Roma and Sinti Issues

Ms. Emma Corneliusson, Project Officer

Mr. Francesco Marrella, Policy and Fundraising Advisor

Mr. Ghenadie Barba, Chief, Rule of Law Unit

Ms. Ilona Salaba, Legal Advisor

Mr. Konstantine Vardzelashvili, Head, Democratization Department

Mr. Tome Shekerdijev, Project Officer

Mr. Ulvi Akhlundi, Deputy Head, Election Department

Ms. Yulia Netesova, Chief, Democratic Governance and Gender Unit

OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek

Mr. Alexander Eliseev, Head, Politico-Military Department, Office in Bishkek

Ms. Rasmiya Kazimova, Deputy Head of Programme Office

Ms. Ekaterine Nakashidze, Head, Economic and Environmental Department

Ms. Giulnaz Sairova, National Regional Programme Officer

Mr. Ulukbek Abdubaliev, Senior Planning and Co-Ordination Officer

OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe

Ambassador Valeriu Chiveri, Head of Office

Mr. Antoni Michal Mis, Project Manager

Mr. Ihar Kuzminich, Chief, Training and Education, Border Management Staff College

Mr. Ilgar Ibrahimli, Senior Executive Officer
Mr. Kai Wegerich, Water and Energy Policy Advisor
Ms. Parisa Sheralieva, National Training Officer
Mr. Robert Heuer, Head, Human Dimension Department
Ms. Shahnoz Mamadatoeva, National Legal Officer
Ms. Tea Jaliashvili, Deputy Head of Office
Ms. Victoria Buchok, Head, Fund Administration Unit

OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine

Mr. Hlib Yasnysky, National Programme Coordinator
Ms. Karin Roelke Senior Programme Coordinator
Ms. Liliya Grudko, National Programme Manager
Ms. Nataliia Romanova, National Programme Officer
Ms. Nataliia Stupnytska, National Programme Manager
Mr. Oleksandr Viktorovich Panchenko, National SALW Programme Manager
Mr. Yaroslav Yurtsaba, National Programme Manager
Mr. Yevgen Poberezhny, National Elections and Governance Officer

OSCE Secretariat

Mr. Andrea Salvoni, Executive Programme Officer, Office of the Special Representative/Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings
Mr. Daniel Kroos, Senior Programme Officer, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities
Mr. Juergen Heissel, Director, Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media
Ms. Julia Haas, Assistant Project Officer, Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media
Ms. Katharina Thon, Programme and Capacity Building Officer, Office of the Special Rep/Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings
Mr. Lorenzo Rilasciati, Deputy Co-ordinator / Head, Economic Activities, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities
Ms. Maria Khoruk, Executive Management, Office of the Secretary General
Ms. Margaret Osdoby Katz, Strategic Planning and Resource Mobilization Co-ordinator, Office of the Secretary General
Ms. Marietta König, Senior External Co-operation Officer, Office of the Secretary General
Mr. Philippe Tremblay, Head, External Co-operation Section, Office of the Secretary General

Ms. Saule Ospanova, Senior Environmental Affairs Officer, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE
Economic and Environmental Activities

Ms. Tetiana Rudenko, Senior Co-ordination Advisor, Office of the Special Representative /Co-
ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

Ms. Vera Strobachova Budway, Senior Co-ordination Adviser, Gender Issues, Office of the
Secretary General

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