



Principles for establishing local sustainable development partnerships

1. **Represent all relevant views and organisations.** Groups should not be excluded because they disagree and the partnership may need to take particular measures to represent women and children. If the partnership is area-based all members should be familiar with the locality. As the local community/environment is the host of the partnership, members from outside should be aware that they are there at their invitation.
2. **A good chairperson is essential.** A good chairperson is not involved in issues, steers clear of personalities or overheated discussion, and maximises the potential of all to contribute to the partnership. Every representative must feel wanted. If they don't feel good about the partnership they won't contribute to it and it won't work.
3. **An Executive is necessary.** Operating things by part-time voluntary assistance is too unreliable. Funding is therefore necessary. If you believe in what you are doing you will get funding – but never as much as you think you need!
4. **Be creative** in demonstrating the partnership. Carry out a project, something that is interesting, which is evidence of the results of the new partnership approach as soon as possible.
5. **Partnerships should not be shy about looking for external assistance.**
6. **Assume that co-operation and consensus will not happen on some occasions and that not all members will be equally engaged with all issues.** Make arrangements to deal with conflicts. eg. if there is disagreement over an issue agree to park it for a while and work on areas of agreement.
7. **A new partnership should try to get a good relationship going quickly with the most relevant statutory body.** Make sure some early projects are done with significant inputs from the statutory sector, semi-states or voluntary bodies. Close links with a LEADER company (or similar body) are particularly valuable.
8. **Keep in touch with grassroots.** This is not easy, but if not achieved a new local partnership can become just another organisation to distrust. Newsletters, newspaper and radio reports, seminars on subjects of local interest, school projects – all help.
9. **Belief.** Always believe in the huge potential of what you are setting out to do.