



PARTNERSHIP FUNDS IN THE NEW EU MEMBER STATES

PARTNERSHIPS STRENGTHEN BILATERAL RELATIONS



The partnership funds set up under the auspices of Switzerland's enlargement contribution facilitate the exchange of experience between institutions in the new EU member states and Swiss partners - in areas such as non-motorised transport, teacher training and biodiversity, for instance. The Swiss contribution to partnership funds for financing small projects is approximately CHF 23 million.

Switzerland possesses a great deal of knowledge in areas such as research and environmental protection, and in other fields too. Given the lack of experience of the partner countries in a wide range of areas (usually for historical reasons), Swiss organisations can consequently make a significant contribution to active knowledge transfer. Partnership funds totalling CHF 23.3 million have been set up or are in the pipeline.

FOCUS ON SHARING EXPERIENCE

The partnership funds in Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary and the Czech Republic support and foster institutional partnerships between Switzerland and the respective countries. These partnerships focus on sharing experience in the various fields. As a result, institutions and government agencies in the new EU member states can benefit from Swiss expertise and knowledge. This is also in Switzerland's interests.

Through the partnership funds, Switzerland is supporting around 150 small projects which will help solve concrete problems in the partner countries and improve the living conditions of their citizens. Only non-profit organisations are accepted as partners in both Switzerland and the partner countries, i.e. organisations that do not pursue any commercial interests through their participation in projects, such as foundations or associations. Public authorities such as municipalities or cantonal administrative bodies are also eligible to access these funds. Trade unions can also be admitted as partners. Town twinning is a traditional example of such a partnership.

FIRST PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS ALREADY COMPLETED

Partnership funds will be set up in all countries by the end of 2012 at the latest. Projects have already been submitted in Hungary, Slovenia and the Czech Republic. The first fruits of these partnerships are therefore already emerging. For instance, Swiss expertise helped to implement a project to promote non-motorised transport in the Czech Republic. Another project concerned incorporating the rights of children in teacher training. As part of the Slovenian partnership fund, a joint research project to preserve biodiversity was implemented.

In Poland the focus was placed on partnerships between towns and municipalities. For instance, Polish cities and municipalities can consult Swiss agencies in areas such as spatial planning and public transport.



MUTUAL BENEFITS OF COOPERATION

By expanding its horizons through establishing and maintaining long-term partnerships between public agencies and institutions, Switzerland also benefits from the mutual exchange of experience. Partnership projects allow Swiss partners to play an active role in reducing economic and social disparities between the new member states and the EU.

Projects are submitted to the national institution nominated to manage the fund. A broad-based selection committee, on which Switzerland is also represented, decides which projects will be financed.

The partnership funds set up as part of the Swiss enlargement contribution:

- will co-finance around 150 partnership projects;
- will create and foster institutional partnerships between public bodies in the new EU member states and Switzerland;
- will enable the exchange of specialist knowledge between the new EU member states and Switzerland to the benefit of all parties.

THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

SUBJECT

Supporting civil society

COUNTRIES

Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Hungary

PARTNERS

Swiss non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and public bodies

STARTING POINT / BACKGROUND INFORMATION

For historical reasons, institutions, organisations and public bodies in the new EU member states lack expert knowledge in many specialist fields. Swiss expertise can help to fill these knowledge and experience gaps.

PURPOSE

- Expand existing and foster new institutional partnerships between non-governmental organisations, research institutes and public agencies from the partner countries and Switzerland.
- Implement partnership projects that will actively contribute to improving the living conditions of citizens, also with the help of Swiss expertise.

ACTIVITIES

- Selecting and implementing around 150 partnership projects
- Transferring Swiss expert knowledge
- Establishing and expanding institutional partnerships
- Fact-finding visits to project partners
- Joint evaluation and drafting of reports
- Creating long-term international relationships in the project area

TARGET GROUPS

Non-governmental organisations and public bodies in the respective partner countries and Switzerland

COSTS

Total project budget (corresponds to amount of Swiss contribution)

CHF 23.3 million

Amount of funds by country:

Bulgaria: CHF 2.2 million

Poland: CHF 3.4 million

Romania: CHF 5 million

Slovakia: CHF 2.5 million

Slovenia: CHF 1.1 million

Czech Republic: CHF 5.1 million

Hungary: CHF 4 million

RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Institutions in the new EU member states in collaboration with a Swiss partner

DURATION

2009 – 2015

Different durations in each country