Project Management in cross-sector social-oriented partnerships

A comparative study on the formation of partnerships in Romania, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Germany

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Summary

Cross-sector social-oriented partnerships which address social or environmental challenges are increasing in practice and in the literature. Although this is expected to continue in the future, management responsibilities are largely unclear in this type of cross-sector collaboration. Project management was found to be a relevant area for investigation because cross-sector collaborations and projects have similar characteristics and projects are mentioned separately in the two literature fields.

By joining them in a novel theoretical framework and by collecting empirical data, this thesis aims to explore, describe and analyse the context and use of project management in the formation phase of cross-sector social-oriented partnerships. The study was undertaken in the belief that project management can be enriched by being researched in collaborative settings and that cross-sector collaborations are interesting to investigate from a managerial perspective. In fact, they offer great potential for knowledge creation and sharing which has been addressed mainly by management research.

This thesis study was structured according to three research objectives. Firstly, we analysed the role of contextual elements in cross-sector social-oriented partnerships by comparing cases in different European country contexts, which were selected based on established criteria. Secondly, we conceptualised the formation phase as it was found that the literature lacked an overarching understanding of this phase. Thirdly, we identified management responsibilities with a focus on project and knowledge management concepts in the formation of cross-sector social-oriented partnerships.

We investigated both partners in a multi-method qualitative study to get a holistic understanding of the research context. Primary data was collected in semi-structured interviews and supplemented with secondary data. The data was analysed on two levels which allowed for the triangulation of findings. Given the mainly inductive approach, template analysis was deployed allowing for flexibility to take account of emerging aspects.

The empirical data shows that project management is deployed differently in the formation of cross-sector social-oriented partnerships, depending on contextual elements and the intention with which they were formed. This is reflected in the interaction of partners, the level of trust between them, the way knowledge is shared and ultimately in the level of formality in which project management is deployed. In light of the generated findings, the extension of a collaboration continuum from the literature is proposed by integrating project management as a parameter. The findings and this proposition have implications on practitioners and for further research in the field.

Keywords: project management, cross-sector social-oriented partnerships, formation phase, cross-sector collaborations, knowledge management
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List of Abbreviations

BUS Business organisation
CSC Cross-sector collaboration
CSR Corporate Social Responsibility
CSSP Cross-sector social-oriented partnership
ECoC 2014 European Capital of Culture in 2014
GeBOC Global eBusiness Operations Center
IOR Inter organisational relationships
NGO Non-governmental organisation
NPO Not-for-profit organisation
PMBoK Project Management Book of Knowledge
PPP Public Private Partnership
UE Unity Enterprise
UK United Kingdom
PSO Private Sector Organisation
TSO Third Sector Organisation
WGS William Grant and Sons
1. Introduction

Public challenges can become so complex and important for society that single organisations from one sector are incapable of solving them alone. In fact, they can be tackled successfully if capabilities, resources, effort and knowledge are linked or shared by organisations (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006, p. 44; Gray, 1989, p. 269). This is the impetus for cross-sector collaborations (CSCs) that address these issues on local, national and international level. Collaboration can be a means to achieve an objective if it extends beyond the core business and occurs when resources, such as information, money, labour etc., are pooled by two or more stakeholders in order to solve problems that neither can solve individually (Gray, 1985, p. 912). Owing to the existence of three economic and institutional sectors - private, public and third - CSCs can occur in four different arenas (Billis, 2010; Seitanidi & Crane, 2009; Selsky & Parker, 2005, p. 854). While public-private partnerships (PPPs) are rather well researched (Austin, 2000), collaborations between organisations from the private and the third sector - cross-sector social-oriented partnerships (CSSPs) are not as established among scholars and thus provide an interesting ground for this thesis research. Furthermore, the number of CSSPs has been constantly rising given the motivations of private sector organisations (PSOs) and third sector organisations (TSOs), which is expected to continue in the future (Austin, 2000, p. 70; Logsdon, 1991, p. 23).

Literature on collaborations between organisations from the private and the third sector has proliferated on a wide range of topics; ‘innovation’ (Holmes & Smart, 2009; Jamali, Yianni, & Abdallah, 2011) and the role of trust (Austin, 2000, p. 83; Bryson et al., 2006, p. 48; Rondinelli & London, 2003, p. 72) as well as instances of failed partnerships (Seitanidi, 2008), propositions for successful collaborations (Bryson et al., 2006; Kearns, 2000, pp. 263–264; Selsky & Parker, 2005) or the role of external and internal stakeholders (Lawrence & Hardy, 1999; Nasi, Nasi, Phillips, & Zyglidopoulos, 1997). Other scholars have researched the influence of institutional logic on the deployment of CSSPs styles (Vurro, Dacin, & Perrini, 2010), or the role of motives as indicators of transformative intention (Seitanidi, Koufopoulos, & Palmer, 2010). This shows that although CSSP is a recent phenomenon in the literature (Seitanidi, 2010, p. 28), management responsibilities are largely unclear which is expressed as “the black box of collaboration management practice” (Kelman, Hong, & Turbitt, 2013). This is problematic because the management of CSCs is challenging and complex owing to potentially differing goals and scepticism among partners (Kanter, 1999, p. 126) or the fact that its implementation can occur on the partnership and the organisational level (Clarke & Fuller, 2010, p. 85; Seitanidi & Crane, 2009). Still, bringing together individuals from different backgrounds is a great opportunity for organisational learning although the potential of knowledge creation that collaboration offers has not been sufficiently explored (Bartsch, Ebers, & Maurer, 2013, p. 239).

Project management is a relevant consideration in that respect because CSCs and projects have similar characteristics. A project is characterised by its temporary nature, unique goals, restricted resources, outlasted by its impact and effect a change (Project Management Institute, 2013). Likewise, CSCs exist for a distinct time period, can be unique, act as change mechanism and the partners have a joint goal ideally with complementary resources (Gray, 1989, p. 29; Seitanidi et al., 2010).
Given this, it is not surprising that projects are mentioned in CSSP literature. However, scholars merely refer to roles such as the project director as a leadership position (Bryson et al., 2006, p. 47), project types like environmental projects (Rondinelli & London, 2003, p. 62) or the existence of projects in social alliances (Sakarya, Bodur, Yıldırım-Öktem, & Selekler-Göksen, 2012, p. 1713) without further discussion on their management (Googins & Rochlin, 2000, p. 136; Selsky & Parker, 2010). Solely in one instance in the reviewed literature, project management was discussed in CSSP case studies in the African context (Rein & Stott, 2009). Moreover, only Selsky and Parker (2005, p. 849) explicitly discussed ‘project-based cross sector partnerships to address social issues’. Consequently, the focus of this thesis work on project management in the evolving area of collaboration between PSOs and TSOs in the form of CSSPs is justified.

As project management and CSSPs are both broad fields, it is imperative to further narrow the scope of this research. The formation of CSSPs is particularly paid attention to which hence leads to the exclusion of aspects relating to implementation and outcomes of CSSPs (Selsky & Parker, 2005, p. 854) or other phases in the project lifecycle (Ward & Chapman, 1995, p.145). This focus is based on the exchanges with experts and practitioners as well as the consultation of literature. It is at the early phases when the ability to influence the unfolding of the project is the greatest but also the likelihood of goal conflict between the future partners (Aaltonen & Kujala, 2010, p. 387). Furthermore, strategic decisions guiding the collaboration are made and subsequent decisions are based on them. However, at this phase the uncertainty is the highest and decreases as the project goes on which makes the formation phase critical (Project Management Institute, 2013, p. 40). Although project management and CSC literature emphasise the importance of the formation phase, they differ in the conceptualisation of it. Furthermore, project management itself covers a wide range of concepts applicable to the formation phase which warrants further narrowing of the scope. This thesis study pays particular attention to knowledge management at the beginning of the collaboration, as CSCs are not only great learning opportunities the partners but knowledge transfer and integration are more intense in collaborative settings (Bhandar, 2010).

Despite the growing number of CSSPs in practice and in the literature, it is not much known how project management is deployed in this context. It could be that great opportunities to enhance the partnership performance are missed because of lacking knowledge concerning appropriate project management concepts. Therefore, this thesis study sets out advance knowledge on this phenomenon. Furthermore, CSSPs occur in various countries and are impacted by different contextual factors (Googins & Rochlin, 2000, p. 142; Sakarya et al., 2012, p. 1718). This is why “a more informed understanding of the contextual reality in which partnerships operate is crucial” (Rein & Stott, 2009, p. 87). Consequently, awareness and careful consideration of contextual elements is a prerequisite to analysing CSSPs.
1.1. Research objectives

The prime research objective of this thesis work is to explore, describe and analyse the context and use of project management in the formation phase of CSSPs. To structure the research, the aforementioned prime research objective is broken down into three objectives.

1. Examine the role of contextual aspects in the formation of cross-sector social-oriented partnerships

The internal and external driving and restraining factors are contextual elements that impact on CSSPs. This objective sets out to generate understanding on the relationship between these elements, such as motivations and challenges or prior experience in CSC, and the deployment of project management in CSSPs. This objective is achieved by deploying a comparative case study strategy as well as a two-stage analysis procedure.

2. Outline the structure and distinct boundaries of the formation phase in cross-sector social-oriented partnerships

In light of the absence of an overarching understanding within and across the reviewed literature, this objective seeks to conceptualise the analytical focus in this thesis work, namely the early phases of CSSPs. The objective is achieved by analysing and discussing the theoretical conceptions and the collected empirical data.

3. Identify management responsibilities in the formation of cross-sector social-oriented partnerships

This objective sets out to recognise project management responsibilities with particular focus on the deployment of project management concepts and knowledge management. The objective is attained by identifying the respective responsibilities in the collected data and by discussing these critically with the literature. As it is aimed to generate a holistic understanding on the responsibilities, the organisational and the partnership level are considered.

1.2. Research question

The following research question was defined as the central focus of this thesis research:

How is project management deployed during the formation of cross-sector social-oriented partnerships between private sector organisations and third sector organisations?

To be able to answer this question, the aforementioned research objectives are the guiding elements for an exploratory study which is conducted to advance the knowledge on this phenomenon as the topic is recent and it is not much known about it which necessitates ‘to discover what is happening’ (Creswell, 2003, p. 22; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012, p. 171; Sekaran, 1992, p. 95). An exploratory study is highly relevant as CSSPs have not been researched from the project management perspective in Europe. A descriptive study would have been appropriate if there were prior knowledge on the characteristics of how project management is deployed in the chosen context so as to ascertain or describe this (Sekaran, 1992, pp. 96, 99). Similarly, a hypothesis-testing, or ‘explanatory’ study (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 172), was not found to be suitable because it is appropriate when the study aims to explain the nature of relationships or the dependence of factors (Sekaran, 1992, p. 98) which is not the case in this thesis work.
1.3. Research focus

The proposed study focuses on four CSSPs in Europe so as to explore the use of project management in the formation phase. The selected CSSPs consist of the PSO and TSO viewpoints and are set in different country-contexts. Their findings are triangulated with two individual perspectives so as to confirm, challenge or extend them. A prerequisite for this research focus was the explicit exclusion of the following concepts and aspects which we acknowledge to play an essential role in CSCs and project management. Firstly, aspects which materialise primarily at later stages in the CSC process were considered out of scope. These are, for example, ‘success, governance and accountability mechanisms, review mechanisms, assessment of outputs and outcomes (Bryson et al., 2006; Rein & Stott, 2009, pp. 82, 85–86). Secondly, CSSPs which are not set in Europe were excluded to allow for comparability between the case studies and to allow for a more direct collection of data. Thirdly, the knowledge areas in the Project Management Book of Knowledge (PMBoK) were selectively considered. As knowledge management is not a distinct knowledge area, we seize the opportunity to address this aspect owing to its importance in collaborative settings (Maurer, 2010).

1.4. Significance of the study

From the theoretical as well as the practical perspective, there is a lack of understanding in the formation of CSC involving TSOs and PSOs. In the reviewed literature, it is stressed that “it would be relevant to gain a better knowledge of their [multi-stakeholder cooperatives] set-up and development conditions” (Noya, 2009, p. 265). This is in line with practitioners’ viewpoints. For example, in an informal talk with a social enterprise networking organisation in the United Kingdom (UK) a manager raised concern over the existence of barriers which prevent the formation of CSSPs. In addition, a review of this year’s issues of the International Journal of Project Management regarding ‘partnerships’ revealed that PPPs were the most frequently researched CSCs. The Journal of Business Ethics publishes articles relating to this field. A special issue on “Cross-sector Social Interactions” in July 2010 featured 15 articles of leading researchers in this field. Thus, we would like to tap into a related but innovative field by advancing the understanding of the intersection of the private with the third sector.

To get a holistic understanding of the research context, we find it imperative to investigate both partners and their respective perspectives on the partnership because most research on CSSPs was found to focus on the analysis of one side of the partnership with emphasis on the corporate perspective (Berger, Cunningham, & Drumwright, 2004, p. 59; Holmes & Smart, 2009; Leisinger, 2007). Our approach is in line with a few scholars in the literature (Austin, 2000; Rondinelli & London, 2003, p. 64; Seitanidi & Crane, 2009). Consequently, this approach, the focus on the formation of CSSPs with a project-management perspective and the European context are, to our understanding, fairly innovative.
1.5. Relevant definitions

**Cross-sector collaboration**
The umbrella term cross-sector collaboration (CSC) is defined as the "linking or sharing of information, resources, activities, and capabilities by organisations in two or more sectors to achieve jointly an outcome that could not be achieved by organisations in one sector separately" (Bryson et al., 2006, p. 44). It comprises collaborative efforts across the three economic and institutional sectors in society. The terms ‘partnerships’ and ‘alliances’ are primarily used in the literature to refer to the vehicles that mediate between organisations from different sectors (Bryson et al., 2006; Googins & Rochlin, 2000, p. 127; Rein & Stott, 2009; Selsky & Parker, 2005, p. 849; Waddock, 1988).

**Cross-sector social-oriented partnership**
Collaborations between PSOs and TSOs are referred to as cross-sector social-oriented partnership (CSSP) in this thesis work. The term was coined by Selsky and Parker (2005, p. 850) who define it as “cross-sector projects formed explicitly to address social issues and causes [such as economic development, education, health care, poverty alleviation, community capacity building, and environmental sustainability] that actively engage the partners on an on-going basis”. CSSPs are structured as process, combining the resources and capabilities of organisations across sectors thereby addressing social or environmental problems too complex to be tackled by the actions of single an organisation (Bryson et al., 2006; Gray & Wood, 1991, p. 4; Seitanidi & Crane, 2009; Seitanidi, 2008, p. 52; Vurro et al., 2010, p. 43; Waddock, 1988).

**Private sector organisation**
An organisation in the private sector is referred to as “private sector organisation” (PSO) in this thesis work. In the private sector, companies, enterprises and businesses aim to meet needs through the provision of products and services. Based on the principles of market capitalism, the focus is to maximise shareholder returns, leading to competition, the strive for individual gains and a profit-orientation (Pearce, 2003).

**Third sector organisation**
An organisation in the third sector is referred to as “third sector organisation” (TSO) in this thesis work. The third sector includes all, economically active and non-active, civil society organisations (Birkhölzer, 2005, p. 4; Googins & Rochlin, 2000, p. 127; Pearce, 2003, p. 24; Ridley-Duff, 2008). Based on the distinction of the non-profit sector and the social economy within the third sector (Defourny, 2001, p. 1), it becomes clear that, for example, not-for-profit organisations and social enterprises belong to the umbrella of TSOs.

**Project Management**
Project management is the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to project activities to meet project requirements (Project Management Institute, 2013, p. 5). This definition provides the basis to tackle the research question in this thesis work.

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1 For more information see Appendix 1: Additional terminologies
Project
The thesis work follows the project definition of the latest PMBoK: “a project is a temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product, service or result” (Project Management Institute, 2013, p. 3). In addition, the aspect of value creation is acknowledged in the definition provided by the Project Management Association of Japan (2005, p. 15) which refers to it as a ‘value creation undertaking’.

Project formation
Project formation in the project management literature consists of the ‘initiation process’ and the ‘planning process’. The former facilitates the formal authorisation to start a new project and the latter comprises the development of the project management plan (Project Management Institute, 2013, pp. 27, 424).

1.6. Architecture of the study
The above sections in the introduction provided an overview of this thesis work, identified the research gaps that it attempts to cover, clarified the research question and objectives, justified the study and introduced relevant terms.

In the following chapter – literature review – the literatures on CSC and project management are revisited as well as a frame of reference developed. While the first two parts will discuss both fields separately, the concluding section will merge the two apparently unconnected fields, CSC and project management by identifying three overarching themes: collaborative context, the CSSP formation phase and collaborative management. This will offer new insights due to the combination of viewpoints and joint analysis of the two streams of research.

Chapter three – research methodology – will outline the assumptions and motivations that influenced us in conducting the research. It will also elucidate the research philosophy and approach that further determine the empirical methodology, hence the choices that we made in terms of research design, method of data collection and analysis and will elucidate the ethical considerations that guided our research.

The fourth chapter – presentation of empirical data – will introduce and provide an overview of the collected data; by presenting the CSSPs and the organisations involved.

Chapter five – data analysis – will then consist of a two-stage analysis process. First, the collected data from the CSSP case studies will be compared across the cases, by identifying similarities and differences as well as emerging categories. Second, the findings from the first analysis level will be confirmed, challenged or extended with the views of two experts in the field of CSSPs.

In chapter six – discussion – the findings from the analysis of empirical data will be addressed with the frame of reference from the literature review.

Chapter seven – conclusions – will summarise the findings from the discussion thereby answering the research question. In addition, the validity and reliability, strengths and limitations of the research, theoretical and practical recommendation will be provided and we will conclude with the future research potential on this topic.
2. Literature review

To inform the research work, publications were reviewed from the project management and CSC literature with an emphasis on the formation of cross-sector social-oriented partnerships CSSPs. As CSC, namely CSSPs, are the chosen research context, the literature in this field is discussed first (section 2.1.), so as to set the stage for the review of relevant project management literature (section 2.2.). The resulting frame of reference for the empirical research (section 2.3.), is novel, merging of these two previously separate literature fields and reflects the research objectives in this thesis work.

2.1. Cross-sector collaboration

Based on the aforementioned definitions of ‘collaboration’, ‘cross-sector collaboration’ and ‘cross-sector social-oriented partnerships’

2, this section presents the literature in this field with particular emphasis on the underlying theories, driving factors for CSC and the different process conceptions and structural considerations and concludes by considering contextual aspects and project management in the CSC literature.

2.1.1. Introduction to cross-sector collaboration

Collaboration can occur in two inherently different forms; organisations can either look within the same sector (intra-sector collaboration) or in other sectors (inter-sector or cross-sector collaboration) for others to collaborate with (Rondinelli & London, 2003, p. 74). Given the rising numbers of publications and collaborative engagements, the importance of CSCs is increasing in practice and in literature which is expected to continue in the future (Austin, 2000, p. 70; Logsdon, 1991, p. 23). Consequently, understanding the basic anchors, such as the economic and institutional sectors and the theories which inform this field, is subject of discussion in the following paragraphs.

The conceptualisation of the institutional and economic environment is essential; however, there is no overarching alignment between scholars resulting in a plethora of differing terms. This is not surprising given “the definition of ‘sector’ is by no means simple and merits discussion” (McDonald, Powell Davies, Jayasuriya, & Fort Harris, 2011, p. 130). The most common terminology is private, public and third sector (Billis, 2010; Defourny, 2001) and is therefore also used in this thesis work. However, Pearce (2003) utilises first, second and third system, Billis (1993) business and government bureaucracy, and voluntary association and others business, government and civil society sector (Googins & Rochlin, 2000, p. 131; Selsky & Parker, 2005, p. 849; Waddell & Brown, 1997, p. 1). Besides these selected terminologies to exemplify their inconsistent use, more important is the understanding of what actually distinguishes these three institutional and economic sectors. Recognizing sectoral differences and subsequently allocating organisations and institutions to the respective sector is important because organisations’ characteristics tend to be the same within and differ largely across sector boundaries which has implications how to manage collaborations successfully (Rondinelli & London, 2003, p. 63). This has been confirmed by others who note that sectors are different and tend not to understand each other (Googins & Rochlin, 2000, p. 135; Selsky & Parker, 2005, p. 851), resulting in the ‘partnering challenge’ which is to overcome the differences and leverage the advantages that arise (Austin, 2010, p. 13).

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2 Additional definitions can be found in appendix 1
Sector boundaries become clearer by discussing their differences according to four aspects - values, actors, characteristics and focus. The following explanation is based on Pearce (2003, pp. 24–26) who elaborated on this the most holistically and comprehensively in the reviewed literature. Companies, enterprises and businesses are the actors in the private sector, whereas government institutions on the local and state level are in the public sector and citizens, NGOs and social enterprises in the third sector. The private sector is based on market capitalism so as to maximise shareholder returns whereas the principle of the public sector is to provide public services by democratically elected institutions. Mutuality is characterising in the third sector together with an attitude towards collaborating whereas profit-orientation drives competition in the private sector and a rather bureaucratic and democratic or paternalistic structure characterises the public sector. The focus of the latter is redistribution and planning contrary to the private and third sector whose focus is to meet needs. In case of the former, the needs are met through the provision of products and services, in the latter social needs are met by caring for others.

The generated understanding of the different institutional and economic sectors enables the distinction in different types of CSCs. As stated in the introduction, CSCs can occur in four arenas which the following figure, based on Selsky and Parker 2005, illustrates.

![Figure 1. Conceptualisation of the four types of CSCs](image)

The above figure allows for the identification of four types of CSCs: private-third (arena 1), public-private (arena 2), or PPPs (Sandstrom & Ylinenpaa, 2012), public-third (arena 3), and trisector (arena 4), or ‘tripartite’ (Seitanidi & Crane, 2009), involving actors from all three sectors. The research focus in this thesis work is arena 1, CSSPs between PSOs and TSOs. Although the CSSP definition (see 1.5.) clarified the use of terms in this thesis work, it has to be acknowledged that CSSP terminology varies in the CSC literatures; authors refer to social partnerships (Waddock, 1991), social alliances (Berger et al., 2004; Jamali et al., 2011; Sakarya et al., 2012), cross-sector social partnerships (Seitanidi, 2008), firm-non-profit engagements (Holmes & Smart, 2009), NPO-BUS partnerships (Seitanidi, 2010) in the reviewed literature. The reason for this wide range of terminologies is that CSSPs focus on areas such as social issues and causes, particularly on initiatives concerning environmental issues, education, healthcare, childcare, equity, public safety, housing, employment training for the disadvantaged, arts and community and economic development (Googins & Rochlin, 2000, p. 127; Selsky & Parker, 2005, p. 854; Waddock, 1988, p. 19).

Note: this distinction was also deployed when defining private and third sector (see 1.5.); the figure ‘Overview of the economy in societal sectors and actors’ in appendix 1 supports this description.
Likewise, research on CSCs and CSSPs is multidisciplinary; informed by various theories in differing research fields with a multitude of research perspectives (Rethemeyer & Moon, 2005; Selsky & Parker, 2005, p. 850). As early as 1989, Gray (1989, p. 244) identified the need for a dynamic, process-oriented theory of interorganisational relations (IOR). Shortly after, Gray and Wood (1991, p. 19) stressed that a theory of collaboration can only be informed by multiple theoretical perspectives and outlined it as an own theoretical approach grounded in a new field of study in the management sciences. In recent years, attention to CSSPs has been steadily growing in the IOR literature (Clarke & Fuller, 2010, p. 85; Selsky & Parker, 2005) which gives rise to the discussion of the theories which inform this field.

In organisational research, resource exchange and resource dependency theories as well as institutional theory and transaction cost theory are mostly referred to in the context of CSCs. These theories point out the advantages of engaging in CSC by discussing driving factors, such as resource availability, and thus less need to compete (Gazley & Brudney, 2007, p. 411; Sakarya et al., 2012, p. 1712). In terms of transaction cost theory, Gazley and Brudney (2007, p. 393) note critically that this theory is primarily used in a positive sense, showing how CSC increases resources and reduces transaction costs rather than also discussing resource demands owing to the decision to collaborate. In management research, Selsky and Parker (2005, pp. 853, 865) distinguish two so-called ‘platforms’, resource-dependence and social-issue. According to their argument, both platforms “derive from a substitution logic, in which organisations seek access to a social issue and mobilise resources to address it in a partnership project” (Selsky & Parker, 2005, p. 867). In a very recent publication, organisation theory was deployed to introduce two modes, ‘complete’ and ‘partial’, for corporate social responsibility (CSR) in PSOs (Rasche, Bakker, & Moon, 2013, p. 651). In the latter, CSSPs were discussed as means for partial organisation for CSR (ibid).

Also theories on organisational behaviour and change were found applicable in CSCs. The former explains behaviour and policy decisions which are relevant to understand when considering membership of organisations to sectoral contexts (Gazley & Brudney, 2007, p. 809). The latter is applied for example to manage resistance to changes in practices which can be a result of CSSPs (Gray, 1989, p. 247). On a rather critical note, there is also a potential conflict of approaches in the use of theories. This creates an overall problematic situation because while the rather theoretically grounded research tends to focus on structural variables it neglects three critical components of CSC: the on-going process dimension, the dynamic nature of development and the unique strengths and weaknesses of partners (Bryson et al., 2006, p. 52). Also, Gazley and Brudney (2007, p. 392) find a rather normative notion in literature on inter-organisational collaboration by establishing cooperation as a goal in itself.

In the reviewed literature, CSSPs have been studied particularly in combination with other fields such as strategic management theory (Clarke & Fuller, 2010), network theory (Jiang & Cai, 2011; Sandstrom & Ylinenpaa, 2012), risk management (Jiang & Cai, 2011), innovation theory (Jamali et al., 2011; Sandstrom & Ylinenpaa, 2012) and the consideration of governance of CSSPs (Rivera-Santos & Rufín, 2010).
2.1.2. Why cross-sector collaboration has gained momentum

CSCs exist for the creation of value; the creation of public value and shared value. The former materialises in opportunities for disadvantaged or weak in society or the improvements of social services or public goods (Rein & Stott, 2009, p. 86). The latter occurs in the form of resource transfer, exchange of knowledge and core competences by creating joint value (Sakarya et al., 2012, p. 1712). Joint value, also referred to as ‘shared value’, was first mentioned as concept by Austin (2000). The identification of complementary resources is a prerequisite so as to use a partner’s strengths and to overcome, minimise or compensate weaknesses (Bryson et al., 2006, p. 51; Googins & Rochlin, 2000).

In the reviewed literature, CSCs were either referred to as ‘collaborative problem solving’ entity (Gray, 1985, p. 911) or creating ‘collaborative advantage’ (Huxham, 1993). The former reflects the notion that CSCs emerge in case of ‘sector failure’, particularly market or government failure, or during crises (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2006; Bryson et al., 2006, p. 46; Gray, 1985, p. 912) whereas the latter takes on a rather positive notion by emphasising the possibility for value creation and the achievement of outcomes. For example, change can be an outcome of CSCs as they are seen as ‘a new paradigm for innovation’ which results in sustainable change for both partners (Kanter, 1999, p. 124; Seitanidi, 2010, p. 27). Probably because of these notions, collaboration literature tends to emphasise positive stories, portraying partnerships as ‘magic bullet’ to create aforementioned win-win situations for all stakeholders (Googins & Rochlin, 2000, pp. 132–133; Rein & Stott, 2009, p. 80). These have created the impression that they are a panacea (Bryson et al., 2006) or holy grail (Austin, 2000, p. 45) resulting in a ‘partnership boom’ (Zadek, 2001, p. 23) or the proclamation that partnership is ‘the mantra for the new millennium’ (Tennyson, 1998). Consequently, the seemingly positive aspects and apparent advantages encourage organisations rush into partnerships, or push their partners into directions, whereby they might overlook negative effects, disadvantages or poor partner choices in the first place which can doom partnerships to fail before they have even started (Seitanidi et al., 2010, p. 141; Waddock, 1988, p. 22).

As raised in the introduction, CSSPs might not always be the best choice in the first place (Bryson et al., 2006, p. 52). This is because TSOs and PSOs are inherently different and used to be adversely focused, leading Rondinelli and London (2003, p.63) to ask “why are some of them now seeing benefits from ‘sleeping with the enemy’?”. This provocative reference can be traced back to Waddock (1988, p.18) who notes ‘unlikely bedfellows’ in light of changing circumstances that cause organisations from different sectors to become ‘odd couples’ (Rivera-Santos & Rufin, 2010). In fact, there are advantages and disadvantages (Gazley & Brudney, 2007, p. 411): to collaborate always means an investment, in terms of time and cost (Birkhölzer, Lorenz, & Schillat, 2005, p. 11; Gray, 1989, p. 73; McDonald et al., 2011) as well as the consideration of implications of collaborating for reputation and public image (Rondinelli & London, 2003, p. 65). Moreover, collaborations have to be managed in spite of their inherent dynamic, obstacles such as people’s resistance to change in practices (Gray, 1989, p. 247) and complexity (Rein & Stott, 2009, p. 85). Also, a discrepancy has been noted between the reality and aspirations leading to an absence of ‘walking the talk’, meaning that rhetoric tends to outpace reality (Googins & Rochlin, 2000, p. 131).
2.1.3. Phases and stages of cross-sector collaborations

Based on the provided background, structural considerations of CSCs in the reviewed literature are introduced. This is relevant because CSCs are multifaceted and not static; hence they evolve depending on partnership characteristics and can exist in different stages (Austin, 2000, p. 92; Rein & Stott, 2009, p. 87). Stages and their respective characteristics determine the type of relationship and enable partners to identify the respective commitment needed so as to achieve their objectives (Googins & Rochlin, 2000, p. 140). In the reviewed literature, several three-stage continuums are proposed as conceptual frameworks to categorise partnerships: reciprocal exchange, developmental value creation, symbiotic value (Reed, 1998, cited in Googins and Rochlin, 2000, p. 138), resource sharing, joint ventures, strategic alliances (Kearns, 2000, pp. 243–246) and arm’s-length relationships, interactive collaborations, intensive management alliances (Rondinelli & London, 2003, pp. 66–67). In addition, Austin (2000, pp. 71–73) proposes a collaboration continuum by categorizing different types of partnerships through the evolution of three principal stages: philanthropic, transactional, and integrative. According to distinct characteristics in each stage, Austin’s (2000, p. 72) continuum aims to assist CSCs in assessing the necessary changes in resources, processes and attitude so as to move along the stages in the continuum.

In the reviewed literature a multitude of propositions for CSC process structures and phases was found which are discussed according to their chronological inception. At the beginning of the 1980’s, McCann (1983) and Gray (1985) were the first to propose collaborative process models which Waddock (1988) built upon by focusing particularly on CSSPs. The reason for these early developments were increasingly turbulent and complex environments for organisations across sectors against which cooperation and CSCs were deployed to cope with these changing circumstances (Gray & Wood, 1991, p. 3; Waddock, 1988, p. 18). In contrast to Waddock (1988, p. 23) who provided guidelines for implementation, Hood et al. (1993) aimed for general applicability of their process in CSCs and lacked an implementation stage (Clarke & Fuller, 2010, p. 87). In 1997, Waddell and Brown (1997) as well as Westley and Vredenburg (1997) concurrently proposed collaborative process models. The one of Waddell and Brown (1997) consisted of five phases: identifying preconditions, convening partners and define problem, setting shared directions, implementing action strategy and institutionalisation. In contrast, Westley and Vredenburg (1997, pp. 383–384) outlined three distinct phases; problem setting, direction setting and structuring. Furthermore, while Rein and Stott (2009, pp. 80, 87) briefly stress that CSSPs move along five phases (scoping, initiating, implementing, consolidating and sustaining/terminating), Bryson et al. (2006, p. 45), categorise the design and implementation of CSCs into five main areas (initial conditions, structure and governance, process, contingencies and constraints, and outcomes and accountabilities). In terms of implementation explicitly, Seitanidi and Crane (2009, p. 415) state that in the case of CSSPs this happens in three stages: selection, design, and institutionalisation. Their model is further endowed with sub-processes showing micro-processes and thereby focussing on details, whereas a distinction between implementation on the organisational and collaborative level as well as discussing outcomes was omitted. This, however, is what Clarke and Fuller (2010) addressed in their conceptual model of collaborative strategic management. The latter will be further elaborated because it is included in the review of selected CSC and project management process models (see 2.3.1.).
The chronological outline of the process propositions in the CSC literature makes clear that a comparative assessment of different models is essential for this thesis work because there is no overarching conceptual agreement on the CSC process. A similar problem occurs when examining the steps and activities so as to get a holistic and in-depth understanding of partnerships (Googins & Rochlin, 2000, p. 142; Seitanidi, 2010, p. 25). Notwithstanding this difficulty, it is imperative to outline the proposed activities and steps in the reviewed literature so as to identify distinct boundaries in terms of activities that belong to respective phases and thus conceptualise the CSC phases. At the beginning of a CSC, the activities and steps, also referred to as ‘prerequisites for success’ (Westley & Vredenburg, 1997, p. 382), range from the need to assess organisational characteristics such as similarities, commonalities and compatibilities (Seitanidi, 2010, p. 141) to identify and define the problem, make a joint commitment to collaborate, identify and legitimise critical stakeholders, find an appropriate convenor, and identify initial resources (Westley & Vredenburg, 1997, p. 382). Also the decision is made to collaborate in the first place which determines whether a partner will be selected or early corrective plans are set in place in some partnerships as a form of risk management so as to avoid wasting resources (Seitanidi et al., 2010, p. 140).

There is agreement among scholars that a ‘tacit process’ exists before the formal existence of a relationship (Koppenjan, 2005; Seitanidi et al., 2010). However, there are differences in how this informal phase is conceptualised. While Koppenjan (2005, p. 138) describes this pre-phase as an ‘interactive negotiation and assessment process’ in which the partners define and agree upon governing arrangements for the partnership, Seitanidi (2010, p. 36) defines this as a ‘formation phase’ itself in which partners are not yet identified. In a different publication, Seitanidi (2010, p. 140) even highlights the problem that “partnership formation and selection can be meshed into the same stage” criticising the explicit, but more often implicit, assumption of scholars that during formation partner selection is taking place.

2.1.4. Cultural context and project management in cross-sector collaborations

An inconsistent use of terminology, as previously mentioned, is a challenge in CSCs which can be better understood when acknowledging that CSCs occur across differing cultural contexts (Googins & Rochlin, 2000, p. 142; Sakarya et al., 2012, p. 1718). For example, American ideology supports deregulation and privatisation and thus CSCs are driven based on the assumption that the government is insufficiently effective on its own (Bryson et al., 2006, p. 44). Also philanthropy is either seen as ‘dumping ground for spare cash’ (Kanter, 1999, p. 123) or as source of competitive advantage (Porter & Kramer, 2002, p. 57). These notions differ in Europe and it has been recently argued that CSSPs have become the successor of purely corporate philanthropic donations (Seitanidi, 2010, p. 23). A suggestion by the president of the European Commission, Jacques Santer, to deploy and support local and regional partnerships in order to tackle unemployment and social exclusion led to an increasing number of CSCs in the European Union since 1997 (Birkhölzer et al., 2005, p. 2). In fact, Googins and Rochlin (2000, p. 129) note the emergence of a trend on the national and international level, suggesting that societal organisation has reached a new stage. However, not only global and national levels are relevant but also the local level at which they are taking place. Birkhölzer et al. (2001; 2005) focused not only on the European context but also on the local level, arguing that the formation of local partnerships has become increasingly relevant in programmes in the European Union and national governments as CSSPs are becoming prerequisites for the implementation of desired projects.
Similarly Tracey et al. (2005, p. 328) emphasise the holistic local impact of community enterprises in which various organisations are engaged across many initiatives in order to work towards holistic local regeneration.

As the introduction briefly outlined, the management of CSSPs is challenging and complex, yet management responsibilities are largely unclear in the CSC literature. Although, it is noted that measuring, monitoring, and reviewing performance throughout the life of the partnership is more challenging in CSCs (Rondinelli & London, 2003, p. 71). Notwithstanding this, project management and CSC have similar characteristics but the latter is not explicitly discussed except for one instance in the reviewed CSC literature. Rein and Stott (2009, p. 83) analysed partnerships in the African context and mention in their analysis one case with a distinction between the project and the partnership which was reflected in two respective management structures whereas in another case, the partnership and the project converged and the management structures overlapped. They also found that, in one case, management of partnership and finances was done by a broker whereas the project management was done by the public sector partner (Rein & Stott, 2009, p. 83). In addition, Selsky and Parker (2010) use three analytic platforms, which they had developed five years prior, as 'sense making devices' in partnerships for project managers (Selsky and Parker, 2005). This use of an older concept, distinctly targeted to project managers, could imply that the consideration of projects in CSSPs is gaining momentum in CSC literature which would further underline the need for this thesis study.

2.2. Project management

The previous section reviewed the CSC literature and found that projects are means how CSCs are conducted. However, as the introduction revealed, it is unclear how these projects are managed. This also means that project management has not received sufficient attention in this context which warrants the necessity of this thesis work that aims to generate understanding of how project management is deployed in the formation of CSSPs.

Due to increased competition and dynamic environments, delivering successful projects has become a business imperative and many organisations have rethought their organisational structure to adapt for project delivery. This phenomenon is referred to as ‘projectification’ in project management literature (Aubry & Lenflè, 2012). Projectification was found to be appropriate to manage product and service complexity, dynamic markets, cross-functional business expertise, innovation, as well as uncertainty (Hobday, 2000, p. 871). This development to become project-based necessitates organisational transformation and the establishment of project management structures. To support this, the Project Management Institute (2013, p.60) identified ten knowledge areas in project management concerning integration, scope, time, cost, quality, human resources, communications, risk, procurement and stakeholder management. Although knowledge management is not defined as distinct knowledge area, projects are also a means of capturing knowledge and contribute to collective learning (Yeong, Lim, & Systems, 2011, p. 16). Consequently, knowledge management appears to be particularly suitable to be investigated in this thesis work and is discussed in the third sub-section. Preceded by the discussion of the project lifecycle and project formation.
2.2.1. The project lifecycle

In the project management literature, projects are structured in processes or in phases of the project lifecycle. It was found that the concept of process is similar to the phases in the project lifecycle and thus can be used interchangeably (Yeong et al., 2011, p. 16). The first to introduce organisational processes was Henri Fayol, by identifying five processes: plan, organise, command, coordinate and control (Wren, 1990, p. 138). Concerning projects, Adams and Barnd (1988, p. 210) outlined four project phases: conceptualisation, planning, execution and termination. This drew upon the work of Thamhaim and Wilemon (1975, p. 31) who defined: formation, build-up, main programme and phase-out. More recently, the Project Management Institute (2013, p. 49) identified: initiating, planning, executing, monitoring and control and closing, as five processes in project management. They are defined according to several aspects, such as the level of resources employed, the level of conflict, uncertainty or rate of expenditure (Ward & Chapman, 1995, p. 145).

The project management literature approaches the lifecycle from different contexts, such as risk management (Ward & Chapman, 1995) or stakeholders’ management (Aaltonen & Kujala, 2010). Ward and Chapman (1995) identified risk management as a project concept that needs to be addressed as early as possible in the project lifecycle, before the major resources are employed. However, this is challenging because at this early level uncertainty is at the highest level and hence, the possibility of assessing risks is at the minimum. The same situation occurs in the evolution of stakeholders’ impact over the lifecycle of a project. Stakeholders have a high impact at the early phases, when they can influence the purpose of the project, but as the execution starts, decisions already made can hardly be changed (Aaltonen & Kujala, 2010, p. 387). Furthermore, each of these stages can be seen differently depending on the respective stakeholder perspective, such as the moment when each stakeholder becomes involved. This occurs, for example, in contracting. The stage that the client calls ‘allocation’ is regarded by the contractor as the ‘concept’, ‘design’, ‘plan’ and ‘allocation’ stages. This is because of two reasons: the contractor joins the project later and second, the contractor has a greater responsibility for design. While the client moves quickly through the conceptualisation and planning stages, the contractor is responsible for more detailed work corresponding to these phases (Ward & Chapman, 1995). The same situation occurs in CSCs, as some scholars note that the initiative of a partnership can emerge at any stage of the project, not necessarily during the exploratory and planning phases (Clarke & Fuller, 2010, p. 88; Koppenjan, 2005).

In spite of the many typologies of project phases that the literature offers, in certain types of projects, such as in product development, the project lifecycle can be represented as a series of spiral of activities, where spiral represents sequential consideration of the aforementioned dimensions (Ward & Chapman, 1995, p. 148). Notwithstanding this diversity, it is important to outline the main stages of it; so as to generate understanding of the importance and role of the project early stages. To exemplify this, the following figure depicts the four stages of the project lifecycle according to Ward and Chapman (1995).
Figure 2. The four stages in the project lifecycle

At the *concept stage* the deliverables are identified and the benefits to be expected from these deliverables (Ward & Chapman, 1995, p. 145). At this stage, more stakeholders may become involved and the project can be supported either actively (through providing resources or expertise) or passively (by approving the project). Most of the literature, suggests that the decision whether to continue (go) or to cease (no-go) is made at this stage (Aaltonen & Kujala, 2010, p. 386; Kähkönen, 1999, p. 199). The ‘planning stage’ follows which includes three sub-stages: design, plan and allocation (Ward & Chapman, 1995, p. 146). Provided that the decision was made to continue, the project moves in the design phase in which the deliverables, as well as the performance criteria and project objectives are defined. During the definition of projects, conflict may arise, particularly in CSCs where organisations come from different sectors and consequently have different preconceptions about the purpose of the project (Googins & Rochlin, 2000; Selsky & Parker, 2005; Verma, 1998). Then, another go/no-go/maybe decision is made, depending on the outcome of the design development, design evaluation and whether fundamental challenges are identified, which have not been found in the conceptualisation phase. The decision to continue leads to the development of a base plan on how the project will be executed (Ward & Chapman, 1995, p. 147). Targets and milestones are set at this point and an increasing number of stakeholders become involved and consequently need to be considered by the project team (Aaltonen & Kujala, 2010, p. 386). After the plan is evaluated, the project may go further to the allocation phase, where decisions about the project organisation and allocation of responsibilities are taken and implicitly or explicitly, distribution of risks among participants. The literature suggests that this can influence the behaviour of participants and hence, the impact that various stakeholders have on the project (Aaltonen & Kujala, 2010, p. 386; Ward & Chapman, 1995, p. 146). Despite the interdependence and constant iteration of the sub-phases within the planning phase, a separation is still possible, as each sub-stage has its own processes and deliverables. As the project reaches the ‘execution stage’, the order-of-magnitude in terms of effort increases (cost and staff involved). In the ‘termination phase’, the commissioning and handover are performed and the main risk that can be incurred is that the final product or service actually does not meet the expectations of customers or other main stakeholders. Any risks at the termination phase are the result of earlier unmanaged risks (Ward & Chapman, 1995, p. 147).

In practice, all phases and particularly the early stages, are planned and executed taking into consideration multiple dimensions – financial, physical scope, functionality, technology, location, timing and environment. Having elucidated the project lifecycle, the next sub-section explores project formation in particular.
2.2.2. Project formation

In the project management literature, topics such as project success, strategy, stakeholders and lifecycle considerations are prevalent whereas the early project phases have not received as much attention. This is despite the fact that scholars acknowledge their importance (Gibson & Gebken, 2003, p. 348; Zhang & Doll, 2001, p. 95). To address this, the following section presents an overview of the relevant literature on project early phases. This will complement the previous discussion of the project lifecycle by focusing on the front-end of projects. Firstly, the different terminologies will be revised. Secondly, the factors that impact the early phases of projects are presented and the last part of this sub-section explores the tools and suggestions provided by the scholars to improve the performance of this stage.

The early phases in a project are important as, for example, 80% of a product in a product development project is specified at this point (Whelton, Ballard, & Tommelein, 2002). However, most projects fail in the early phases (Zhang & Doll, 2001, p. 95) and poor project definition is a major cause for this early project failure (Gibson & Gebken, 2003, p. 348). Because of this, increased attention is paid to the criticality of the formation phase in the successful implementation and performance of projects. Moreover, Zhang and Doll (2001) argue that the front end of projects is ‘fuzzy’ and that managers need to deal with a high degree of uncertainty at this stage. In this context, Bryson and Bromiley (1993) examine the critical factors that can affect the process of project planning and identify the context as a major determinant, defining it as the project characteristics upon which the project team has little or no control (Bryson & Bromiley, 1993, p. 320). The context will be used as a basis of comparison for the different case studies. The literature provides different terminology and typologies for the early phases of a project. Crawford et al. (2006, cited in Cano and Lidón (2011, p. 526) define project definition as the first stage in the project lifecycle whereas Ward and Chapman (1995) propose that project definition and project initiation are in the ‘conceptualisation stage’, as discussed.

The factors that appear to have the highest impact on the early project phases are as follows: firstly, the involvement and awareness of the team about the project (Bryson & Bromiley, 1993, p. 324); secondly, the experience of team members (Adenfelt & Lagerström, 2006, p. 196) and thirdly, technology, depending whether the project requires technology that is already available or needs to be developed. Fourthly, the availability of time (Bryson & Bromiley, 1993). Another aspects discussed is conflict in the project team (Verma, 1998). All in all, Bryson and Bromiley (1993, p. 324) argue that 50% of the variance in a project can be explained by context variables. In line with the first factor, Zhang and Doll (2001) emphasise the importance of a project team vision. In the context of partnership formation, not only the team of one organisation should share the vision, but this can be extrapolated to a common vision among the partners. Also Koppenjan (2005, p. 137), stresses the importance of cooperation in the early phases, defining the concept of structured cooperation as the risk-sharing participation of partners that is expressed in a binding agreement; for instance through a contract or the creation of a joint legal entity. In addition to project team dynamics and communication, the external project environment can be dynamic and there is a constant risk that stakeholders, particularly clients, change their requirements during the project lifecycle.
This critical aspect is envisaged by Aaltonen and Kujala (2010), who explore the possibility of project stakeholders to influence the decision making throughout the different project phases, particularly emphasising that their power is the highest in the early phases. Therefore, in order to minimise disturbances at execution and completion phase, a thorough stakeholders’ analysis should be performed at the ‘investment preparation phase’ (Aaltonen & Kujala, 2010, p. 386).

In this dynamic environment, Neal (1995, p. 5) raises the question of how project managers can identify initial requirements accurately and track the changes proactively and introduces the ‘Kipling’ method which encourages to answer: what, where, when, who, how and why questions. Similarly, Whelton and Ballard (2002) argue that effective project definition processes are needed to support changing project objectives and means during its lifecycle. This is also confirmed by Whelton et al. (2002), who argue that project definition has to be flexible, to include dynamic project goals and consider organisational change. Kähkönen (1999, p. 625) suggests that the project definition is finished when sufficient alternatives have been defined. Given the recommendation to analyse the early project phases with a multi-disciplinary approach, scholars such as Whelton et al. (2002) explore the project definition phases from a knowledge management perspective seeing it as learning opportunity. However, to enable this, facilities for learning need to be in place. Kähkönen (1999, p. 626) agrees that the project definition phase is a learning process where the project team aims to reach a shared opinion and common understanding about the issue and together, to find and implement projects to tackle them. In the context of CSCs, alliance theory suggests that the very reason why firms are willing to form partnerships is to acquire new skills or tacit knowledge (Austin, 2000, p. 76). This knowledge-based view can explain the increasing number of CSSPs, through which firms learn and create value (Rondinelli & London, 2003, p. 62). Therefore, knowledge creation theories in project management and particularly in project early phases in CSCs will be explored next.

2.2.3. Knowledge management in projects and during project formation

Although knowledge management is not a distinct knowledge area in the PMBoK (Project Management Institute, 2013), it was found highly relevant in CSC projects. In fact, for collaboration to occur, knowledge has to flow between organisations, as their employees interact and engage in joint problem solving (Solitander, 2006, p. 198). Moreover, collaborations between organisations operating in different sectors bring individuals from very different backgrounds together and thus may face significant obstacles in communication, knowledge exchange and in building trust (Verma, 1998).

The literature on organisational theories increasingly emphasises the importance of organisational learning as a key performance driver in project-based organisations (Bartsch et al., 2013, p. 239). Despite its importance, Bartsch et al. (2013) acknowledge the challenges that arise in capturing, sharing and transferring knowledge from projects within and across the organisations. This occurs mainly because of the nature of project-based organisations in which project are unique which creates boundaries inside the firm to transfer and integrate the knowledge from particular projects to the organisation as a whole and to subsequent projects (Grillitsch, Müller-Stingl, & Neumann, 2007, p. 19). The same phenomenon can be observed in collaborative projects in the form of a process of inter-organisational knowledge integration (Bhandar, 2010, p. 267). Knowledge management and particularly knowledge creation are not present in the current PMBoK with one exception (Project Management Institute, 2013, p. 466).
In fact, it appears that the PMBoK suggests a reactive approach by identifying the obligation of project managers to conduct meetings dedicated to lessons learned while emphasising that these lessons learned in meetings should be conducted particularly when the project is moving in the wrong direction or yields results beyond those expected (Project Management Institute, 2004, p. 230). Contrary to this notion, Ghoshal (2005, p. 89) suggests adopting ‘positive psychology’ as a new vision which stresses the importance of building good initiatives rather than just repairing the worst because it was noted that organisations focus on reducing the negative impact rather than having a proactive attitude. In this view, knowledge management should be approached proactively (Nonaka et al., 2006, p. 1186), thereby improving the project performance and the knowledge and skills of team members (Yeong et al., 2011, p. 13). This is why Nonaka et al. (2006) introduce the concept of ‘knowledge activism’, referring to the introduction of roles in the organisation and projects to catalyse and manage knowledge creation and sharing. Also, Hobday (2000, p. 891) stresses the importance of learning throughout the entire project lifecycle in a proactive manner and emphasise that processes need more than routine project management procedures and planning. Thus, the use of knowledge during the formation phase is highly important because it not only decreases uncertainty but also enables better decision making.

How organisations learn from and through projects
Resource-based theories discuss knowledge as a difficult-to-imitate resource for competitive advantage; for example in the strategic project management literature, a ‘knowledge-based view of the firm’ is advocated (Nonaka et al., 2006, p. 636). Given the contemporary dynamic context, it is raised that this view of the firm should be complemented with the theory of dynamic capabilities to support the delivery of successful projects (Nonaka & Krogh, 2009). This is in line with the aforementioned need in CSC literature⁴ for a dynamic process-oriented theory in IOR (Gray 1989, p.244). There are two types of knowledge, tacit and explicit (Nonaka & Krogh, 2009, p. 635). ‘Tacit knowledge’, a term coined by Polanyi, representing knowledge that is unarticulated, tied to the senses, movement skills, physical experiences, intuition and implicit rules of thumb, whereas ‘explicit knowledge’ is expressed and defined through drawings or writing (Nonaka & Krogh, 2009, p. 635). While Polanyi (2003, p. 220) states that tacit knowledge can be acquired mainly through being exposed to the environment and the context of learning, Nonaka and Krogh (2009, p. 635) argue for a possibility of ‘knowledge conversion’, from tacit to explicit knowledge.

Concerning the applicability of tacit and explicit knowledge in projects, Yeong et al. (2011, p. 12) state that knowledge is created and shared mainly through explicit sources and opportunities are missed if tacit knowledge from previous projects is not codified. This was confirmed by scholars who explored the resource-based view of the firm in collaborative projects. For example, Bhandar (2010, p. 268) suggests the use of social capital which is a resource based on relationships that can influence knowledge integration and formation of networks. Whelton et al. (2002, p. 198) argue that the project definition phase is characterised by a process of group learning and knowledge exchange and defines the project definition group as a learning organisation in itself. This is consistent with the argumentation of Macmillan et al. (2001, p. 169) who state that the conceptual phase of project is intense in terms of information and knowledge transfer between designers.

⁴ See discussion in 2.1.1.
Hällgren and Söderholm (2010, p. 354) share the same view arguing that practitioners share knowledge, experiences and expectations in local settings in line with Hobday (2000, p. 855) who notices that knowledge sharing mostly occurs in informal settings, through exchanging problem-solving tips through narratives or in what is sometimes called communities of practice. However, learning can also emerge from crises in projects, where project managers need to adapt to changes and acknowledge coincidental learning (Hällgren & Wilson, 2011, p. 196).

**Barriers to learning and knowledge transfer in projects**

The reviewed literature identified a series of barriers that hinder the creation and sharing of knowledge in projects. Particularly CSCs may face challenges because organisations from different sectors have different cultures and structures, (Googins & Rochlin, 2000, p. 135; Selsky & Parker, 2005, p. 851), as discussed in the previous section (see 2.1.5). As Maurer (2010) stressed, members of project teams are unlikely to know each other or to have cooperated prior to the project which may lead to less trust and less propensity to sharing knowledge. In collaborative projects, Bhandhar (2010, p. 267) notices that although each organisation already has its own agenda and conflicting interests which adds to the challenges of knowledge transfer between organisations, they can be seen as learning opportunities. To these barriers, Bartsch et al., (2013) and Bhandar (2010) identify “social capital” as source to overcome them and enabling learning in project-based organisations. For example, the organisational culture (as part of social capital) encourages knowledge creation and sharing as it is a valuable asset for the organisation (Adenfelt and Lagerström, 2006). While the above authors explore individual projects, others focused on collaborative projects, such as Bhandar (2010, p. 269) proposing three factors that influence the knowledge exchange and integration among organisations: opportunity, motivation and ability. ‘Opportunity’ refers to the access to networks, such as prior relationships between the partners. ‘Motivation’ is the driver for organisations in the absence of immediate or certain returns – which is the case in CSSPs and is often facilitated through trust and norms agreed among partners. ‘Ability’ refers to the competencies and resources of the organisations in the network and it can be shared languages, codes or collective knowledge.

This section has revisited the literature on project management, first focusing on the project lifecycle with emphasis on project early phases. Then, knowledge management theories were explored, due to the importance of learning in the initial project phases. Building on this, the last subsection showed that the existence of prior ties leads to less formality which enables knowledge exchange. Also, the challenges to learning appear to be more intense in CSCs as they bring together organisations and individuals from very different backgrounds. Taking together the findings from the CSC and project management sections, CSC is an almost untouched topic in the project management literature and although projects are explicitly mentioned in some articles on CSSPs (Googins & Rochlin, 2000, p. 136; Selsky & Parker, 2010) there was no further discussion on how they are managed (Grudinschi et al., 2013, p. 2). Consequently, the concluding section sets out to connect the CSC and project management literature.
2.3. Project management in cross-sector social-oriented partnerships

The frame of reference in this thesis work consists of three themes which were identified in the CSC and project management literature. They were selected because of their occurrence in both fields as strands in the literature and in accordance with the research objectives in this research. The following figure conceptualised CSSPs at the intersection of TSOs and PSOs and provides an overview of the frame of reference which resulted from the reviewed literature.

![Figure 3. Conceptualisation of CSSPs at the intersection of TSOs and PSOs](image)

The above figure shows the three elements of the frame of reference; the ‘formation phase’ refers to the CSSP at the intersection of PSOs and TSOs whereas ‘context’ and ‘management’ also occur on the organisational level not only at CSSP level. ‘Contextual elements’ consists of external elements such as intermediary organisations or national legislation and internal elements which are distinct to the respective partner. ‘Management responsibilities’ occurs on the organisational level of the respective partner and on the CSSP level (Clarke & Fuller, 2010). By way of differentiating these different levels their consideration reveals a useful structural dimension. The following sub-sections discuss each theme separately.

2.3.1. Collaborative context

The ‘collaborative context’ consists of internal and external elements that impact on the partnerships. For example, internal driving and restraining factors of the partners are motivations and challenges respectively. An external element is the country context in which the partnership occurs (see 2.1.4.). This is in line with Vurro et al. (2010, pp. 39–40) and Seitanidi et al. (2010, p. 152) who discuss two interrelated drivers of change, the external changes in the macro context and the internal changes of notions within organisations in CSSPs. The project management literature defines ‘project context’ as the project characteristics upon which the project team has little or no control, but 50% of the variance in projects is determined by contextual factors (Bryson & Bromiley, 1993, p. 320). Moreover, Ward and Chapman (1995) emphasise that the context impacts on the project lifecycle. Similarly, the manner in which a partnership unfolds is directly related to the context which it consists of (Rein & Stott, 2009, pp. 80–81). This thesis work gives precedence to this by deploying a comparative case study strategy based on different country and organisational contexts to investigate how contextual factors impact on the deployment of project management during the formation phase of CSSPs.
Internal driving factors are the organisations’ motivation to engage in CSC and thus partnerships’ drivers. They are highly relevant to inform this research because motives not only point to reasons for initiating activities that lead to partnership formation (Seitanidi et al., 2010, p. 147) but also indicate expected outcomes and show justification for collaboration and willingness to deploy resources (Seitanidi, 2010, p. 38). Examples of motivations for organisations generally to engage in CSCs are access to new, complementary or scarce resources (Austin, 2000, p. 69; Gazley & Brudney, 2007) as well as the identification of new information (Holmes & Smart, 2009, p. 395; Sakarya et al., 2012). Furthermore, organisational driving factors for PSOs can be related to aspects concerning human resources, public relations or research and development (Austin, 2000, p. 76); whereas for TSOs the access to additional financial resources, managerial or technical expertise and support as well as to be associated with a known corporation are to the fore (Berger et al., 2004, p. 83). External driving factors are aspects in organisations’ environment which impact on the decision to engage in CSCs or generally drive partnerships. Frequently stated examples are the decreasing roles of governments (Googins & Rochlin, 2000, p. 129), consumer demands for transparency and responsible behaviour (Rondinelli & London, 2003, p. 62) or the search for competitive advantage (Porter & Kramer, 2002, p. 57).

Internal restraining factors are obstacles and challenges within the organisations that challenge their decision to engage in CSSPs. Barriers in the literature that can strongly hinder the formation of CSSPs were broadly grouped into resource scarcity, such as staff capacity and time (Austin, 2000, p. 78; Gazley & Brudney, 2007, p. 411) and competing institutional logics, like differing language or administrative structures (Austin, 2010, p. 13; Bryson et al., 2006, p. 50). The latter can result in transactional costs owing to incompatible ways of working (McDonald et al., 2011, p. 261) and are hence also referred to as ‘natural obstacles’ (Googins & Rochlin, 2000, p.137). An additional restraining factor can be the lack of experience (Austin, 2000, p. 88) which underlines the inherent challenge of CSCs to achieving them successfully. External restraining factors are barriers and challenges in organisations’ environment which impact negatively on the decision to engage in CSCs. They range from the notion that rigid boundaries between sectors are enforced by infrequent interaction across sectors (Bryson et al., 2006) to flaws in the ‘alliance market place’ owing to its immaturity such as the absence of communication vehicles to find partners, structures to match their interests, information sources on potential partners, absence of intermediary structures (Austin, 2000, p. 88).

In terms of external factors in CSSPs, the literature mentions the potential existence of ‘third parties’ which stands for a variety of roles including judge, arbitrator, fact finder, mediator, and facilitator (Gray, 1989, p. 161). These ‘enabling structures’ are key to facilitating collective action (Selsky & Parker, 2005, p. 857), constructive communication, the resolution of differences and reaching agreement (Gray, 1989, p. 163). Similarly, Westley and Vredenburg (1997, p. 383) see ‘gifted and energetic’ conveners as important part during partnership initiation owing to their vision and ability to inspire people. Similarly, they act like mediators by negotiating bilaterally with key stakeholders (Westley & Vredenburg, 1991, p. 68).
2.3.2. Formation phase of cross-sector social-oriented partnerships

Informed by the foregone sections on process-perspectives in the CSC literature (see 2.1.2.) and project management literature (see 2.2.1.), the second theme deploys a process-based view to CSCs. This thesis work conceptualised ‘formation’ as the first phase at the beginning of CSSPs. Project management and CSC literatures agree that it is important for the consecutive phases in the process; in fact, a successful formation phase will contribute to the likeliness of positive outcomes and it can be an early indicator for the partnership’s potential for change (Seitanidi, 2010, p.140). From a project management perspective, this phase is critical as the level of uncertainty is at its highest, as well as the influence of stakeholders (Aaltonen & Kujala, 2010, p. 387) and the potential for conflict among organisations or team members (Verma, 1998), while the level of knowledge is minimum. In terms of CSC literature, some comment that the partnership process is well elaborated (Googins & Rochlin, 2000, p. 133), whereas others are rather critical, questioning the validity of linear process models due in part to the fact that formulation and implementation tend to overlap in organisational strategy or activities such as partner selection occur in differing phases (Mintzberg, 1990; Seitanidi et al., 2010, p. 140). All the more, an understanding of this phase is invaluable to the promotion of the CSC process steps and activities (Googins & Rochlin, 2000, p. 142). Also in the project management literature, where there is a lack of agreement over the life-cycle phases of a project, due to the diversity of projects and industries (Kerzner, 2009, p. 68). Still, it seems that boundaries between the phases are blurred as the project lifecycle can be seen as a series of spirals of activities, rather than a linear process (Ward & Chapman, 1995, p. 148). Consequently, a comparative analysis and discussion of selected models is indispensible to inform this thesis work. The table in appendix 2 provides an overview of the models which are basis for the following analysis.

In terms of the selected CSC process models, Seitanidi (2010) and Gray (1989) propose a three-phase model, whereas Clarke and Fuller (2010) distinguish five phases. Seitanidi’s (2010) model comprises formation, implementation and outcomes and Gray’s (1989) model problem setting, direction setting and implementation. Although Clarke and Fuller (2010) conceptualise two more phases, it actually consists of four steps; the formation of partnerships and context analysis (phase 1), the formulation of a collaborative strategic plan (phase 2); the implementation of tactics on the collaborative and organisational level (phase 3 and phase 4); the focus on outcomes (phase 5). This shows that the models of Seitanidi (2010) and Clarke and Fuller (2010) are aligned in conceptualising the beginning - formation (phase 1) - and the end - outcomes (phase 3, phase 5 respectively) - of the process. But they differ also in two respects; first, in Clarke and Fuller’s model (2010, p. 88) phase 1 is rather broad, consisting of contextual considerations at each organisational level and partner identification whereas Seitanidi (2010) distinguishes these two aspects. The ‘context’ such as the analysis of organisational characteristics, motives and prior experiences with collaboration is part of the ‘formation phase’ in Seitanidi’s model (2010, p. 36). It is conceptualised as ‘tacit’ phase, characterised as emergent and ‘informal viability assessment mechanism’ before the partner selection (Seitanidi et al., 2010, p. 141). Gray’s model (1989, p. 57) does not consider the context and partner selection prior to the partnership but starts once the partners have committed to collaborate. With regard to activities in the phases, Gray (1989) and Clarke and Fuller (2010, p. 88) are aligned in their respective phase 1 concerning the joint analysis of the problem, identification of resource needs and the potential presence of a convener to identify and bring all stakeholders together.
Before a partnership agreement is made, however, Clarke and Fuller (2010) further point out in their phase 2 the joint working on statements concerning partnership mission, vision and values which is in line with the development of a collective identity in Seitanidi’s model (2010, p. 42).

This comparative discussion showed that as per the reviewed CSC literature, the formation phase of the CSC process is divided in two sub-phases which can be discerned based on the identified ‘boundary activities’. Namely, the decision to collaborate after ‘partner selection’ (Gray, 1989; Seitanidi et al., 2010, p. 140) and a formalised partnership agreement, also referred to as ‘the starting point of working together’ (Clarke & Fuller, 2010, p. 88). It can take various forms such as a strategic plan (Clarke & Fuller, 2010, p. 88), contract, memorandum of understanding or an informal agreement to co-operate (Rein & Stott, 2009, p. 82). Nevertheless, there are sceptics, such as Clarke and Fuller (2010, p. 88) and Koppenjan (2005), who argue that the formation phase does not necessarily have to happen at a distinct time during the partnership. Also, collaboration models are rather generic and the importance of a phase varies which means that an understanding of the steps is pivotal for the management of collaborations (Gray, 1989, p. 56–57).

Unlike the above scholars in the CSC literature who explore processes in collaborative contexts chronologically, Grudinschi et al. (2013, p. 5) take on a longitudinal perspective, by identifying the essence of collaboration processes throughout the project holistically. The five processes of collaboration according to Grudinschi et al. (2013) are collaborative governing, collaborative administration, reconciling interests, forging mutual relationships, and building social capital. The first process relates to participative management, cooperation and joint decision making (Koppenjan, 2005, p. 138; Westley & Vredenburg, 1997, p. 382), as also explored in the phases and stages of CSCs (see section 2.1.3.). The correspondent of this process is the emphasis on cooperation in the project management literature (Zhang & Doll, 2001). The second process is related to monitoring mechanisms, coordination, and clarity of roles and responsibilities that should be in place, which both CSC and project management literatures emphasise (Project Management Institute, 2013, p. 49; Rein & Stott, 2009, p. 82; Rondinelli & London, 2003, p. 71). The third process is addressed by the CSC literature both at the level of project team as well as at the inter-organisational level (Rondinelli & London, 2003, pp. 62, 69). In the project management literature, the notion of conflict and reaching common agreements has been of interest for researchers for a long time (Verma, 1998; Zhang & Doll, 2001). The fourth process concerns the perception of partners that the collaboration brings benefits from both sides. In the CSC literature, organisations increasingly engage in partnerships as they become aware of the benefits of cooperation (Rondinelli & London, 2003, p. 63). The fifth process of building social capital refers to trust, knowledge creation and sharing, intra- and inter-organisational and collaborative projects are seen as a process of inter-organisational knowledge integration (Bhandar, 2010, p. 267).
2.3.3. Collaborative management

In line with the third research objective, the management responsibilities in collaborative settings are referred to as ‘collaborative management’ in this thesis work. As the introduction as well as the reviewed CSC literature showed, CSSPs are not necessarily associated with management practices. Based on the first two sections of this chapter, particular focus is put on managerial skills and knowledge management.

Leadership skills are needed in CSCs, for example, to prevent power imbalances that potentially threat effectiveness of CSCs or to build legitimacy and trust (Bryson et al., 2006, p. 50), but also for conflict resolution (Sandström & Ylinenpaa, 2012, p. 148). In practice, power sharing in collaborations does not imply equal power and not even entirely shared or intended goals (Bryson et al., 2006, p. 78). Analytical skills are also essential to incorporate the previously discussed contextual factors which influence how the partnership unfolds (Clarke & Fuller, 2010; Rein & Stott, 2009, pp. 80–81) but also to consider various analytical levels that are needed in ‘project research’ (Söderlund, 2004, p. 190) and in CSC research (Sakarya et al., 2012, p. 1712). In terms of human resource management, skills are needed for effective team building and to create a shared understanding of the value created (Googins & Rochlin, 2000, p. 142; Maurer, 2010, p. 631; Rondinelli & London, 2003, p. 69). With regard to early project phases, Zhang and Doll (2001) emphasise the criticality of a project team vision and argue that a lack of shared understanding leads to unclear project targets and priorities, contributing to uncertainty. Therefore, in the context of partnership formation, the members of each team and organisation should reach congruent goals (Austin, 2000, p. 81) and effective communication which leads to commitment and fosters good business relationships (Wong, Cheung, Yiu, & Pang, 2008, p. 823). In addition, planning skills are required for skilful scoping so as to avoid misunderstanding of intentions (Rein & Stott, 2009, p. 84) and awareness that the level of required engagement and complexity rises as partnerships are becoming more strategic and long-term oriented (Googins & Rochlin, 2000, p. 140). Whelton et al. (2002) confirm that subsequent changes in project objectives, in stakeholders’ requirements and expectations or organisational changes have to be considered in the project early phases. The planning phase should, therefore, be dynamic and provide adaptive designs. Furthermore, strategic planning and scenario development can be deployed to help collaborations anticipate and shape future developments and manage shifts in power effectively (Bryson, 2004). Regardless of the chosen planning approach, analysis of stakeholders is crucial for successful planning (Bryson et al., 2006, p. 48; Bryson, 2004). Consequently, stakeholder management is vital in this regard which is, informed by project management and CSC literature, and the subject of discussion in the following paragraph.

With regard to CSCs, stakeholders are worth consideration from two perspectives. First, stakeholder considerations can be a reason why they are formed and thus they play a role in the formation of CSC. Second, CSCs can be means to address stakeholder needs, resolve conflict or advance a shared vision among stakeholders (Gray, 1989). With a view on the ‘stakeholder society’, Googins and Rochlin (2000, pp. 132–133) discern an evolving notion which demands PSOs to engage in the creation of win-win partnerships with the community as core element in business strategy as opposed to the rather traditional notion of exchange relationships in CSSPs.
In the latter PSOs assume a ‘giving back role’ in a system characterised by shareholder capitalism and profit maximisation in which the creation of jobs, wealth and paying taxes is how citizenship manifests itself (Friedman, 1970). In this regard, the notion of a ‘fit’ of these elements for corporate survival was advocated by Freeman (1984). Thus, stakeholder management is seen as critical because stakeholders can influence the purpose, unfolding and planning of the project at this stage. In addition, the literature on project management stresses the importance of a thorough stakeholder analysis at the initial stages of projects, to minimise disturbances at subsequent phases (Aaltonen & Kujala, 2010, p. 386).

Knowledge management is of particular interest as it combines knowledge from different sectors and literature fields: social networks, organisational learning and project management (Levin & Cross, 2004, p. 1477). There is little research that considers the interrelationships between these literature strands which is why this thesis work pays particular attention to this. In the context of CSCs, Parkhe (1993, p. 802) suggests that the existence of prior ties leads to lowering the contractual safeguards, which is reflected in rather informal relationships. However, this gives room for knowledge exchange and capturing (Levin & Cross, 2004, p. 1478, Maurer, 2010). Differentiating between weak and strong ties among partner organisations, Levin and Cross (2004) found that partners are more willing to exchange information when prior strong ties exist and the information is more insightful and useful. In addition, learning from trusted partners increases the likelihood of absorbing knowledge, as the partners are expected to deliver reliable and useful insights, which leads to fewer conflicts and less need to verify information, as well as lower costs for knowledge transfer (Levin & Cross, 2004, p. 1478). Moreover, the literature shows that knowledge capturing is affected by the level of trust when working with external project partners (Maurer, 2010, p. 630) as well as particularly important in the planning stage, where information is directly linked to good planning (Wong et al., 2008, p. 828). Although some authors suggest that knowledge capturing can be the very reason for CSSPs formation (Rondinelli & London, 2003, p. 62), Maurer (2010, p. 631) argues that it can also be an unexpected or unintended outcome of the partnership.

This chapter has revealed that CSSPs have become a topic of interest to researchers in CSC and project management literature. The former elucidated that CSCs are means to create public and shared value and it was shown that there are several conceptual frameworks to categorise partnerships as well as process models. Then the importance of the cultural context was discussed and it was showed that project management was only explicitly mentioned in few instances in the CSC literature. This provided rational to review the project management literature in the following sub-section. It focused on the project lifecycle, project formation and knowledge management. The separate review showed that the two literature fields have similar characteristics providing the basis for the frame of reference in the last sub-section. By identifying three main themes, in line with the three objectives of this study, the two previously separate literature fields were merged which was the basis for the discussion in chapter 4. The following chapter details the methodology which underpins this research.
3. Research methodology

This chapter outlines and justifies the methodology that governs this thesis work in terms of the literature review (chapter 2), as well as the empirical part (chapter 4) and data analysis and discussion (chapter 5). The ‘theoretical methodology’ is elaborated in the sections on research philosophy, research approach, research assumptions and motivations. The subsequent sections are about the ‘empirical methodology’, namely the research design, method of data collection and analysis. The chapter concludes by discussing the ethical considerations.

3.1. Introductory remarks

This thesis work is written with underlying assumptions based on researchers’ assumptions and motivation which are acknowledged to contribute to how this research was approached and conducted. They are elaborated together with a guiding explanation on the methodological structure in this introductory section.

3.1.1. Research assumptions and motivation

In the course of this thesis work, a wide range of decisions were made that were governed by underlying assumptions and the researchers’ experience and motivation. Assumptions are the bases from which the choice for a particular and adequate research method derives (Long, White, Friedman, & Brazeal, 2000, p. 191) and thus, have to be outlined prior to the elaboration of the deployed research methodology. As research on CSC in the project management literature is limited, to our understanding, and the PMBoK does not include knowledge management as a separate knowledge area, we considered this an opportunity to explore how project management is deployed in CSSPs. Moreover, being from different countries we had the chance to select partnerships from different cultural backgrounds, making the contribution, we believe, more valuable. Also the researchers’ background impacted on the decisions made in this thesis work and our motivation to engage together in this thesis research.

After having both worked for international PSOs, we would like to build on our experience and interest in sustainability management by acknowledging that there has been growing interest in CSSPs. However, based on initial contacts with practitioners and a glance at the literature prior to formally starting to work on this thesis, we found that both sides, PSOs and TSOs, need to know more about the set-up, management and evaluation of CSSPs. In fact, initial informal exchanges with practitioners in both fields revealed that this kind of partnerships is gaining relevance as sectors have started to intersect in recent years. Moreover, we are Associate Partners on a volunteer basis in the Erasmus Mundus Social Economy Project and our thesis findings can potentially have a wider audience. Owing to our study background, we are interested in project management and found this field particularly suitable to be explored in this context.
3.1.2. Methodological framework

Notwithstanding various scholarly approaches in the business research field, the concept of a ‘research onion’ was found to be particularly suitable owing to the structure that it provides and its holistic and comprehensive nature, ranging from research philosophies to the data analysis method. The following figure provides an overview of the adapted ‘research onion’ from Saunders et al. (2009, p. 109; 2012, p. 128) with four distinct layers in this thesis work.

![The research onion representing the methodological framework](image)

The metaphor of an onion was chosen to emphasise that research methodology consists of many layers prior to discussing data collection techniques and analysis procedures which are the empirical methods deployed. The value of the ‘research onion’ concept for this thesis work is that it shows clearly that three ‘analytical layers’, namely the research philosophy (section 3.2.), research approach (section 3.3.) and research design (section 3.4.) precede the choice of an adequate empirical method (section 3.5.). In order to reveal the central layers of the research onion, the first layers need to be clear, as these assumptions and paradigms underpin the choice of the research strategy and the relationship between knowledge and the way it is developed.

3.2. Research philosophy

The philosophical assumptions and beliefs concerning ontology, epistemology and axiology of the researcher are the research philosophy (Creswell, 2013).

*Ontology*, is about the assumptions on the nature of reality and “how the world operates” (Creswell, 2013, p. 21; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009, p. 110). There are two ontological positions, namely objectivism and subjectivism. The latter is also referred to as constructionism (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 111). In this thesis work, subjectivism is adopted because the phenomenon of interest, project management in CSSPs, is the outcome of social interaction (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 22). Also, we believe that the social phenomena are a result of the perceptions and actions of the social actors which underlines a constructionist position (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 111). As a result, this is reflected through the choice of the research question (an open “how” question), a comparative case study strategy and qualitative data collection methods. Given that we interview individuals, we consider that their view constructs the reality and it is their testimony that is analysed and discussed. Moreover, we are aware that people “perceive different situations in varying ways as a consequence of their own view of the world” (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 111) which is another reason why we chose to interview both partners, the TSO and PSO, in a CSSP.
Epistemology refers to what ‘acceptable knowledge’ is and what should be regarded as such in a study field (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 15; Saunders et al., 2009, p. 112). The four main epistemological research philosophies are positivism, interpretivism, realism and pragmatism (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 108). Interpretivism fits best for this thesis work because context, time and human interactions are fundamental to this research philosophy (Biggam, 2011, p. 138). As a result of this, we analyse and discuss contextual elements in CSSPs, acknowledging its impact on the management of CSSPs and the way they unfold. Furthermore, we agree that the subject of this research is too complex to be reduced to “a series of law-like generalisations” as is the case for positivism (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 116). Similarly, realism was not applicable because we do not aim to transform but to understand the status quo in the management of CSSPs. In fact, we do not argue that our conceptualisation “is simply a way of knowing” the (external) reality (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 17) and this research is therefore not following realism. Similarly, pragmatism was not found suitable as the researcher would adopt objective and subjective points of view and it acknowledges an external view, unlike interpretivism which considers this view to be socially constructed (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 119). Consequently, we consider interpretivism as a better choice than pragmatism also because we adopt a subjective ontology (ibid).

Aspects of axiology are dealt with in more detail in section 3.6. Our judgments about value and ethical stance guided the process of social enquiry. For example, the choice of the research method reflects this.

3.3. Research approach

The use of theory during the research and the intention of data collection are reflected in the research approach which has subsequently impact on the research design (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 124). When considering the two extremes, research can collect data either to build or to test theory. The former refers to the inductive; the latter to the deductive approach (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 124). For example, if a hypothesis or propositions were build based on the reviewed literature and tested by means of empirical data, then a rather deductive approach would be deployed. It is worth noting that research is never truly inductive or deductive but will entail elements of both and is thus suggested to be viewed along a continuum (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 573). In addition, there is also abductive reasoning which means moving back and forth between induction and deduction (Morgan, 2007, p. 71).

In the absence of hypotheses or propositions based on the reviewed literature, we believe that this thesis study primarily follows an inductive approach. In fact, we consider individual instances which are subject to a comparative analysis as we aim at “identifying patterns within data” (Hammond & Wellington, 2013, p. 87) and accommodate emerging themes (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 573). This is highly relevant as the chosen topic, namely the intersection of project management and CSCs is fairly novel, as elaborated in previous sections, which bolsters the choice for an inductive approach. Moreover, three aspects further underline this; first, the study is highly context specific as case studies are set in four European countries; second, each CSSP is unique and consists of different organisations; third, the research is exploratory and aims to build theory in an under-researched field. The choice for this research approach is reflected in the research process, such as the choices to study a small sample of partnerships and to interview the persons most involved in the partnership.
In line with the interpretivist epistemology, we aim to generate understanding of the meanings that people give to events and of the contextual elements. Hence, we looked for a flexible approach that would allow adjustments to the research emphasis as the research unfolds and we were less concerned with generalising our findings; all these reasons, according to Saunders et al. (2009, p. 127), lead to the choice of an inductive approach. It accommodates the use of qualitative data, a variety of methods to collect these data and the case studies research strategy (Eisenhardt, 1989; Saunders et al., 2009, p. 126). Still, we acknowledge that there are deductive elements in this study as well; the template analysis procedure “combines a deductive and an inductive approach to qualitative analysis” because codes were predetermined in an initial template and amended as data was collected and analysed (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 505).\(^5\)

### 3.4. Research design

The general plan on how the research question in this thesis work will be answered is what Saunders et al. (2012, p. 159) refer to as the research design. It is the third layer of the research onion consisting of three elements: the research strategy, the time horizon and the methodological choice, which have to be consistent with the underlying research philosophy, justified by the research objectives and overall coherence across its elements (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 161).

Prior to the discussion of the deployed research strategy, it is worth noting that ‘research strategy’ is also used as an umbrella term to distinguish between quantitative and qualitative research (Bryman, 2008, p. 21) or between quantitative or qualitative designs (Maylor & Blackmon, 2005, p. 251). This has created discussion because some find that the dichotomy has caused an ‘unproductive debate’ becoming a “caricature in social sciences” (Yin, 2003a, p. 33) or a “battle of egos” (Long et al., 2000, p. 190). Notwithstanding that this distinction can be useful to clarify the epistemological and ontological orientation as well as the role of theory (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 27), we argue in line with Yin (2003a), that the choice for the data collection techniques and analysis procedures are decisive if the research is of qualitative or quantitative nature.

#### 3.4.1. Research strategy

To link the previously outlined research philosophies and research approach with the empirical methods of data collection and analysis, the methodological element of choice is the research strategy (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, cited in Saunders et al. 2012, p.173). There are a multitude of research strategies – such as experiment, survey, case study, action research, grounded theory, ethnography, archival research – which are of equal value given they answer the respective research question and are in line with the research philosophy and approach (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 141; Yin, 2009, p. 2).

In light of an open and explanatory (“how”) research question (Yin, 2003b, p. 22), a mainly inductive approach and a constructionist ontological and interpretivist epistemological position (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 386), the case study strategy was chosen. Several other reasons bolster this decision. First, the case study strategy is suitable when the topic is broad and complex yet there is little information and theory available (Dul & Hak, 2008, p. 24; Hamel, Dufour, & Fortin, 1993, p. 16; Kumar, 2008, p. 49). It holds in this study as two previously unconnected fields are jointly investigated, namely project management and CSSPs, as the literature review revealed.

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\(^5\) The data analysis procedure is elaborated in detail in 3.5.6.
Second, particularly contextual elements were of interest in this instance so that investigating in the real-life context was essential and the case study strategy allowed for this (Yin, 2003b, p. 13). Experiments had not been appropriate for this reason as they manipulate instances (Dul & Hak, 2008, p. 5). Although a survey could have met the requirement of the real-life context, it is found to be more suitable in quantitative analysis (ibid) which makes clear that it had not been appropriate in this thesis study. Third, the choice for a case study strategy in collaborations follows a ‘methodological tradition’ if the research purpose is exploratory, according to Sakarya et al. (2012, p. 1710). Already 22 years ago, Gray and Wood (1991, p. 4) noted that “the preponderance of research on collaborative alliances to date has been based on case studies” as they have proven particularly useful for generating theoretical and practical insights.

There is a wide range of case study definitions and some even argue that there is no straight forward definition owing to a range of associations implicitly held by scholars (Hammond & Wellington, 2013, p. 16). According to Eisenhardt (1989, p. 234) it is “a research strategy that focuses on understanding the dynamics present within a single setting” and Hammond and Wellington (2013, p. 13) note that ‘casing’ is the systematic choice of examples of a phenomenon bound in a particular context. In the conception of this thesis work, a case study accommodates the phenomena of interest - the project management concepts during the formation phase of cross-sector social partnerships – in different country contexts. The latter aspect of multiple contexts becomes relevant in the choice for the type of case study. Yin (2003a, p. 5) identifies six types, by differentiating between the deployment of a single or multiple cases in one study and the intention of the cases, namely exploratory, descriptive or explanatory. In contrast, Kumar (2008, p. 50) proposes five case study types depending on their set-up such as snapshot, longitudinal, pre-post, patchwork or comparative case studies. These comparative case studies comprise two or more studies at two or more research locations to enable inter-unit comparison (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 63; Kumar, 2008, p. 50) thus falling into the dimension of a multiple-case study, according to Yin (2003a).

It was decided to deploy multiple-case studies to compare cases thereby identifying common and differing aspects across contexts so as to explore the significance of context and to strengthen the findings (Bryman, 2008, p. 387; Hammond & Wellington, 2013, p. 27; Yin, 2003b, p. 133). Comparisons can be made independent of the chosen research approach or the kind of data collected but entail ‘the logic of comparison’ meaning that social phenomena are understood better if they are set in relation to meaningful other cases in different country-settings or across time (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 63; Hammond & Wellington, 2013, pp. 27–28). Given the study’s research question, to find out how project management is deployed in the formation phase of CSSPs, and the fact that context plays an important role as the reviewed CSC literature revealed, a single-case study that collects data only in one context would not suffice to achieve the research objectives and to generate meaningful results (Yin, 2003a, p. 135). Consequently, a comparative design was chosen to avoid idiosyncratic findings (that hold only for a particular setting), thereby reaching a sound understanding and explanation of the phenomena (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 173). A challenge when deploying comparative studies is to find a balance between depth and breadth of cases and to develop a “feel for context” (Hammond & Wellington, 2013, pp. 28–29). This will be elaborated in the section on data collection (3.5.1.). Before, however, the ‘research choice’ has to be made which is how and if qualitative and quantitative techniques and procedures are combined (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 151).
3.4.2. Methodological choice

Researchers have two methodological choices; namely using a single or multiple data collection techniques with an according analysis procedure. The former is referred to as ‘mono-method’, the latter as ‘multiple methods’ (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 151). The deployment of multiple data collection methods results in various sources of data which can reduce the bias of individual methods and increases the overall confidence of the data collected and consequently also the research findings (Sekaran, 1992, p. 219). The primary data collection technique in this thesis research was semi-structured interviews, so as to build comparative case studies and provide expert perspectives. With respect to case studies, they are strengthened by multiple sources, can accommodate different research approaches and are mostly built by more than one data collection technique (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 234; Maylor & Blackmon, 2005, p. 249; Yin, 2003a, p. 83). Thus, secondary qualitative data from documentation in the form of relevant websites or press releases were consulted to complement the primary qualitative data from the interviews or to prepare for the interviews in advance. This material was provided by the respondents and had thus not been distinctly written for this research purpose. As outlined above, the collection of primary and secondary data resulted in a multi-method qualitative study which is in line with research strategy of comparative case studies and the mainly inductive research approach (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 537; Saunders et al., 2009, p. 152).

3.4.3. Time horizon

Data collection for a study can take place either once as a snapshot or at several points in time. The former refers to ‘cross-sectional’, the latter to ‘longitudinal’ studies (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 155; Sekaran, 1992, pp. 109–110). Longitudinal studies have a longer time horizon because the data collection takes place at several points in time which is useful when identifying cause-effect relationships or tracking factors over time (Sekaran, 1992, p. 111). However, we found that a longitudinal study would neither be appropriate nor feasible in this thesis work. It had required to collect data prior to the partnership and after the formation phase. However, this would have required identifying CSSPs which undergo these phases during the three months in which this thesis work was conducted. Consequently, a cross-sectional investigation was set up to examine retrospectively how project management was deployed during the formation phase of CSSPs. We believe that the study is not limited by the fact that data was collected at one point in time.

3.5. Empirical method

Based on the overall research plan that was outlined in the research design, the following sub-sections focus on the ‘tactics’, thereby differentiating between the data collection technique and the procedure for data analysis (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 151). It is worth noting that the analysis process started during data collection. This overlap is not surprising given that field notes were taken and the overall process necessitated intuition owing to the required evolution and flexibility in a mainly inductive approach (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 538; Maylor & Blackmon, 2005, pp. 250, 340).

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6 See Appendix 3 for data collection details
3.5.1. Data collection approach and technique

A variety of methods and techniques, such as observation, interviews, or questionnaires can be used to collect primary data (Saunders et al., 2009). If documents are included in a study written for a different purpose, they are referred to as ‘secondary data’, which can be in the form of raw data or published summaries (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 304).

Ethnography, participant observation, focus groups, document or conversation analysis and qualitative interviewing were potential techniques for primary data collection because this research is based on interpretivism and follows a mainly inductive approach (Bryman, 2008, p. 369). Qualitative interviewing was chosen to be the most suitable collection technique for primary data because by deploying qualitative interview guides, the focus was on obtaining narratives in the person’s own terms so the informants themselves contour the subject matter. This is in line with the exploratory nature of this research as well as the reviewed CSC literature. Much the same as Holmes and Smart (2009, p.397) we aimed to “uncover detailed information about the formation” of CSSPs. Similarly, Berger et al. (2004, p. 60) found ‘field-based approaches’ and ‘elite interview’, or expert interviews, to be appropriate if the research aims to understand a complex interactions which holds for this exploratory study.

The approach for data collection in this thesis work was that both CSSP partners were interviewed to gain a holistic understanding of the phenomenon. This was similar to Jamali et al. (2011) and Seitanidi (2008), as opposed to Holmes & Smart (2009) who analysed only one perspective of the participating party. Data was recorded with a digital recorder or by typing during the interviews. Interviews were supplemented with secondary data from documents and information from sources such as the company website, sustainability reports, conferences and press releases. It is worth noting that the chosen research strategy, comparative case studies, did not predetermine the choice for the data collection technique because it can accommodate both quantitative and/or qualitative data (Maylor & Blackmon, 2005, p. 249).

Interviews can be classified into: structured, semi-structured and unstructured or in-depth interviews (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 320). For this research, semi-structured interviews were used, as they allowed for a degree of flexibility, by preparing mostly open-ended questions and giving the possibility to change their order according to the answers given by the respondents (Biggam, 2011, p. 146). A distinct feature of qualitative research is the continuous refinement of the data collection and analysis during the on-going investigation (Maylor & Blackmon, 2005, p. 344). Notwithstanding the approach to use the same interview guide for the respondents, slight adjustments were made, according to the organisational context and availability of information. For example, one of the respondents supplied us with extensive documentary evidence prior to the interview. Owing to the availability of this secondary data, several questions were adapted, or primarily eliminated, to avoid the collection of redundant information. As seen in the literature review, the context is an important factor which influences the unfolding of the CSSPs. The methodology, therefore, is driven by the objectives of the research and the findings from the literature review. The main body of the interview guide was structured according to the main themes of this research thereby ensuring measurement validity.
Lofland and Lofland (1995, p. 78) note that although the interview guide is considerably less formal than a questionnaire its development requires the same care. The interview guide comprised general questions about the company, as well as questions regarding the overall partnership, but with a focus on the formation phase. The partnership-specific questions were posed based on the research objectives with particular emphasis in that the majority of questions were dedicated to the theme ‘collaborative management’ as this most closely relates to the research question. In addition to the main body, relevant information of general nature about the respondent enabled the contextualisation of their answers (Bryman, 2008, p. 442).

3.5.2. Sampling design

Non-probability purposive sampling was found to be the most suitable sampling design in this qualitative multiple case study research. Non-probability sampling is used when factors other than generalisability, such as time, are important (Sekaran, 1992, p. 229). Thus, the choice of cases was made on conceptual and not representative grounds (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 29). Purposive sampling, rather than random sampling, is given precedence in qualitative research and is found particularly suitable for case study research (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 237). Eisenhardt (1989, p. 537) referred to this as ‘theoretical sampling’ when the intention is to build theory from these cases which is in line with the primarily inductive research approach in this thesis work. Purposive sampling allowed for the deployment of researchers’ judgement based on the suitability of cases to answer the research question and enabled the selection of subjects based on their expertise (Sekaran, 1992, p. 237). This is in line with Holmes (2009, p. 397) stating that “the interviewees selected were those who were most closely involved in the creation and development […] had rich experience of the way they worked”.

Thus, the ‘sampling element’ or ‘unit of data collection’ were the individuals who were targeted as interviewee (Hamel et al., 1993, p. 43). In this study, they were the responsible manager of the CSSP in the respective TSO or PSO. Consequently, the study aimed to capture ‘expert’ view points and perceptions of practitioners with experience in managing CSSPs so as to understand how project management is deployed in these partnerships with emphasis on the formation phase. To put it in a nutshell, the choice for this particular sampling design was made for two reasons; first, the representativeness of the sample was not found to be critical for the study, thus non-probability sampling, and second, the study’s purpose was exploratory and resulted in obtaining relevant information which resided in the practitioners of CSSPs, the sampling elements.

3.5.3. Identification and selection of sample

The identification of potential CSSPs underwent a lengthy process which was outlined as a funnel, ranging from general and broad internet researches, to focused approaches of individual contacts, so as to locate the potential sample. This is depicted in figure 5.

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7 See appendix 5: Interview guide
Internet research was conducted by browsing relevant websites on CSR and business ethics. This resulted in the identification of 10 potential partnerships in Romania and Sweden. Also, internet research revealed a very recent local partnership in Germany and pointed out a multitude of conferences on the topics of sustainability management, cross-sector partnerships and CSR which opened the possibilities for personal networking. Two of these events were attended in November 2013 in the UK: one international forum on natural capital and a local conference on cross-sector collaborations. Resulting from interactions at both conferences, nine contacts were established with CSSP practitioners. Unlike Holmes and Smart (2009) who only screened for PSOs that engage in CSSPs to identify their sample, we approached TSOs and PSOs alike. It became clear in these conferences that intermediaries, also referred to as broker organisations or platforms, play a vital role in some country contexts. Consequently, relevant intermediary organisations, such as Social Enterprise Scotland, were contacted and four further contacts established in this way.

The holistic approach to interview both partners turned into a challenge. For example, a very promising case study was cancelled at last minute by one partner owing to limited resource availability. For the same reason, the partner in another CSSP, identified via a university network, cancelled the participation in this research work. These sobering learning points in the first stages during the identification of cases led to the consultation of personal contacts. The first assurance of support was through a prior work experience in Romania and the second after the successful exchange of contacts during a lecture on the management of Umeå European Capital of Culture 2014 (ECoC 2014) in Sweden. It is worth noting that the identification of potential CSSPs was focused on Europe only because, we wanted to make comparative analysis across countries which were from a similar geographical area rather than across the globe.

The identified sample underwent a selection process based on the following case selection criteria which were chosen by taking account of the reviewed CSC literature.

- **CSSP dyads in the formation phase** (Jamali et al. 2011, p.382)

Given the exploratory purpose and the conceptual approach to interview all parties involved, CSSPs dyads were chosen, consisting of one PSO and one TSO partner during the formation phase. This was because the availability of both partners was seen as essential in light of the understanding that meaningful results can only be achieved if all partners involved are considered.

8 For example, www.responsabilitatesociala.ro or http://www.csrsweden.se
• **Non-economic or social welfare objective** (Sakarya et al. 2012, p. 1713; Jamali et al. 2011, p.382)
  This is the prerequisite for a partnership to be a CSSP; thus, the criterion ensured that only CSSPs with a genuine intention to have a positive societal impact were considered.
• **Non-philanthropic CSSPs** (Austin 2000, p.382)
  CSSPs that are in the philanthropic stage are characterised as charitable donor-recipient relationships. The value flow is rather one-sided which is why it was not found to be a viable studying ground to explore the use of project management.
• **PSOs from different industries** (Holmes & Smart, 2009, p.397)
  As one of the objectives in this research is to examine the role of ‘collaborative context’, the sample should contain organisations from different backgrounds so that any patterns could not be attributed to a specific industry context.
• **CSSPs with differing purposes** (Seitanidi & Crane, 2009, p. 416)
  For this selection criterion the same explanation as to the one above applies. Purpose refers to whether the CSSPs addresses an environmental or social challenge.
• **Scope of CSSP activity** (Birkhölzer et al., 2005; Seitanidi et al., 2010, p. 144)
  CSSPs can focus on the international, national or regional level. It was decided to analyse those CSSPs that have a regional impact because we found it more concrete and relevant to answer the research question. This had not been the case when analysing a national programme or an international organisations that would have had many variables.

An additional criterion was that they are set in different country contexts owing to the importance to examine contextual elements, as elaborated previously, not for convenience or ease-of-access to data. This resulted in a total of four CSSPs and therefore eight interviews. After these interviews, it was decided to include two individual perspectives of TSOs from the UK, irrespective of a particular CSSP, resulting in two in-depth interviews with experienced managers of CSSPs. It is worth noting that the intention was not to build holistic case studies from these two interviews, but they were considered value adding to this research owing to their longstanding experience in CSSPs. Consequently, these two individual perspectives served the purpose of investigating whether the findings in the four holistic case studies were found to hold in other contexts as well, which allowed for the triangulation of results. The information provided by them was only subject to the second stage of the analysis (see 3.5.6.). To sum up, the following table depicts the selected cases and lists all respondents with their respective position and organisational background.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case study # / Country</th>
<th>Respondent #</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 / Romania</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>CSR team member</td>
<td>HP GeBoC (Global e-Business Operations Center)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fundraising &amp; Marketing</td>
<td>Plantam fitpe bune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 / Sweden</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Marketing &amp; Communication</td>
<td>Swedbank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Administrative staff member</td>
<td>Kulturverket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 / United Kingdom</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>William Grant &amp; Sons Distillery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Reserve Manager</td>
<td>Scottish Wildlife Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 / Germany</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>General Manager</td>
<td>Licher Basktürerein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Executive Assistant</td>
<td>Lebenshife Gießen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- / United Kingdom</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Executive Manager</td>
<td>Unity Enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- / United Kingdom</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Senior Corporate Partnerships Executive</td>
<td>Plan UK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1. Overview of selected respondents**
Based on the selection of four partnerships and two individual perspectives, 10 interviews were conducted. All interviews were recorded by means of audio devices and supplemented by note taking (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 321). Further details on the data collection can be found in appendix 3.

As the managers directly responsible for the CSSP were the ‘objects of study’, the aim was to conduct interviews directly with them thereby giving priority to the quality of the information rather than the quantity of interviews. Only few references indicate a suitable number of interviews. While general suggestions in business research state to avoid “the use of small samples” (Webb, 1998, p. 21), others argue that the suitable number of interviews depends on the kind of population from which the sample is drawn (Creswell, 2009) or to research until ‘data saturation’; which means new insights are not generated by collecting more data (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 235). In our case, the sample size arose naturally from the way in which cases were identified and selected which was elucidated in this section and was in line with Eisenhardt (1989, p. 545) who noted that four cases are sufficient for theory building research. The conducted thesis study is thus considered as a small-scale study, which is particularly suitable for the chosen case study research strategy (Hammond & Wellington, 2013, p. 18).

3.5.4. Unit of analysis

A prerequisite to proceed from the elaboration of the data collection to the data analysis is, besides data preparation, the clarification of the unit of analysis. Depending on the research question, the unit of analysis can be focused on individuals, dyads (two-entities), groups, divisions, organisations, the industry or a country (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 67; Hammond & Wellington, 2013, p. 176; Sekaran, 1992, pp. 106–109) or more broadly on an event, a process, a role or a time period (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 26). It is worth noting that the questions in the interview guide were aimed at the ‘units of data collection’ which were, as stated in the sampling design, the individual respondents of respective TSOs or PSOs. The primary unit of analysis, however, was the partnership between the PSO and the TSO which is in line with our research question, how project management is deployed in CSSPs and not how it is deployed in the respective partner organisations. As this is a ‘multisite study’ (Creswell, 2013, p. 97), the ‘primary unit of analysis’ is represented by the four CSSP cases. They are the ‘primary unit of analysis’ because sub-units of analysis had to be defined as the study also aimed to examine contextual elements which resided within the respective partner organisation. Consequently, the ‘sub-unit[s] of analysis’ were the organisations involved in CSSPs. This resulted in an embedded multiple-case design (Yin, 2009, p. 42) which is depicted in the following figure.

![Figure 6. Overview of the unit of analysis](image-url)
These primary and sub-units of analyses were selected after careful consideration of the CSC literature. We are in line with Sakarya et al. (2012, p. 1713), who deployed the social enterprise dyad as unit of analysis and Seitanidi and Crane (2009, p. 416), who chose the ‘partnership’ as unit of analysis, thereby framing a sample of two case studies of two partnerships, instead of four case studies of four organisations. Their rational is in line with ours, to explore the interactions in the form of the selected management concepts and to acknowledge the perspectives by organisational members (ibid).

### 3.5.5. Interview transcription

Carefulness and rigor in data preparation was seen as essential notwithstanding the required commitment of time for the researchers and respondents. Still, each party benefitted: the respondent was able to check whether their answers were captured correctly and the researchers were able to carry out a detailed and truthful analysis of collected data (Bryman, 2008, p. 443). In order for these two processes to start in a timely manner, the recording was checked for the audio quality after finishing the interview and the transcriptions were prepared by the interviewer (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 485). In addition, it was considered important to prepare one’s own transcripts, as this had the advantage of familiarising the reader with the content and to enable starting the data analysis through early note-taking of the transcripts (Gibbs, 2007, p. 15).

At first, field notes were revised and transcripts were prepared so as to change the medium both researchers could have access to the data (Gibbs, 2007, pp. 11, 99). It is worth noting that when only one of us attended the interviews, the other either transcribed or read the transcription thoroughly so that both were equally familiar with the interview content. Following this, transcripts were sent to the respondents to ensure transparency and enable them to approve the transcript. The level of transcription was in line with our exploratory study and interpretivist epistemology which meant that we aimed to capture all content, even if it did not refer directly to the question which had been asked. Hence, the answers were interpreted holistically not question by question. This meant that even if the reply did not directly answer the question, it complemented the answers from other questions. As our interest was not focused on details regarding expression and language but in the factual content, some parts of the transcripts were tidied up to ensure grammatically correct transcripts (Gibbs, 2007, p. 14).

A particular aspect in this research set-up was that data collection took place in four country contexts. This resulted in three interviews which were not held in English. Both interviews for the German case study were conducted in German and one in the Romanian case study in Romanian. This allowed interviewees to express themselves in their own language, to feel more comfortable, convey the right message and avoid cultural and contextual insights being lost (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 541). Still, the translation of these interviews was subject to a degree of interpretation on the side of the interviewer. Yet, we aimed to minimise this bias as each respondent approved the English transcript. Furthermore, three interviews (one with the Romanian PSO representative and the two interviews of the Swedish case study) were held in English as the respondents expressed to feel comfortable with this.

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9 Data access to both researchers was ensured by English transcripts because not all interviews were held in English.
3.5.6. Data analysis procedure

Careful consideration was given to the method of analysis and presentation of case study data because “analysing data is the heart of building theory from case studies” (Eisenhardt, p.539). There are two approaches to analyse qualitative data, either by letting themes emerge freely without prior categorisations or by deploying conceptual frameworks to the analysis and interpretation of data (Maylor & Blackmon, 2005, p. 351). They reflect the tension in qualitative research between openness and structure; on the one hand, remaining open to the data, on the other hand, imposing shape and structure on the analytical process (King, 2004, p. 269). Deploying a structured approach to the data analysis was found suitable because a thesis deadline had to be met and the interview guide was informed by themes from the reviewed literature. Consequently, template analysis was utilised for the analysis of collected qualitative data because it enabled not only to take account of the themes from the literature but was flexible to accommodate emergent categories, which is in line with the inductive approach chosen (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 539; Saunders et al., 2009, p. 506).

Initial template and emerging categories

As template analysis is a structured analysis approach, it allows for the development of an initial template which consists of categories structured in themes prior to the data analysis (King, 2004, p. 257; Saunders et al., 2009, p. 505). This was in line with Yin (2003b, p. 134) who suggests creating “tables that display the data from the individual cases according to some uniform framework”. This template was developed based on the interview guide deployed during the interviews and referred to as a ‘skeleton’ as we were aware that it only provided the initial starting point for the subsequent analysis steps. This was because one of the challenges faced by researchers in analysing data as part of an exploratory study is dealing with emerging themes which were not identified in the literature review (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 140). In our case, we retained the three overarching themes yet had to acknowledge emerging categories. However, only emerging categories were kept that contributed to the research objectives so as to answer the research question. Consequently, these new categories were included in the initial template which was thereby expanded and amended. In fact, by including them in the template, they became part of the two-stage analysis procedure. The template analysis approach was particularly suitable in this respect owing to its flexibility in allowing amendment of the categories throughout the process so that the template was incrementally adjusted and the balance between within and across case analysis (King, 2004, p. 257). This was done by changing the level of codes in the hierarchy, deleting or adding codes and changing their scope as the analysis unfolded (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 507).

Data analysis in two stages – level 1 and level 2

Data analysis began with the interview transcription and the coding procedure. The latter was the meaningful dissection of the transcript information, field notes and additional documents (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56). Regarding the analysis procedure, a mixed-strategy was deployed by combining case oriented and variable-oriented approaches owing to the complexity of the phenomenon (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 176). This resulted in a two-stage analysis procedure which the following figure depicts.
In analysis level 1, the primary unit of analysis, the CSSPs, were analysed within and across cases to identify patterns as well as differing and emerging aspects (Bryman, 2008, p. 387; Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 539; Hammond & Wellington, 2013, p. 27). The aforementioned ‘initial template’ was deployed and gradually refined which Miles and Hubermann (1994, p. 176) referred to as “stacking comparable cases”. At first, within-case analysis was performed by filling each case into the template according to the identified categories. This enabled to cope with the large amount of data and enabled the familiarisation with each case ‘as a stand-alone entity’ (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 540). Second, the case-level displays were juxtaposed resulting in a final template which enabled the cross-case comparison to identify similarities and differences across cases according to the template categories (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 540; Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 178). An excel worksheet was used to accommodate the final template.

Analysis level 2 built on this by including the two individual TSO perspectives to elaborate on the categories on the organisational level discerned in the analysis level 1 and those for which the critical discussion added value. This allowed for the triangulation of findings. Triangulation in this thesis study does not mean the use of differing data collection techniques (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 146) but rather to further elucidate and corroborate the initial findings and evidence, from the first analysis level, with additional sources of evidence, by distinguishing the perspectives of TSOs and PSOs thereby ensuring internal validity (Creswell, 2013, p. 251). This is what Hammond and Wellington (2013, p. 145) referred to as ‘triangulation of sources’ which is the consideration of different perspectives about an event or phenomenon.

3.6. Ethical considerations

This thesis followed the ethical guidelines for social science research by ensuring that no harm is caused to the participants and was conducted in compliance with policies of the Umeå Business School and Umeå University. Throughout the thesis work, various ethical aspects were considered: in formulating our research topic, we exerted the right to select a topic of our interest, without external influences from sponsors. As we gained access to information, we considered the participants’ right to be fully informed and the right to privacy. No coercion was used and participants had the right to informed consent, safety, confidentiality and to withdraw at any time (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 188). We informed the respondents at the beginning that the thesis will be made publicly available and outlined our research aims. Furthermore, matters of anonymity and confidentiality were addressed to each interviewee. All respondents agreed that the organisations and their position could be stated, but their names were not disclosed and they were therefore referred to as “respondent #”. Furthermore, each transcript was used as the basis for analysis after the consent of the respondent was given and the interview recording and other data was stored for no other reason than this thesis research.

10 This analysis step is reflected in chapter 4
11 See appendix 6: final template
4. Introduction to empirical part

This chapter will give an overview of the analysed organisations and will present the four CSSPs. The aim is to familiarise the reader with each case ‘as a stand-alone entity’ and is as such the outcome of the first part, the within-case analysis, in the first level of analysis (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 540). The information presented in this section is based on the qualitative material collected by means of semi-structured interviews (primary data) and document analysis (secondary data). The reader is encouraged to consult the appendix for background information on the country context. The following table provides an overview of the four cases which are presented in sections 4.1. – 4.4.\textsuperscript{12}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case # / country</th>
<th>PSO / TSO</th>
<th>Industry and activities</th>
<th>CSSP / focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case 1/ Romania</td>
<td>GeBoC</td>
<td>Subsidiary of the multinational information technology corporation Hewlett-Packard</td>
<td>Joint tree planting / environmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plantam fapte bune</td>
<td>Environmental civil society initiative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 2/ Sweden</td>
<td>Swedbank</td>
<td>Stock-listed Swedish bank</td>
<td>Fair Opera Project / social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kulturverket</td>
<td>Cultural organization, involve youth in cultural life of Umeå</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 3/ UK</td>
<td>William Grant &amp; Sons Distillery</td>
<td>Family-owned distillery with international operations</td>
<td>Juniper Recovery Project / environmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scottish Wildlife Trust</td>
<td>Environmental activities across Scotland</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 4/ Germany</td>
<td>Licher Basketbären</td>
<td>Sports management, professional basketball club</td>
<td>Event-based / social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lebenshilfe Gießen</td>
<td>Supports and works with disabled children and adults</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Overview of the four case studies

The chapter concludes in section 4.5. with the presentation of the two individual TSOs which are subject to the second level of analysis.

4.1. Case study 1

The CSSP – Plantam fapte bune (We Plant Good Deeds) in Romania

In the spring of 2013, the partnership between Global eBusiness Operations Center (GeBOC) and Plantam fapte bune started as an initiative of GeBOC to plant trees by involving a certain number of employees in Armășești, Ialomița County, Romania. The initiative is part of GeBOC’s pillar of environmental activities in CSR and it was established as a short term partnership with the scope of two planting activities, in spring and in autumn 2013.

PSO partner- GeBOC Romania

GeBoC Romania is the local subsidiary of Hewlett-Packard, an American multinational information technology corporation headquartered in the United States. In Romania, the company has owned the local organisation GeBOC in Bucharest since 2005. GeBOC has been involved in many CSR initiatives, such as cleaning and rehabilitating parks in Bucharest, collaborations with social centres for elderly people or children and rehabilitation of forests (Giuclea, 2012). The organisation organises its CSR activities in three pillars: civic, social and environmental.

\textsuperscript{12} The table resembles Jamali et al. (2011, p. 381)
Without an assigned team or function responsible for the CSR initiatives, these activities are accomplished by the employees on a volunteering basis, up to a quarter of his/her regular work. The CSR responsibilities and the work performance are related, since employees that need improvements in their work performance should not be engaged in CSR activities as respondent 1 detailed.

**TSO partner - Plantam fapte bune**

Plantam fapte bune [English: We Plant Good Deeds] is an environmental civil society initiative which has been running at the national level in Romania since 2011. The aim of the initiative is to build awareness and to report illegal deforestation, to plant trees on public lands that are currently not included in the forest area, to monitor these planting initiatives and to conduct maintenance work. The objective of the organisation is to cover 300 hectares of forest in Romania, out of which 50 hectares have been already covered. The team is very ambitious: “We want to reach those 300 hectares and 50,000 people involved already as volunteers”. It is scheduled to run for a period of 5 years, according to respondent 2. The reforestation activities take place in several counties and each county has its own team responsible for the region. The organisational structure is not well defined and “our people are good at everything”, as respondent 2 described it. Although partnerships with private sector organisations exist in specific periods, the activities occur on a regular basis and sometimes continue from year to year. The initiative was awarded several prizes such as the first prize in the Civil Society Gala in 2012 in the environmental section and in the National Volunteer Gala concerning environmental protection. In April 2013, the organisation received the High Patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Margarita of Romania (Plantam Fapte Bune, 2013).

### 4.2. Case study 2

**The CSSP on the Fair Opera Project**

Umeå, a city in the Västerbotten region in Sweden, is going to be the European Capital of Culture in 2014 (Umeå2014). One of the initiatives during the ECOC 2014 is the Fair Opera project. It is a five year project, involving children, students, music academies, a symphony orchestra and professional librettist and composers and will be inaugurated in March 2014. The Fair Opera project started in 2010, when children aged 5-8 years discussed with their teachers the meanings of four subjects: expression, progress, justice and dignity. Following this, they created rules for what fair music means and they created music, based on these rules, using computers. Afterwards, older children developed this work. In the meantime, a story competition took place in Umeå having the same four subjects as topics. The stories were passed to University of Umeå, where students transformed these stories into librettos. These librettos, together with the music created by the children, were sent to music academies in Riga, Piteå, Rome and Perugia. The outcomes were later delivered to composer Jan Sandström and librettist KG Johansson, who will create a full length opera for Umeå2014 (Hammar, 2013a). Apart from the main event in March, the performance will take place, at a slightly smaller scale, in May 2014 as well, during the Growth Days organised by the PSO partner, Swedbank.
**PSO partner - Swedbank**

Swedbank is a Swedish based bank offering retail banking, asset management, financial, and other services (Bloomberg, 2012). The cornerstones of Swedbank’s strategy are a large customer base, investment in long-term relationships, decision-making close to the customer, maintaining a low risk level and industry-leading cost efficiency. At the end of the first quarter of 2013, the organisation had 14,413 employees (Swedbank, 2010). Swedbank’s community engagement is through various initiatives and with a wide range of organisations in Sweden. The cooperative affairs team is based in Stockholm and works with larger central agreements. Swedbank invests in a “sustainable society, that grows naturally, where people want to live, they can work, they have meaningful spare time” and adapts its CSR strategy to the needs of the country, as the person responsible for marketing and communications emphasised. An example is the ‘Young Jobs’ in Sweden, project that aims to reduce the youth unemployment, together with the Swedish Public Employment Service and the Savings Banks. Similarly, the ‘Young Economy’ project which educates young people in private finance matters, in collaboration with the Swedish Institute of Private Finance.

**TSO partner - Kulturverket**

Kulturverket is an organisation in the city of Umeå which was inaugurated in 2006. It aims to involve children and youth in the cultural and artistic life of the city. Through their initiatives, children meet artists and cultural workers such as: filmmakers, musicians, librarians or artists working in animation, photography and technology. The organisation has developed two working methods: “Kids tell the pro’s what to do”, based on children coming up with ideas and being the creators, while the professionals “make it happen” (Hammar, 2013b). This is where Kulturverket brings in professionals to make these ideas reality. Through the second method, “Where’s the art in Research?”, the organisation aims to involve children in the process of research. Kulturverket will be involved in ECoC 2014 by means of a variety of projects, like Fair City, Fair Game or Fair Opera Most projects start in the schools but will be presented professionally – e.g. in the NorrlandsOperan, in theatre venues or in the Museum of Contemporary Art in Umeå.

### 4.3. Case study 3

**The CSSP on the Ayrshire Juniper Recovery Project**

The declining population of juniper plant in Scotland gave rise to this partnership project. It was formed between the Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT) and the William Grant & Sons Distillery (the distillery) to understand and tackle this environmental problem in Scotland. It was initiated by the PSO and it is framed as a 2-year programme in the time between August 2012 and 2014, and was on-going during the time of the research. The Ayrshire Juniper Recovery Project aims to prevent the decline of juniper by growing on cuttings from mature specimens and using them to replace the parent plants before they die out. The project is implemented by the SWT and the Scottish Rural College, which was brought on board by the SWT, as well as volunteers from the distillery at the Grey Hill Grasslands Reserve of the SWT. Juniper is used to produce gin and as the distillery produces Hendrick’s Gin, there was a great interest from their side in the preservation of this natural species in Scotland. The project was initiated and made possible by a £12,840 grant from the charity committee of the distillery (Rowe, 2013). An aspect which both partners independently mentioned was the pivotal aspect of learning in the project about this endangered species in Scotland.
PSO partner – William Grant & Sons Distillery
Established in 1887, the independent family-owned distillery operates internationally today. The company wholly owns the distribution in its key markets: the UK, the United States, China and Taiwan. In addition, joint ventures and third party arrangements for the distribution exist around the world. The most famous brands in the portfolio of the company are the single malt whiskeys Glenfiddich – celebrating its 125 year anniversary last year – and Balvenie. In addition, the company’s Hendrick’s gin, whose juniper for the production is sourced all over Europe, is reported to have led the super-premium gin segment. In September 2013, the company reported a record turnover of 1.06bn GBP which was a year-on-year increase of 1.6% (WGS, 2013). Responsible marketing and responsible drinking is at the core of its own Code of Marketing. In terms of charitable donations, the company’s policy is to donate 1% of its annual group profit before tax to charities around the world. This ranges from 1½ to 2 million pounds per year and has been steadily growing which lead to the revision of the structure of this policy. But in general, a company director remarked that “Any money that is not spent during one year gets accrued to the next year” and explained the main criteria in this policy “They are generally Scottish, can support cultural and endemic causes, money must make a material difference and they are generally not health oriented”. Overall, the company has on-going partnerships, like the Ayrshire Juniper Recovery project or others which are project-by-project.

TSO partner – Scottish Wildlife Trust
The SWT is registered in Scotland yet affiliated to The Wildlife Trusts, a UK-wide network of 47 Trusts with more than 2,000 wildlife reserves on the national level. In Scotland, the organisation has about 40,000 members and 8 reserve managers are looking after the organisation’s reserves in Scotland. For example, respondent 6 in the study is responsible for 17 nature reserves in South West Scotland. There are other organisational elements such as a marketing and fundraising department, wildlife watch and a people and wildlife department. In addition, the SWT has three visitor centres across Scotland that are managed by dedicated staff. The organisation has a very open stance towards collaborations and is willing to work with whoever wants to contribute, PSOs or TSOs alike. Respondent 6 stated that “We generally work with partnerships because that is the way we get things done” which further underlines this.

4.4. Case study 4

The CSSP
The social partnership between the Licher Basketbären (PSO) [English: Lich Basketball Bears] and the Lebenshilfe Gießen (TSO) [English: Life Help Gießen], was formed in August 2013 and was still on-going during the research. Both organisations are situated in a region about 55km north of Frankfurt in Germany and are strongly rooted there as respondent 7 from the PSO emphasised: “My mind-set has always been driven by the conviction to work in the region and for the region”. The idea for a social partnership arose from the side of the PSO because their organisational structure is heavily volunteer-based and some of them are associated with the Lebenshilfe Gießen. The partnership does not have an official project name and there is not a contractual basis or any other formal agreement between the organisations. However, it was publicly announced in the German news via the internet and local newspaper in October 2013 (TheBloob, 2013). The CSSP objective is to encourage contact between professional basketball players and disabled children and adults as well as the two organisations thereby increasing the
intersection of both organisations during joint events such as the open day at the Lebenshilfe Gießen in December 2013 in which the basketball club participated with the entire basketball team as well as the active support of volunteers from the Lebenshilfe during the building and removal when setting-up the basketball arena before and after the games. Also, Lebenshilfe Gießen is invited to attend games, present what they are doing, disseminate flyers or collect donations (via their donation tin) at events organised by the Licher Basketbären. There are more joint events planned, particularly focused on the provision of fundraising possibilities for the TSO during basketball games and volunteer support for the PSO.

**PSO partner – Licher Basketbären**
The basketball division of the basketball club ‘TV 1860 Lich’ was founded in 1962. The team increasingly professionalised and started playing in the second German league in 1992. Shortly after this, the team hired trainers from the United States and even made their way to play in the first German basketball league, thereby becoming a professional basketball club. Since July 2009, the club has been using the name ‘Licher Basketbären’ and is now playing in the ProB league in Germany (Basketbären, 2011). The organisational structure of the management is very flat. There is one general manager (respondent 7) who emphasised that “we are strongly shaped by volunteer workers” because he is supported by volunteers and one part-time staff member. They report to one business executive and five company partners. Important decisions are made jointly. The organisation has been collaborating with 2-3 local enterprises; for example, a marketing agency which was responsible for re-shaping the company logo and to design print materials. The two social partnerships that the organisation has (one with Lebenshilfe Gießen which is subject of this research and another with a local organisation that cares for families whose children are waiting for donor organs) are at an early stage but the organisation’s aim is the development of these current partnerships and potentially to even include 2-3 new partnerships in the future.

**TSO partner – Lebenshilfe Gießen**
The Lebenshilfe Gießen is strongly driven by its vision to live in an inclusive society by taking the needs of disabled people seriously, using knowledge, experience and creativity. At the heart of the organisation is the support of people with disabilities and their families in their daily lives so that they can have a more positive, successful and happy life. This is achieved by providing education, housing and work for disabled children and adults in the region (Lebenshilfe, 2013). The organisation has a decentralised structure and has been active for over 50 years in the region. Thus, it is very established and well known through fundraising activities such as a vintage car raffle since 1995. Through a professional organisational structure as well as clear allocation of responsibilities, the organisation ensures a fruitful and positive working atmosphere. Contact with PSOs in social partnerships has been scarce as this form of collaboration is less of interest to the Lebenshilfe Gießen “Everyone knows us here in the region, thus we do not need to engage in marketing or acquisition activities” (respondent 8). In fact, the efforts, such as including volunteers from a PSO, tend to outweigh the benefits for the organisation. Still, events such as ‘Social days’ are held in which employees of large local employers are invited to participate (e.g. renovating buildings) and people often donate or want to do events with the Lebenshilfe Gießen for which the organisation will receive a donation.
4.5. Individual perspectives from third sector organisations

In addition to the four case studies, individual TSO perspectives were considered with two in-depth interviews. The data from these interviews was collected after the completion of the eight interviews for the case studies and was used for the second level analysis.

Unity Enterprise

The social enterprise ‘Unity Enterprise’ is a registered charity in the UK whose business operations focus on Western Scotland. It is committed to the promotion of the ability of people to ensure full cultural, social and economic inclusion within their community. The organisation was founded in 1989 and its business model is based on the provision of quality services, resulting in activities in the areas of career centres, housing support services, community care, education, training, business partnerships, catering and cafés (Unity Enterprise, 2012). Unity Enterprise has a people-centred approach by not providing dedicated office-space but rather by ensuring that they are “as close as possible to the services that we provide, so that we don’t become too hierarchical or too structured. We keep the focus and the regular contact with our service users, so that they don’t become statistics, but they are people” as the Executive Manager elucidated. This results in a very flat organisational structure which is divided into geographical areas. The organisation has had business partnerships since 2010 when it won a contract to provide the catering services to a construction company which built infrastructure for the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow in 2014. The respondent explained that “out of that one contract we actually had four other contracts” which resulted in new business partnerships, all construction related, which were still on-going during the time of the research.

Plan UK

The umbrella organisation of Plan UK is Plan International which has over 8,000 staff in 48 countries with its focus on working with children in the world’s poorest countries by focusing on education, health, child protection and participation, economic security and water and sanitation (Plan UK, 2013). Plan UK is divided into two major divisions: one having a programmatic focus and the other a public engagement focus. The management of corporate partnerships is done regularly and is part of the public engagement division. Overall, the charity has a broad experience of working with the private sector and particularly large organisations as a Senior Corporate Partnerships Executive elucidated “We have a quite steady and maintained portfolio of partnerships as it is something that we have improved upon and really grown over the past 4 or 5 years and we see it as a key part of our fundraising strategy”.
5. Analysis

The analysis of the collected data underwent two analysis levels. Based on the within-case analysis which enabled the presentation of empirical findings (chapter 4), the first level (5.1.) revealed similarities and differences across CSSP cases as well as emerging categories that were then partially addressed in the second analysis level (5.2.) which took on the perspective of PSOs and TSOs. The two analysis levels reflect the unit of analysis, the ‘focus of attention in a study’ (Hammond & Wellington, 2013, p. 149). Hence, the CSSP - the primary unit of analysis - was examined in the first level and the respective organisations - the sub-units of analysis - in the second level.13

5.1. First level of analysis

In line with the comparative case study research strategy, the four cases were compared in the first level of analysis so as to identify common and differing aspects as well as emerging categories. From the 27 categories of the final template, 21 were subject to the comparative analysis across cases and 6 categories emerged. The following matrix provides a structured overview of the categories from the final template which were subject to this first level analysis those indicated with a star (*) will be subject of the second level analysis as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Similarities</th>
<th>Differences</th>
<th>Emerging categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Motivation</em></td>
<td>*General CSSP</td>
<td>*Industry context as external</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Contribution</em></td>
<td><em>experience</em></td>
<td><em>impelling factor</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Experience with partner</em></td>
<td><em>Challenge</em></td>
<td><em>Project engagement</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>CSSP objective</em></td>
<td><em>Conflicts</em></td>
<td><em>Proximity</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>CSSP process</em></td>
<td><em>Knowledge management and learning</em></td>
<td><em>Use and management of volunteers</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>CSSP characteristic</em></td>
<td><em>Initiator</em></td>
<td><em>Marketing</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Timeframe</em></td>
<td><em>Partner selection</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Initiator</em></td>
<td><em>Planning</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Partner selection</em></td>
<td><em>Risk analysis</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Stakeholder analysis</em></td>
<td><em>Project team</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Level of trust</em></td>
<td><em>Level of trust</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Partnership agreement</td>
<td>*Partnership agreement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Resource identification</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8. Overview matrix of analysis level 1

The figure clearly shows that the comparative analysis revealed more similarities than differences across the four CSSPs according to the analysis criteria. To elucidate this, the first two sub-sections discuss the identified similarities (5.1.1.) and differences (5.1.2.), complemented with emerging categories in the concluding sub-section (5.1.3.). The paragraph headings are guiding means indicating which categories are discussed.

5.1.1. Similarities across cases

*Fairly short timeframe and mutually beneficial CSSPs*

As the presentation of empirical data (see 4.1. - 4.4) revealed, all CSSPs had been ongoing during the time of the research and were set for a distinct period for shorter than two year, except for the German CSSP. This could be explained by the fact that it had been initiated four months prior to this research and was event-based at this stage.

13 The final template, which was the bases for the data analysis, can be found in the appendix 6.
Another similarity was that all CSSPs were characterised as mutually beneficial. Related to this, respondent 7 from the German PSO mentioned: “If you look at it in detail, I believe that, the more value is probably on the side of the Lebenshilfe [TSO]. But I really don’t have a problem with this, quite the opposite actually.” or respondent 5 in the British PSO “We went into it, knowing that it would be mutually beneficial all along the way because obviously it is something that the SWT [TSO] is interested in and we were going in to learn and we have learned.”. This was confirmed by the TSO respondent 6 “To me it feels as though we are getting the most out of it (…) but hopefully the distillery [PSO] is getting something out in terms of publicity but the staff also enjoys the fact that they are involved”. The aspects raised in terms of motivational drivers will be discussed at a later stage.

**PSO as CSSP initiator and approaches in partner selection**
In the analysed CSSPs the initiator was always the PSO, TSOs do approach PSOs as well, however, if they want to realise projects but do not have the financial means “We started out the normal way applying everywhere for money because we realised we would not be able to afford to turn our ideas into reality with just that kind of money” (respondent 4). The reasons for initiation, namely the organisational drivers, were largely similar across PSOs and across TSOs but are discussed at a later stage.

Worth noting is the Swedish CSSP because there was an intermediary involved, Umeå2014, through which the PSO identified the project with the TSO. In that case, partner selection, in terms of matching organisations, was largely done by the intermediary organisation. Interestingly, although also largely PSO-driven, the formation was different in the Romanian and the British CSSPs. While in the former, the PSO had a dedicated budget for certain activities and was thus looking for a partner to do the activity with (i.e. to plant trees), in the latter, the PSO requested that the TSO develop a plan which respondent 5 elucidated: “The SWT [TSO] pulled together a plan which had a funding requirement and I was able to go to our charitable giving group and showed them the plan and asked if they were prepared to fund it”. These different approaches ultimately had an impact on the partner selection. Another aspect in partner selection was the existence of prior ties between the organisation which was the case in the British and German CSSPs. Notwithstanding this, the British PSO had a ‘charitable policy’ according to which partners are selected.

**Differing perceptions on the partnership process**
The empirical data revealed that the partnerships did not unfold according to a pre-described pattern. Respondent 1 remarked that “the relationship grew in an informal way”, in line with respondent 5 who summarised the formation phase “it was far more informal than actual milestones, it was just sort of 2-3 meetings, visit of the location itself, the refining of the plan, the identification of the financial resource need and then the agreement to fund”. In terms of the perception on the entire CSSP, the perspective of the TSOs and PSOs largely differed. While TSOs tended to describe the entire project, the PSOs rather referred to the part in which they were involved. For example the TSO in the British CSSP (case 3) had a much broader conception of the whole project by outlining the different milestones and even noting that the level of communication between PSO and TSO became less after the initial first milestones of planning and receiving the commitment of the PSO to fund it. Similarly, the Romanian TSO described the project wider than the PSO, including the acquisition of materials and tools and project communication.
No joint project team or partnership agreement at the start
In the absence of a joint project team across all four cases, the individual partner organisation had one dedicated person who was the contact for the respective partner. This point of contact, however, had a role in the organisation which was not exclusively dedicated to the management of the CSSP. The use of single points of contacts resulted in a rather informal way of communication: “Calling in to say hello - I should probably do that. It cannot hurt for the relationship to keep it going”. In addition to the rather informal aspects, no formal partnership agreement was set at any of the analysed CSSPs from the start. In the British CSSP, an agreement was signed after the decision was made about how to implement the project. Respondent 6 from the TSO remarked that “It is quite unusual, it is quite trusting about what other people will do”. In the Swedish CSSP, the TSO and PSO had separate agreements with an intermediary organisation that acted as enabler of the partnership whereas in the Romanian and German CSSPs, there was no partnership agreement between the organisations. Respondent 7 from the German PSO explained “Sure, if there are important financial transactions which have to be secured, a contract is needed. But this social partnership is built on a different basis. It works well with looking into each other’s eyes and trust”. The notion of trust versus formal structures in CSSPs was thus an important category which emerged in aspects throughout the interviews.

Lack of joint activities – risk and stakeholder analysis and identification of resources
Noticeable in the empirical data was the fact that the four case studies were similar in the absence of the following three CSSP aspects; the joint identification of resources, joint risk and stakeholder analysis in the CSSPs. The respondents in cases 1, 2 and 3 negated to have collectively identified resources for the CSSP whereas the German PSO mentioned that “We met several times and discussed jointly how we can contribute to the respective other organisation” (respondent 7), this, however, was informal and at the very beginning of the relationship when a CSSP was not directly intended by the organisations. The aspect of risk analysis was interesting because, although there was no joint risk analysis for the CSSPs, as one respondent admitted “I have done a mental risk analysis”, risks were considered in the respective organisations. The empirical data showed that the side which was in charge of the project implementation – which were the TSOs in case 1, 2, 3 – considered risks more thoroughly. This concerned project implementation risks such as bad weather conditions, in both environmental CSSPs, whereas both CSSPs with a social/cultural focus (cases 2, 4) were less concerned about risk; respondent 4 even stated that the project implementation was not a risk for the TSO but it could be for the PSO if they get less publicity than expected. However, this potential risk of negative publicity for the PSO was stated to be no concern by the German PSO “everyone knows about our dedication and commitment to include volunteers from the Lebenshilfe [TSO], so there won’t be any problem even if something should go wrong” (respondent 7). The aspect of being dependent on the PSO and their judgement on how things are done was perceived by the Swedish TSO as risk: “I think that from an artistic/creative point of view, the biggest risk is that you are not free” (respondent 4), which was mitigated by describing the project from the beginning in a wide sense, to allow for flexibility. Another aspect was that the PSOs (in cases 2, 4) emphasised the importance of being involved in the CSSP more than purely financially; TSOs (in cases 1, 2, 3) stressed the financial risk owing to the project dependence on the financial contribution of the respective PSO. This is another aspect where it became clear that PSO and TSO notions differ in terms of managerial aspects.
The absence of a joint stakeholder analysis was similar across all four CSSPs. It goes without saying that stakeholders differ across projects but it is interesting to note that stakeholder analysis still was considered on an organisational level in a rather informal way in some cases, a respondent confessed “I am sure I did a mental analysis of the partners”. For example, both organisations performed an individual stakeholder analysis in the Romanian CSSP. While the PSO focused mainly on internal aspects such as employee participation and budget approval, the TSO emphasised external stakeholders such as authority approval or contracts with transportation companies. Similarly, the Swedish PSO focused on the results for their customers whereas the TSO considered the participants in the project in case 2. The reason why a formal internal stakeholder analysis was not deemed appropriate was stated in one case: “In a way, I am very close to the various stakeholders from our internal side. It did not require formal stakeholder analysis” (respondent 5).

No prior experience in partnering together and good level of trust
The partners in all of the four cases had not collaborated in a CSSP together before. Still there had been prior connections between the organisations in cases 3 and 4. In the British CSSP, the PSO had been funding a previous project of the TSO before and the German PSO had been supported by volunteers from the TSO. In other words, there had been points of contacts between the partners in these two cases prior to the CSSP which bolstered their confidence to engage in a CSSP with the respective partner. Still, trust had to be built throughout the project which was the result of fulfilling the commitments the partners had made to each other as respondent 5 explained. As more commitments were agreed to and subsequently fulfilled as promised, the level of trust increased which in turn led to more significant commitments in the CSSP. Similarly, in the Romanian CSSP it was observed that the level of trust increased as the partnership unfolded because it had been lower at the beginning, as the partners had not collaborated before. Particularly in one incident very early on - when the provision of funds from the PSO was at stake - the TSO responded with professionalism despite the possibility of withdrawing the sponsorship. This increased the level of trust, as respondent 1 from the PSO emphasised. Furthermore, the previously discussed reputation of an organisation and the willingness to engage in a CSSP was found to be closely connected to the level of trust between organisations. “They were very trusting perhaps because the SWT is a big organisation with a great reputation” (respondent 6). Another aspect concerning trust was raised in the German CSSP (case 4) because a strong foundation of trust was found to be essential owing to the absence of a formal contractual basis of the partnership.

Project planning done by TSO and differing contributions of partners
Concerning CSSP planning, it was found that the CSSP project planning was done by TSOs in three cases. The exception to this was the German CSSP where planning was done jointly by means of meetings and contact of the managers responsible in the respective organisations. This was not the case in the other CSSPs because the TSOs were in charge of project implementation and thus responsible for the project planning (cases 1, 2, 3). For example in the Romanian CSSP, the planning was already done from the TSO side in the previous year. In contrast, the planning from the side of the PSO concerned budget planning and was thus mainly formal which had started already in the previous year on an organisational level and independent of this CSSP. The Swedish PSO also mentioned the need for formality when reporting on the sponsorship to the tax authorities.
In the British CSSP (case 3), the TSO made a plan that had a funding requirement; it had not been a top priority project because the TSO could have not done it alone and thus the funding from the PSO was essential. This was the case as well in the Swedish and Romanian CSSPs in which the project was enabled through the PSO funding but implemented by the TSO expertise. This dependency of the project on the mutual contribution; “often it is the expertise that comes from the NGO’s; the business then provides in-kind contributions such as employment or something like that” (respondent 6). In addition, TSOs contributed with volunteers, developed the project plan, as previously stated, and managed the project as they were responsible for the project implementation. In the case of an event-based CSSP such as cases 1, 2 and 4, the TSOs were primarily responsible for organising the event and for the administrative part. Whereas, monetary donation and voluntary staff participation were the primary means by which PSOs contributed in three CSSPs. Only in the German CSSPs did the contribution of partners differ. While volunteers from the TSO supported the PSO before and after the games and the TSO was able to collect donations during the games, the PSO participated in the open day of the TSO with the entire basketball team.

Largely no joint identification of partnership objective

The partnership objective was only identified in the German CSSP (case 4) as encouraging contact between professional basketball players and disabled children and adults. In the other cases, however, the objective differed across PSOs and TSOs but was largely the same within the two groups. The TSOs focus mainly on the project objective whereas the PSOs had a primarily business-oriented focus. A project focus means that, for example, the TSO in the British CSSP aimed to evaluate the state of juniper, expand it by using seeds and identifying additional locations. This was similar to the Romanian TSO’s objective to plant 300 hectares of forest with the help of 50,000 volunteers. The business focus is reflected in the PSO objective of customers satisfaction in the case of Swedbank “Image and external awareness are central because local partnerships and marketing are in a close relationship; a social partnership has inevitably marketing aspects to it” (respondent 7). Similarly, respondent 6 from the distillery remarked the need for a public relations resource. Although it appeared initially that PSO’s objectives were rather long-term and intangible such as the investment in society, as respondent 3 and 7 agreed; the former stated that “the objectives are not purely financial, this is more connected to our long term determination that we want to build this society where you can live, work and have a meaningful spare time” and the latter “we are seeing a social responsibility to give something back to people, to include them and to do good for people”. It turned out that the TSO actually had the longer-term objectives closely related to the project unlike the PSOs whose mindset towards CSSP timeframe was influenced by their industry setting. This will be discussed as emerging category concerning external driving factors.

In terms of CSSP contribution and objectives, a correlation was found across the cases. The empirical data showed that contributions were quite complimentary and reflected the respective CSSP objective. In this respect, the Romanian PSO’s objective was to involve a number of employees as volunteers and the contribution (apart from the donation) was the volunteers themselves. The objective of their TSO partner was to plant a certain amount of trees and the contribution, respectively, was related directly to the activity of planting trees by purchasing seedlings and tools. Similarly, the objective of the Swedish TSO was to involve children, students and professionals in the cultural life of Umeå and to bring art into social science.
Respectively, its contribution was the preparation of the artistic performance and the coordination of the children, students and professionals for the event. The common objective in the German CSSP was to increase the visibility of the organisations at events and to enable the interaction of basketball players and disabled people; consequently, the contribution was to mutually participate in events of the respective partner. The same finding is applicable to the British CSSP in which the TSO aimed to save the juniper plant and it contributed with the development of the plan on how to realise this and it managed the project.

**Motivation to engage in CSSPs on organisational level**

Noticeable in the data was that the motivation to engage in CSSPs was similar across TSOs and also across PSOs in the four cases. Concerning the former, the PSO’s reputation in terms of their name and reliability and the need for financial resources and volunteers was relevant for the TSOs in cases 1, 2, 3. The PSO’s motivation to engage in CSSPs was driven by the reputation of, or prior ties, with the TSO and the urge to help “because we have a brand of gin; I was told that there was a rare stand of juniper that was threatened very close by where our gin is made so it seemed a good idea to learn more about juniper by supporting doing it in a way through the SWT [TSO]” (respondent 5) or “we want to give something back to the region and the local area. We have been working with local partners and we see ourselves in a responsibility to give something back socially” (respondent 7). In the Romanian PSO, the organisational motivation was to give employees the possibility to become involved. The aforementioned publicity and marketing drivers for the PSO occurred in cases 2, 3, 4.

5.1.2. Differences across cases

**Differing levels of previous experience with CSSPs**

The PSOs and TSOs in the four CSSPs had differing previous experiences with partnering, ranging from none, little to extensive. On the PSOs side, GeBOC (case 1) had extensive experience in working with partnerships which is reflected in the internal division of the CSR activities in three pillars, with 3-5 partnerships for each pillar. Similarly, the British PSO had a charitable policy and a “longstanding historical collaborations” (respondent 5). The local branch of the PSO in the Swedish CSSP had few experiences in partnering, as the major partnerships are managed centralised at the office in Stockholm and the German PSO had experience with local partners. Each PSO had experience in supporting different causes: the Romanian PSO both environmental and social, the British PSO focused its actions on all causes except for health-related issues, the Swedish PSO on children/youth and the German PSO on social causes. As the experience among PSOs was rather mixed, the analysed TSOs seemed more experienced. The British TSO (case 3) had a broad experience with partnering “We generally work with partnerships because that is the way we get things done” (respondent 6) and for the Romanian TSO, the funds from the private sector were the main source of funding of its projects. On the other hand, CSSPs are a new trend in Sweden “we realised it is possible, so that was kind of an eye opener, people do want to contribute” (respondent 4) whereas in Germany, the TSO showed reluctance to engage in social partnerships owing to the additional administrative work that it generates.
Challenges differed across CSSPs

Although the challenges vary across the four CSSPs they were related first, to the type of project (social or environmental), second, to the degree of interaction between the partners and third, to its nature as an internal or external challenge. The two environmental CSSPs, coped with the unpredictability of weather conditions as a determinant factor for project success. Moreover, the reliance of volunteers from the PSO involved the challenge of involving people who are not trained to work manual labour outdoors. Regarding the social/cultural CSSP, it was found that while the monetary contribution enabled the initiation of the partnership project in cases 1, 2, 3, the requirements PSO’s had to be respected by the TSO. This ‘dependency relationship’ may create a conflict for the TSO because of the potential to lose financial resources, time and energy working on the PSO requirements. Moreover, the PSO may represent a constraint for artistic freedom if the TSO has to ask for the consent of the PSO for changes in the project. It also appeared challenging for TSOs to predict the outcome of an artistic performance, whereas environmental projects seem better placed to determine clear outcome parameters, such as the number of trees to be planted and the number of volunteers to be involved (cases 1 and 3). In addition, predicting the workload itself can become difficult for the TSO when extra activities are agreed with the PSO; efforts that may not be visible from the PSO’s side. The degree of interaction impacted on the collaboration and the challenges that the partnership faced. For example in the British CSSP “the project does not require that much interaction with the distillery at this stage” (respondent 5) and consequently not many partnership challenges occurred. An interesting case is the Swedish CSSP, as the intermediary’s involvement (Umeå2014) led to decreased communication between the two partners and consequently, to fewer challenges as most of the work (e.g. financial management) was managed by the intermediary.

Another challenging aspect that can occur is the perceived misalignment when it comes to the processes of planning. In one case, the PSO believed that the flat organisation insured little bureaucracy, whereas the TSO saw the planning process of the PSO more bureaucratic. This is why the respondent 7 from the German PSO stated “I am honestly saying that I am not a friend of bureaucracy” and thus encouraged a rather informal way of working. Another challenge was the agreement how to implement the project. This was the case in the British CSSP as the PSO and TSO had different aims; while the TSO wished the endemic population of juniper to be preserved and expanded using only juniper from one site, the distillery argued that the expansion could happen more quickly if plants from other places were used. Also financial challenges occurred in the Romanian CSSP. The uncertainty at the partnership initiation was high, as the PSO could cancel sponsoring the activity and announced this to the TSO: “it was awkward to tell them that the project could be cancelled”, as respondent 1 revealed. Initially seen as an internal challenge for the PSO, it affected both partners.

Conflicts rarely occurred

Unlike challenges, CSSP conflicts were not frequently discussed in the interviews and occurred mostly at the level of the individual organisations. In the Romanian PSO, the activity to plant trees was part of the CSR programme for which one budget was assigned and the activity thus competed with other CSR initiatives for resources. Therefore, it was an internal conflict at the organisational level. However, the allocation of resources in this context may have directly impacted the partnership, from the decision of partnering to the extent to which the PSO can contribute.
In the British CSSP, the PSO faced also an internal conflict, as the commercial drive could have been in conflict with the charitable donation for this CSSP. The existence of an intermediary in the Swedish case study impacted this aspect of the relationship as well because part of the project work was managed by the intermediary; the two organisations had little contact so that there were not any circumstances for conflict to occur. Irrespective of the differences in the type of conflict, professionalism was found to be essential in the prevention and solution of conflicts as respondent 6 and 1 agreed. Another aspect is the clarification of responsibilities from the initiation of the partnership “if you are very careful in the beginning and say very clearly what to do and you take that responsibility” (respondent 2).

Learning and knowledge management were integral aspect of CSSPs

The responses to the questions related to knowledge were the most diverse from all aspects analysed. This is due to the differences in the experience with partnering and whether it is the perspective of the PSO or the TSO. It can be noted, however, that the learning points of the TSOs were strongly related to the implementation, more than in the case of PSOs. For example, a TSO respondent stated: “I learned to promote projects, have patience with volunteers to coordinate armies of people and make budget estimates” (respondent 2). The importance of promoting the project and dedicating time for it was discussed by the TSO in the British CSSP as a learning point “I am a project manager, I get the project done. I do know that it is important to publish what we do I wish somebody would have taken that from me […] making sure that there is enough time available for the PR-side of things” as well as to attract more volunteers and gaining practical knowledge on the implementation of the project, technical skills and the topic of interest (i.e. the juniper population). In addition, was a learning point for.

However, knowledge was not a gain only for the TSO. In the German CSSP, the PSO respondent also suggested gaining knowledge outside the business aspects, namely treating disabled people with patience even in situations of high pressure and stress. Concerning the application of knowledge from previous partnerships, respondent 7 stated that the way partnerships are managed is identical hence knowledge from previous projects can be easily transferred to future projects. As CSSPs have been a rather recent trend in Sweden, the Swedish TSO learned that PSOs want to get involved in cultural events more than expected and that the potential of the organisation in its field of activity – children, youth and culture – is very high for CSSPs. This leads to the finding that the field in which the TSO operates has an impact on its attractiveness for PSOs, as it can, for example, have a positive contribution to the image of the PSO.

The comparative analysis revealed that there were overall more similarities than differences across the four CSSPs. This was surprising given the applied case selection criteria (see 3.5.3) but manifested in the identification of 17 similarities and 4 differences across the CSSPs as the matrix in figure 8 showed. In addition, new aspects emerged in some interviews owing to open questions and an exploratory approach. This led to a diversity in the interpretation of questions and hence in the answers. As an example, when asked about the challenges that had to be overcome, interviews referred either to project challenges (such as weather or relying on volunteers) or to partnership challenges (dependency on the PSO or the artistic freedom constraints). The template approach enabled us to take account of these emergent categories and to include them in the second level of analysis.
5.1.3. Emerging categories

Industry context influences PSO stance towards CSSP

With regard to the timeframe of the CSSP, the respondent 7 from the German PSO explained: “We are planning until the end of the basketball season. But I believe we will be able to gradually extend this social partnership”. This way of arguing, to stress the industry context to explain the mindset towards collaboration, was also reflected in the statement from the distillery in the British PSO “Generally, various projects that I have been involved in, because we are in the whiskey business, go on for decades but again, we have not actually formally agreed where this one is going to go” (respondent 5). These two examples show that the mindset towards the time of a CSSP can be influenced by the industry of the PSO and was, contrary to the TSO perspective, rather short-term in the analysed cases.

Project engagement of PSO and TSO differs in partnership project

In cases 1, 2, 3, the PSO was not involved in the project from the beginning. For example, in the British CSSP, the project lasted for five years, while the partnership between the PSO and the TSO was set for two years. Respondent 6 from the TSO underlines the point “this project will continue even after the first two years; this will hopefully be a long-term thing provided that we deliver and they deliver and we will be happy with each other after the 2 years”. Similarly, the Fair Opera project in the Swedish CSSP was started by the TSO in 2010 with Swedbank joining in 2013, and the Romanian initiative was scheduled to run for a period of 5 years but respondent 2 from the TSO highlighted that “partnerships occur on determined periods […] per activity”. This means that the projects were run from the side of the TSO and could accommodate several partnerships. In other words, the partnership timeframe does not necessarily coincide with the project length.

Importance of proximity between partners for relationship building

In the British CSSP, respondent 6 was not able to accept invitations for an informal meeting from the PSO to discuss how the project was going because of the geographic distance, stating about it “that would have been a nice thing to do, that informal getting to know them”. These kinds of meetings were repeatedly stated in interviews to contribute to the development of trust between partners and strengthening of their relationship. Similarly, respondent 7 from the German PSO noticed “every partnership needs to be cared for and fostered. Just having it written on a piece of paper does not yield anything for anyone involved.” Hence, proximity and relationship building lead to less formality in the CSSP and higher reliance on trust and mutual respect.

Volunteers - reliance of TSOs and management of volunteers

In both environmental CSSPs (cases 1, 3), the TSOs relied on volunteers, the employees, from the respective PSO. This was accepted yet challenging to manage. The resulting uncertainty is underlined in the statement of respondent 6 “We did not know when we started whether there would be interest amongst the employees”. This was also apparent in the Romanian CSSP. Although the TSO planned the number of volunteers well in advance, the PSO then had to ensure that it could meet these requirements. In one incident not enough volunteers appeared at an event which created frustration at the end of the day “worst part was that we did not finish” as respondent 1 reflected. The resulting learning was to commit with fewer but more reliable volunteers to the TSO and to have reserve lists internally.
Another aspect worth noting was the challenge to deploy volunteers in a field with which they are not familiar with such as manual work outdoors which emerged as a challenge in both environmental CSSPs. The challenge to manage volunteers, however, is not only on the side of the PSO but also for the TSOs. The German and British TSO independently stated that teaching volunteers takes sometimes longer than the impact they have on the project. Thus, working with volunteers is not always the best choice and has to be carefully evaluated.

The marketing aspect of CSSPs
The role of marketing and publicity in CSSPs evolved in differing contexts and PSOs and TSOs had differing notions about it. Respondent 7 from the German PSO acknowledged “Social partnerships and marketing are in a close relationship; a social partnership has inevitably marketing aspects to it. Image and external awareness are central and hence marketing is part of it” which is in line with the fact that the point of contact in the Swedish PSO was the Marketing and Communication manager. Similarly, respondent 5 from the British PSO also mentioned the need for a resource that is involved in public relations matters. The respective TSO partner who then had to work with public relation matters was not overly enthusiastic but did not mind that “even if they had just come to me and said we want a PR stamp, it would have still been worth doing because we are getting a really good project out of it”. This notion differed to the mindset of the German TSO as respondent 8 stated that “everyone knows us here in the region, thus we do not need to engage in marketing or acquisition activities”.

5.2. Second level of analysis

Based on the first level of analysis, the second level will thus take on an organisational perspective. The first level of analysis showed that the TSOs were more involved in the project because they were in charge of the implementation in three cases which meant that the management was mainly done at the TSO side. To confirm or challenge this observation, a second level of analysis was performed. It included the interviews held with two TSOs that had longstanding experience in CSSPs. Consequently, the categories which applied to the organisational level in the aforementioned analysis were subject of critical scrutiny based on the individual PSO viewpoints.

5.2.1. Confirmation of findings

Contribution - mutual dependence of partners and expertise of the TSO
The mutual resource dependence of partners in CSSPs was confirmed by respondent 10, explaining that Plan UK contributed with “the international reach and the NGO expertise” in development and working with vulnerable people, while their PSO partner “enable us to reach more people with more effective interventions and with a level of outcome that we could not do by ourselves”. The two-way contribution was confirmed by respondent 9 from Unity Enterprise (UE): “Our agreement has been that we provide the on-site service. Their contribution is that we don’t get charged for electricity, rent and those on-costs. But we provide the labour and the service”.

Differing partnership objectives and the importance of PSO’s reputation in the selection
In terms of partnership objectives, the TSOs had a primarily project focus in the analysed cases. This is in line with Plan UK that aims to reach more people through their programmatic work, which is similar to UE, where respondent 9 explained their aim in business partnerships is in the development of people.
PSO’s reputation was also stated to be a criterion at Plan UK so as to “harness their reputation and harness some of their business skills and fit them into the programme to get us a level of reputational benefit that we can use to promote the benefits of the programme” (respondent 10) which was similar to the four case studies.

Professionalism and responsiveness in conflict resolution
None of the conflicts discussed in the four CSSPs occurred in Plan UK or UE cases. Nevertheless, professionalism and responsiveness in managing and resolving conflicts was raised by both interviewees. In a similar vein with the Romanian and British CSSPs, respondent 10 from Plan UK acknowledged that the “ability to be collaborative is really important” and respondent 9 confirmed that “when the problem arises how we respond is actually more important. We fix the problem. [...] You responded and you let them know that you have responded. [...] you have been open and honest to them”.

Lack of joint stakeholder analysis and the influence of experience in CSSPs
None of the analysed CSSPs performed a joint stakeholder analysis. The last two interviews confirmed that such an analysis is not common in CSSPs, although Plan UK considered stakeholders’ interests jointly in some of their strategic partnerships “We would do that together and looking at, who do we want to reach with the partnership and what their objectives are in terms of the audience they are reaching” (respondent 10). In the four CSSPs, the TSOs appeared to have a broader experience with partnering. As this was the case with Plan UK and UE, respondent 9 explained that “The risk diminishes the more experience you have; because you know the level of potential problems that may come around. It shows that previous experiences influence the attitude towards management of partnerships. Another aspect was that the need for formality in managing the partnerships increases with the level of experience. This was stated in the British PSO and also the interview with Plan UK revealed that the processes with strategic partners are more formal that with less strategic ones.

Importance of proximity between partners for relationship building
An emerging finding was that relationship building leads to less formality in the partnership and higher reliance on trust and mutual respect, as in the cases 3 and 4. This was confirmed by both individual TSO viewpoints. At Plan UK, the senior partnership manager noted that proximity makes the set-up of informal meetings easier as well as the fact that trust is developed and mutual respect for the expertise of the respective partner. This was confirmed by respondent 9 from UE: “Relationship building is critical in all this. [...] Everything is done on a much more of a friendship basis, than it is in fact a formalised partner basis. [...] We try to take away everything that would dehumanise the relationship”.

The marketing aspect of CSSPs
In line with the rather reserved notion of the German TSO concerning the need of marketing, the CEO of Unity Enterprise stated that “I would rather put more people to help our service users, than dedicate people to either a marketing role, PR. That’s not what is important for us. What is important is for us is to help people develop”. The differing TSO notions about marketing could be explained by the need for resources, on the one hand, and the ‘dependent relationship’ to the TSO to enable the project, on the other hand.

14 Unlike the German TSO and UE stance, the British TSO did not mind marketing as long as the project could be done
5.2.2. Contradiction of findings

**TSO as CSSP initiator and partner selection**

While in the analysed CSSPs, the PSOs were the CSSP initiators and primarily selected the partners, the interview with Plan UK revealed that the TSO can also be selective when choosing a partner. They ask the following questions “do we know that the potential partner is interested in the areas in which we work? [...] Before we approach the partner we make sure that they were not engaged in any activity that directly contradicts Plan’s aims and objectives”. Moreover, Plan UK even started to look out for PSO partners to form CSSPs themselves which is unlike the TSOs studied in the four CSSPs that looked for PSOs in case of financial constraints for a project. Owing to the long-standing experience of Plan UK, respondent 10 elaborated this differing notion; “Historically we found that companies approached us […] but increasingly often we seek to expand our portfolio and we are proactively looking for opportunities to engage with corporates”. In case of UE, business partnerships were triggered by a public authority, the city council, which required contractors to involve social enterprises through a social responsibility clause in major construction works. UE won a tender in 2010 to provide catering for one of the contractors, which resulted in a business partnership. Following this one contract several other partnerships were formed which respondent 9 explained as “We have to proof our trustworthiness to them [...] they take a risk with any social enterprise because they don’t know whether or not you can meet their standards”. This adds another valuable dimension to the finding that PSOs are primarily CSSP initiators.

**Well established process for strategic partnerships and joint planning**

While the four CSSPs unfolded in a mainly informal way, the interview with Plan UK revealed that the processes for strategic and non-strategic partnerships differ. As part of an experienced TSO, respondent 10 outlined a well-established process for their strategic partnerships: scoping phase (identify sweet spots, objectives of both partners, how to use each other’s expertise and skills or resources to build a successful programme), agreement stage (contract, activity plan, identify responsibilities, input expected at what point from whom, reporting, and donation schedule) and implementation phase (broken down into programmatic milestones [number of people to be reached] and other sections like reporting, evaluation). In case of the UE business partnerships, the implementation is fully on the side of the TSO and pre-agreements or pre-contracts are done in which relationship building is key. Hence, the contractors are clear about the parameters they expect “you are doing the catering so it is up to you to manage that” (respondent 10). Unlike three of the CSSPs, in which the TSOs were responsible for the implementation and project planning, the two individual interviews revealed that it is attempted to perform a joint planning: “We try to make it as joint as possible in order to make sure that it truly is a partnership rather than a one-sided activity” (respondent 10).

**TSO challenges and the importance of PSO’s image**

While the TSO in one of the cases stated a challenge in maintaining the project freedom when working with PSOs, this was not evident from either Plan UK or UE interviews. Similarly, the bureaucracy challenge faced by the Swedish and German TSOs seemed not to be a problem for Plan UK or UE. In fact, the differences in approach were perceived as learning opportunities, for example to learn from their PSO partners about various operational processes, as expressed by Plan UK.
In addition, the PSO’s concern about the impact that the partnership potentially has on their reputation, was perceived as a challenge by a TSO: “It can be challenging not only in terms of the association with our name but we are really proud of our partnerships and when any partner is undergoing negative publicity, that makes it very difficult to talk about the good things that we do with them” (respondent 10).

5.2.3. Extension of findings

Learning and knowledge management
While the analysed TSOs and PSOs in the CSSPs emphasised specific knowledge gained through the partnerships, the two additional interviews both revealed the aspect of continuous learning as part of the partnering with PSOs: “We’ve been very open to taking on quite a lot of learning as you would with any sort of collaborative partner” (respondent 10). Respondent 9 added the importance of staff flexibility and adaptability to change so as to ensure continuous improvement. In terms of learning, the Romanian TSO, in line with Plan UK, learned about financial aspect through the CSSP. The respondent from Plan UK went further by elaborating on the transfer of knowledge: “We have a team which is very focused on sharing experiences and lessons that we are learning as we go along” (respondent 10). This was the only instance across all interviews in which a formal organisational structure dedicated to knowledge management was stressed.

Events as external CSSP driver
In addition to the emerging aspect of the PSO industry as external PSO driving factor (cases 3 and 4), external events may drive organisations into partnering. This was the case of the Swedish PSO, where ECoC 2014 provided opportunities for CSSPs and for UE case as well, as respondent 9 highlighted: “And one of the main factors in this has been the Commonwealth Games” in the UK, by creating a lot of building work.
6. Discussion of empirical findings

The following chapter discusses the empirical findings with the reviewed literature. It provides answers to the three research objectives by addressing the findings from the empirical data with the frame of reference from the literature review. This enables answer the research question which is the subject of the concluding chapter that follows.

6.1. Collaborative context

In this thesis work ‘collaborative context’ is conceptualised as internal and external elements in the form of driving and restraining factors like motivations and challenges that impact on CSSPs. This is unlike Seitanidi (2010, p. 36), who rather narrowly considers ‘context’ as internal organisational aspects, such as organisational characteristics, motives and prior experiences or Bryson and Bromiley (1993, p. 320) who conceptualise ‘project context’ as the elements which the project team has little or no influence on. In fact, “recognising contextual differences provides an important check against imparting partnership models from one context to another” which emphasises once more the importance of the collaborative context for CSSPs (Rein & Stott, 2009, p. 81).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal elements</th>
<th>Reviewed literature</th>
<th>Empirical data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• access to resources</td>
<td>• TSO: PSO reputation; need for financial resources and volunteers (cases 1, 2, 3)</td>
<td>• TSO: PSO reputation, prior ties with TSO, urge to help, publicity/marketing (cases 2, 3, 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Knowledge creation and sharing</td>
<td>• PSO: TSO reputation, need for resources and volunteers (cases 1, 2, 3)</td>
<td>• Socio-cultural factors for participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• PSO: EIR, PR and R&amp;D aspects</td>
<td>• TSO: gain access to additional financial resources, managerial or technical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• TSO: gain access to additional financial resources, managerial or technical</td>
<td>expertise and support, be associated with a known corporation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• External elements</td>
<td>• decreasing roles of governments</td>
<td>• Sweden: CSSPs are recent trend, decreasing role of government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• decreasing roles of governments</td>
<td>• external demands for transparency and responsible behaviour</td>
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</table>

Table 3. Discussion of contextual elements - driving factors

Concerning driving factors, the empirical data was largely in line with the reviewed literature. This holds particularly for internal elements such as the access to resources which are new, scarce or complementary for the respective organisation (Austin, 2000, p. 69; Gazley & Brudney, 2007) which was reflected across all respondents. Resource complementarity will be detailed in the collaborative management section, as reflecting the resource-based view of the firm (Bhandar, 2010). Reputation of the partner was important for TSOs and PSOs alike; either reputation from previous ties (cases 3, 4) or by external accreditation as in the case of the Romanian TSO. The possibility for new knowledge creation or sharing was a driving factor for partners in the literature (Holmes & Smart, 2009, p. 395; Sakarya et al., 2012) as well as in the empirical data. For example, “we were going in to learn and we have learned” (respondent 5). Particularly interesting in this CSSP (case 3) was that knowledge creation was a driving factor which appeared on the partnership level as everyone involved read and learned about juniper cultivation. With regard to partnership-level objectives, the empirical data showed similar findings to Šakarya et al. (2012, p. 1718) in a way that there were common partnership-level objectives, such as to learn about juniper (case 3) or protection from landslides (case 1), and organisational-level aspects such as that TSOs were driven by financial resource dependence and PSOs by the concern for legitimacy.
Concerning the latter, neither PSOs stated this concern directly in the empirical data but it was inferred from the fact that public relations was a reoccurring aspect across three PSOs, either in the role of the respondent or the resources deployed. The exception was the Romanian PSO whose motivation was driven from human resource considerations such as employee motivation, and enrichment of corporate culture which was in line with Austin (2000, p. 76). In the literature on collaborative projects, Bhandar (2010, p. 269) identified that even in the absence of immediate or certain returns, organisations are still willing and motivated to engage in CSSPs which holds for the PSOs in cases 2 and 3 as discussed in the analysis. An additional PSO driving factor was socio-cultural aspects for PSO participants which emerged from the data: “it’s cool to be eco sometimes” (respondent 1) and also the German basketball players from the PSO perceived the social engagement in the partnership entirely positively according to respondent 7. Neither socio-cultural factor nor the ‘urge to help’ or to give back to the community, as the analysis revealed, had been stressed in the reviewed literature.

In terms of external contextual elements, the demands from external stakeholders for transparency and responsible behaviour in light of heightened interest for environmental issues (Rondinelli & London, 2003, p. 62) was not found as a driving factor in the data. However, all four CSSPs were set in a different country context\(^\text{15}\) and the empirical data showed that this aspect played a pivotal role for the notion of organisations and the development of CSSPs. The Swedish TSO noted that “it is still quite new for everyone, so it is difficult to imagine how you can gain from it” (respondent 4) referring to an ongoing discussion on the use of monetary donations owing to the potential influence that PSOs could exert on the work of the third sector. The increasing need for TSOs to consider monetary donations from PSOs in Sweden can be an indicator for the decreasing role of governments which was also stated by Googins and Rochlin (2000, p. 129) as an external driving factor for CSSPs. This finding from Sweden was unlike the British country context where CSCs are an alternative form of governance which has been evolving as a trend since the New Labour government emphasised CSC in the UK in 1997 (Seitanidi, 2010, p. 18). A recent trend in Romania is the development of responsible business practices and partnerships, mostly led by multinational companies which were willing to invest and brought their organisational culture and practices to this new market (Stoian & Zaharia, 2009, p. 422), coinciding with the integration in the European Union in 2007.

In terms of restraining factors, the empirical data largely differed from the literature.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Restraining factors</th>
<th>Reviewed literature</th>
<th>Empirical data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal element</td>
<td>resource scarcity</td>
<td>Overall no competing, but differing institutional logics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>competing institutional logics</td>
<td>Dependency of donation and reliance on volunteers from PSO (cases 1,2,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lack of experience</td>
<td>Determine outcome at the start (cases 1,2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External element</td>
<td>infrequent interaction across sectors</td>
<td>Weather conditions (cases 1,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>immature ‘alliance market place’</td>
<td>Take account of other sector’s interests (case 1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Discussion of contextual elements - restraining factors

\(^{15}\) For more details on the country context of the four CSSPs, see Appendix 4
There were few similar aspects such as resource scarcity (Austin, 2000, p. 78; Gazley & Brudney, 2007, p. 411) which created the dependency of TSOs on monetary donations and reliance on volunteers from PSOs (cases 1, 2, 3) or from the TSO (case 4). It could be suggested that, based on the empirical data, institutional logics compete (Austin, 2010, p. 13; Bryson et al., 2006, p. 50), although there were two CSSPs in which the logics differed. In another CSSP, the PSO promoted the partnership as on-going CSSP whereas the TSO partner stated that it was at a very early stage and did not perceive it as established CSSP. In terms of the lack of experience, which Austin (2000, p. 88) stated as restraining factor, all analysed CSSPs in this study did not perceive this as such even though they had never collaborated with the respective partner before. A challenge which occurred in case 2 was the need to determine the explicit CSSP outcome at the start, which was not stated in the reviewed literature. Also regarding external restraining factors, such as weather conditions in environmental CSSPs (cases 1, 3) or the need to respect the interests of the private sector (case 2) were not mentioned in the reviewed literature either. Similarly, the aspects of immaturity of the ‘alliance market place’ (Austin, 2000, p. 88) or infrequent interaction across sectors (Bryson et al., 2006) were not found in the data.

An external element in the Swedish CSSP was the existence of an intermediary organisation, Umeå2014, which was neither found to be a restraining, nor a driving factor. This was in line with the CSC literature that mentioned the potential presence of a convener in the initial phase to identify and bring all stakeholders together (Clarke & Fuller, 2010, p. 88; Gray, 1989). Interestingly, according to the within-case analysis of the Swedish CSSP, the intermediary had implications in four areas; first, formal agreements were not signed between the partners but with the intermediary; second, partner selection was done by the intermediary; third, indirect initiation from PSO side through the intermediary; fourth, little contact between the organisations which minimised the likelihood of conflicts. This finding was in line with Selsky and Parker (2005, p. 857) arguing that they facilitate collective action or Westley and Vredenburg (1991, p. 68) who identify bilateral negotiation with key stakeholders as roles of an intermediary. Still, also the financial management was of the partnership was done by the intermediary which was in line with Rein and Stott (2009, p. 83).

6.2. CSSP formation phase

The research focus in this thesis work was the formation phase of CSSPs which was defined as the first phase at the beginning of CSSPs. Project management and CSC literature agreed on the importance of this phase in terms of its contribution to the likeliness of positive outcomes or as indicators of a CSSP’s potential for change (Koppenjan, 2005, p. 138; Seitanidi et al., 2010, p. 140). Notwithstanding the lack of explicit appreciation of this phase in the data, aspects such as a high level of uncertainty (Aaltonen & Kujala, 2010, p. 387) or the potential for conflicts (Verma, 1998) were stressed by respondents; for example, concerning the financial contribution of the PSO (case 1) or the involvement of volunteers in all four CSSPs. While the two CSSPs with the environmental focus (cases 1 and 3) were dependent on volunteers to get the work, in the German CSSP with the social focus volunteers from the TSO were involved in the work with the PSO. Just as the reviewed literature differed in the conceptualisation of this phase, so did the answers of the respondents.
When asked to outline the phases of the partnership, it was expected that respondents would detail the stages and respective milestones as all CSSPs had been on-going at that point in time. However, most statements were not applicable to be discussed with literature because respondents outlined mainly activities, but not in a chronological manner, which was unlike in the CSC literature that the examination of steps and activities is rather difficult (Googins & Rochlin, 2000, p. 142; Seitanidi, 2010, p. 25). This firstly showed that the practitioners in the four CSSP cases did not have a process-oriented way of thinking in terms of their partnerships. Consequently, a critical comparison of the four CSSPs with the proposed conceptualisation from the literature was performed on an activity-level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps and activities during CSSP formation</th>
<th>CSC literature frame of reference</th>
<th>Empirical data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-phase 1 activities:</strong></td>
<td>History of collaboration or experience with organisation (cases 1, 3, 4)</td>
<td>• Analysis of organisational characteristics, motives and history of collaboration of partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Decision to collaborate</td>
<td>• Identification of partners starts 1-1.5 months in advance (Romanian, TSO)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Seitanidi et al., 2010, p. 140, Gray, 1989; )</td>
<td>• Partner selection primarily driven by PSO (cases 1, 2, 3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Boundary activity 1:</strong></td>
<td>If TSO depends on monetary contribution of PSO (case 1, 2, 3), the commitment of the PSO gave go/no-go decision with agreement to fund</td>
<td>• Decision to collaborate, if no monetary contribution (case 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-phase 2 activities:</td>
<td>Intermediary involved in case 2, impacted on how partners collaborated but also partner selection and indirect agreement</td>
<td>• Joint decision to collaborate, if no monetary contribution (case 3, 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Joint analysis and problem definition</td>
<td>Resource needs were identified largely by TSO if they were in charge of project implementation (cases 1, 3)</td>
<td>• Joint decision to collaborate, if no monetary contribution (case 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Joint statements: mission, vision, values</td>
<td>• Intermediary involved in case 2, impacted on how partners collaborated but also partner selection and indirect agreement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Resource needs and stakeholder identification</td>
<td>• Joint decision to collaborate, if no monetary contribution (case 4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential role of an intermediary</td>
<td>• Resource needs were identified largely by TSO if they were in charge of project implementation (cases 1, 3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Development of mutual understanding</td>
<td>• Joint decision to collaborate, if no monetary contribution (case 4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Boundary activity 2:</strong></td>
<td>• No partnership agreement at the start (cases 1, 2, 3, 4)</td>
<td>• Partnership agreement (Clarke &amp; Fuller, 2010, p. 88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Clarke &amp; Fuller, 2010, p. 88)</td>
<td>• Case 2: separate agreements with intermediary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Case 3: agreement after decision on project implementation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• In cases 1 and 4 no partnership agreement at all</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Comparison of theoretical frame and empirical data on CSSP formation

The table shows that the comparison resulted in similarities as well as differences in the conceptualisation of the CSSP formation phase which warrants discussion of these aspects. While the activities in sub-phase 1 were largely similar across the literature and the four CSSPs, it is rather questionable whether sub-phase 2 existed as such in the four analysed CSSPs. This is because the cases largely lacked joint-activities regarding planning, identification of resource needs and stakeholder or risk analysis as identified in the analysis level 1. However, the reviewed literature identified these joint activities as vital prior to the project implementation (Clarke & Fuller, 2010; Gray, 1989; Seitanidi, 2010) which means that the CSSP cases and the literature differed. In terms of boundary activities, the empirical data showed that it needs to be differentiated if the PSO contributes with a monetary donation or not. In case of the former, the commitment of the PSO gave the go/no-go decision for the CSSP (cases 1, 2, 3) whereas in the latter, a joint decision was made (case 4). Although all partnerships were similar in the absence of an agreement from the start, two CSSPs did not have a partnership agreement (cases 1, 4). Agreements were signed either after it was decided on the project implementation (case 3) or with the intermediary (case 2). In terms of the organisational level of analysis, the last two interviews added value to the conceptualisation of the formation phase because they had a clear process-perspective and were able to answer this question more thoroughly than the eight respondents from the four CSSPs. The formation of business partnerships were referred to as “pre-agreements or pre-contracts” at UE and respondent 9 stressed the importance of relationship building in this phase.
The actual agreements are rather loose “they define who is responsible for what. In that way there is clarity about the operation. [...] But it is not formalised in terms of a contract” (respondent 9). At Plan UK the last aspect differed because formal contracts, either a letter of intent or a memorandum of understanding, are foundations depending on the type of partnership which was stated as such in the reviewed literature (Clarke & Fuller, 2010, p. 88; Rein & Stott, 2009, p. 82). Furthermore, respondent 10 from Plan UK elaborated a distinct process for strategic partnerships, consisting of a scoping, agreement, implementation and evaluation stage. The finding was that this partnership process from Plan UK, as outlined in the analysis, strongly resembles the frame of reference from the literature. The only difference is the identification and selection of partners which comes before the scoping phase at Plan UK. This comparison showed that the overall conceptualisation of the frame of reference from the literature holds for the more experienced partners, which is reflected in the degree of professionalism in the management of CSSPs.

Another aspect on the organisational level worth noting was that the answers from respondents of the same CSSP concerning the formation phase differed which leads to the finding that TSOs and PSOs perceive this phase differently. This is for example reflected in their different notions on the timeframe for the CSSP objectives. In fact, three TSOs (cases 1, 2, 3) had mainly longer-term objectives closely related to the project unlike two PSOs (cases 3, 4) whose CSSP time horizon was influenced by their industry setting. This is in line with project management literature in which Ward and Chapman (1995) differentiate between the client and the contractor perspective, arguing that project stages can be seen differently depending on the respective perspective. This depends on the moment when the organisation becomes involved - while the client (in this context, the PSO) moves quickly through the planning stage, the contractor (TSO) is responsible for more detailed work. Similarly, in the CSC literature, it is mentioned that the initiative of a partnership can emerge at any stage of the project, not necessarily during the exploratory and planning phases (Clarke & Fuller, 2010, p. 88; Koppenjan, 2005). This means that the partnership and the project do not necessarily have the same time frame which is also in line with Rein and Stott (2009, p.83) that distinguished between project and partnership in their partnership cases.

The five holistic collaboration processes along the project outlined by Grudinschi et al. (2013), were found to be partially applicable in the four CSSPs. While, processes on collaborative governing and administration were not found applicable owing to the absence of participative management and joint decision making as well as monitoring mechanisms, the processes ‘reconciling interests’, ‘forging mutual agreements’ and ‘building social capital’ were largely applicable. Particularly the aspects of mutuality and trust were important “it involved a lot of trust, we trust that this will work and I think we can do that because we also see some mutual benefits in making this happen” (respondent 3). Also knowledge creation concerning social capital was mentioned throughout the cases as the analysis revealed. Still, it remains questionable whether explicit inter-organisational knowledge integration occurred in the eight organisations. This was because despite mentioning the interest and importance of knowledge, none of them stated explicit knowledge capturing entities such as a dedicated team to share experiences and lessons learned at Plan UK. The latter was in line with the literature that knowledge capturing entities catalyse knowledge creation and sharing in the organisation and in projects (Nonaka et al., 2006; Whelton et al., 2002).
6.3. Collaborative management

The concluding discussion sets out to identify the management responsibilities in CSSPs, in line with the third research objective, thereby contributing to the development of collaborative management theory. As was found from the reviewed literature, CSC is not often associated with management practices, which means that there is not much knowledge on collaborative management from a theoretical perspective (Kelman et al., 2013). This study sets out to address this shortcoming. The following figure provides an overview of the managerial aspects from the empirical data and the two streams of literature thereby clarifying in which aspects our findings and the literature intersect. The aspects found in the literature which were not in our data are in the respective columns to the left or right whereas the empirical findings which were not presented in the reviewed literature are shown in the arrow below. In that way, it becomes clear how this study expands the knowledge on collaborative management.

![Figure 9. Collaborative Management - literature and data](image)

Although the CSC literature states the need for planning skills so as to avoid misunderstanding of intentions (Rein & Stott, 2009, p. 84) or even strategic planning to anticipate and shape future developments (Bryson, 2004), it remains unclear who needs these skills within the partnership. The empirical data showed that CSSP project planning was done by the TSO in three cases except for case 4, where it was done jointly. In fact, in these cases (1, 2, 3) the TSO was responsible for the project implementation and presented a plan to the PSO, which then made the decision to provide a financial contribution and thus enabled the project. This means that the PSO in these cases was less involved in formation activities than the TSO. Worth noting were the differing planning requirements which the TSOs had to take account of in the data. While the Swedish PSO wanted to know the outcome of the project at an early stage, the British PSO left it to the TSO to draft a plan and then decided on their commitment to the project. This resulted in differing notions for the respective TSOs.
While the Swedish TSO perceived it as a challenge to predict the outcome of an artistic performance, the British TSO acknowledged the freedom in planning and the absence of a formal agreement from the start which was perceived as a form how trust manifested in the CSSP. These PSO requirements are contextual elements which affect the process of project planning which is in line with Bryson and Bromiley (1993). In addition, it was found that the PSO may join the project when the planning phase is finished at the TSO, which is in line with the reviewed literature, as a partnership can emerge at any stage of the project (Clarke & Fuller, 2010, p. 88; Koppenjan, 2005).

Bryson (2004) and Whelton et al. (2002) suggest dynamic and adaptive planning in projects and that allows for flexibility in case of future changes. In two instances this suggestion was confirmed: firstly, by the Swedish TSO: “What you need to do is to describe your project in a very wide sense so there is room for change and artistic freedom so you can feel free to adjust it” (respondent 4), and secondly, by the German CSSP, in which the decision was made to start with a few joint activities as initial steps which might then get gradually extended. Moreover, the interviews revealed that the TSO and the PSO plan separately, and this can start long before the partnership itself, a finding that the two streams of literature did not explore. Another scenario that was not mentioned in the reviewed literature was that the TSO prepares a thorough plan that is presented later to the PSO. Moreover, at the PSO’s side, planning can be done for various reasons other than the project or the partnership; for example to justify expenses for the tax authorities (case 2) or for the budget (case 1).

In terms of risk management, the empirical data showed that risks were analysed in greater detail by the TSO and that all four cases lacked a formal and joint risk analysis as in the case of planning activities. This was reflected in the reviewed literature which lacked reference to collaborative risk management practices. The only aspect for which a connection was found between the literature and the empirical data was the correlation between experience and risk assessment, the more experience an organisation has the better its ability to assess risks, in the case of Unity Enterprise. This was in line with Seitanidi et al. (2010, p.36) who emphasise the role of prior experience in CSCs. As this thesis study connects two distinct literature fields, it was not surprising to find the absence of collaborative practices but furthermore, it becomes evident that the study of management responsibilities in CSCs provides opportunities for further research.

Given that a multitude of stakeholders are involved in a CSSP and that they exist for the very reason to address a problem in society which is faced by one or more groups of stakeholders (Selsky & Parker, 2005, p.850), we expected that thorough stakeholder analyses would be performed. This was fuelled by the importance that scholars give to stakeholder analysis, seeing it as crucial for successful planning (Bryson et al., 2006, p. 48; Bryson, 2004) and given the high influence of stakeholders in the project formation phase (Aaltonen & Kujala, 2010). On the contrary, however, none of the CSSPs performed a formal stakeholder analysis, in a similar way to the lack of a formal risk analysis. Nevertheless, stakeholders were considered at an organisational level and rather informally. For example, the Kipling method16 (Neal, 1995, p. 5) without formally referring to it as such “we discuss the contractual forms of cooperation when we make the planning (e.g. a forest authority). How are we going to work together? What do we need from those with whom we collaborate?”.

16 The Kipling method encourages to answer to what, where, when, who, how and why questions
What became clear in the analysis on this aspect was that TSOs and PSOs had a different understanding of the relevant stakeholders. While customers (case 2), employees and internal approvers (case 1), were more important for PSOs, the TSO perceived the beneficiaries; vulnerable groups (Plan UK) or disabled persons (case 4) as the main stakeholders. This leads to the findings that a joint stakeholders’ analysis in CSSPs is challenging owing to the different interests of the partners and the different influences that various stakeholders have on them. The fact that the partners performed, an informal stakeholders’ analysis independently (8 out of 10 respondents) is proof that this is feasible and useful in the context of CSC, but hard to accomplish jointly.

The complementarity of contributions, as discussed in the analysis, was aligned with Gray (1989) and Seitanidi (2010), who discuss the complementarity of resources in a CSC. Furthermore, it was noted in the data that the contribution can be related to the respective organisational objective. This correlation was not found in the reviewed literature, because we noted that project objective is rather stressed in project management (Project Management Institute, 2013) whereas the contribution to the CSSP was rather subject in the CSC literature (Bryson et al., 2006; Gray, 1989). Another aspect was that although the literature stated that the partners jointly identify the problem to be tackled in the CSSP (Clarke & Fuller, 2010, p. 88; Gray, 1989; Westley & Vredenburg, 1997, p. 382), we found that, like in the cases of risk and stakeholder analysis, this was not performed jointly. Still, the TSOs were those with the expertise on the problem to be tackled, hence it was not surprising that the Romanian PSO acknowledged “they have done everything that was supposed to be done on their side [...] they have better knowledge of the soil and type of trees to be planted” (respondent 1).

Although the importance of project teams was stressed in both literature fields (Bryson & Bromiley, 1993; Maurer, 2010; Vurro et al., 2010, p. 47; Zhang & Doll, 2001), the empirical data revealed that only four of the ten organisations had an assigned project team or more than one person responsible for the project. The fact that three of them were TSOs (case 1, 2 and Plan UK) can be explained by the broad range of activities in which the TSO is involved, including the implementation of the project. Another influential aspect was the flat organisational structure. For example in the Romanian CSSP: “tasks are clear. In any moment, if I need something, I know who to go to” (respondent 2); the same was evident in the data on the Swedish PSO, the British TSO, the German PSO and UE. The resulting finding was that responsibilities are clear at organisational level; however, they are not well defined at partnership level. Concerning knowledge in project teams, Maurer (2010) argues that bringing members from outside of the project team and experts enhances knowledge of the team members. This was only the case in Plan UK where, in addition to a project team for each partnership, communication experts were also in place.

The empirical data revealed that trust in CSSPs is vital, more than signed agreements or formal analyses. “Trust is an absolutely integral aspect of partnerships. Especially because we do not have any formal contractual basis in this social partnership, it is built on trust. We have to trust each other that everyone holds their word and adheres to the agreed responsibilities and commitments so that both sides participate. That works only on a strong foundation of trust” (respondent 7). In the literature, agreements such as contracts are stressed as a way of risk-sharing in the early project phases (Koppenjan, 2005, p. 137) but the data showed that trust is more essential than formal agreements.
Interesting to note is that the greater the interaction between the partners, thus the level of collaboration, the higher was the level of trust in the empirical data. For example, the Romanian PSO explained that the level of trust was lower at the beginning because the two organisations had not collaborated previously whereas this was not an issue in cases 3 and 4 where organisation had had prior ties. This was in line with Parkhe (1993, p. 802), stating that the existence of prior ties strengthens trust, leads to lowering the contractual safeguards, which signifies higher reliance on relationship building. A finding that emerged from two interviews was that the moment when the financial contribution was made by the PSO was linked to trust and the existence of prior ties. In the Romanian CSSP both partners had not collaborated before and the PSO was reluctant to provide the financial support for the project much in advance, which shook the trust temporarily. In the case of the British CSSP, the fact that the support was provided early was per se a proof of trust from the PSO who had previously collaborated with the TSO on other projects. It can thus be concluded that, although the importance of trust in CSCs is indeed addressed in the literature (Levin & Cross, 2004, p. 1478; Maurer, 2010), the respondents stressed this aspect in several contexts, acknowledging that it is the basis on which the relationship is built.

Since CSCs bring together individuals from very different backgrounds, it was argued in the literature that obstacles regarding communication, building trust and knowledge exchange are likely to occur (Berger et al., 2004, p. 61; Googins & Rochlin, 2000, p. 135; Selsky & Parker, 2005, p. 851; Verma, 1998) owing to differing institutional logics (Austin, 2010, p. 13; Bryson et al., 2006, p. 50). This, however, was not the case in the empirical data as shown in the analysis section. On the contrary, the respondent from Plan UK perceived the different institutional logics as enriching the partnership: “Part of having a good relationship, is that when you encounter differences of approaches that you can overcome that completely”. This is in line with Austin (2010, p. 13) who stresses the ‘partnering challenge’ which is to overcome the differences and leverage the advantages that arise. Related to the different institutional logics, however, the British and Swedish TSOs faced challenges in dealing with, for example, the bureaucracy or PR requirements from the PSO’s side, as the British TSO explained: “The whole PR side of it was a bit of hard work for me because it is not really something that I can be bothered with”, while the Swedish TSO found the processes from the PSO’s side rather long and bureaucratic. Overall, however, conflicts were not frequently discussed in the interviews and they generally occurred internally, at organisational level, and were mostly minor. In fact, professionalism, responsiveness and communication were found to be essential in preventing and solving conflicts, as shown in the analysis. This was confirmed by the literature according to which leadership skills are needed in order to build legitimacy and trust (Bryson et al., 2006, p. 50), and for conflict resolution (Sandström & Ylinenpaa, 2012, p. 148).

When reviewing project management literature and particularly the PMBoK (Project Management Institute, 2013), we found that knowledge management is typically oriented towards managing internal projects and rarely with inter-organisational projects. However, the empirical data revealed that knowledge management is an area worth analysing in collaborative projects. For example, respondent 5 from the British PSO acknowledged: “There are obviously 2 strands of learning: learning about the specifics and horticulture of juniper and then there is learning of how to potentially use that learning for making our brand better”.

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Respondent 4 from the Swedish TSO learned how to better realise the potential of the organisation and their field of activity, in attracting PSO sponsorships. Hence, it was shown that when collaborating with a different sector, the organisation is exposed to a new environment and to new activities that allow it to learn about itself, in new contexts. This was an emerging aspect that was not identified in the reviewed literature which leads to the argument that it is precisely through this explicit consideration of knowledge management that project management as a field can be influenced and enriched. In addition to the above finding, the empirical data showed that CSCs are opportunities for inter-organisational knowledge exchange, because the two partners learn from the other’s way of operating or area of activity which was in line with the reviewed literature (Levin & Cross, 2004, p. 1478; Rondinelli & London, 2003, p. 62), as respondent 10 explained: “Each specific partnership brings us into contact with a new area […] We learned a huge amount on generally what the sort of motivation and drivers are for the private sector when engaging in CSR. […] We are partnering with impressive professional global organisations, who generally have bits and pieces that we can learn from”. Similarly, respondent 7 learned “to be patient and show understanding”, by collaborating with TSO that operates in this field, or “about the specifics and horticulture of juniper” (respondent 5), knowledge that can be gained by collaborating with a different sector.

The reviewed literature provides also other valuable insights in capturing and sharing knowledge which was a confirmed with our data. For example, learning occurs in informal settings (Hällgren & Söderholm, 2010, p. 354; Hobday, 2000, p. 885). As in the case of risk and level of formality, the level of experience of the organisations in CSC influenced knowledge management as well. In the context of learning from previous partnerships, respondent 6 highlighted: “I probably did a lot of them probably subconsciously; I am sure that previous experience has helped that this one runs smoothly”, similar to the viewpoint of respondent 7: “The general management of these partnerships is identical. So yes, I could apply my knowledge from previous partnerships”.

### 6.4. Proposition to expand the collaboration continuum

Although the overview of the comparative analysis (analysis level 1, figure 8) showed that there were more similarities than differences across the cases regarding the criteria from the final template, the subsequent analysis and discussion revealed that the four CSSP cases differed in their CSSP intention. While the German CSSP did not involve much interaction except for certain event-days, the Swedish CSSPs, notwithstanding that it was also event-based, involved considerable more interaction. The Romanian and British CSSPs mainly focused on solving a problem by conducting a joint project. This is what Gray (1985, p. 911) referred to as ‘collaborative problem solving’. Moreover, Unity Enterprise was an example of ‘service outsourcing’ in their business partnerships as they were fully responsible for delivering the project to the agreed conditions, whereas Plan UK had philanthropic as well as strategic partnerships and hence a professional organisational structure for their management. Consequently, the intent with which a CSSP was formed impacts the way it is managed.
The reviewed CSC literature discussed several conceptual frameworks to categorise partnerships. Among those, the collaboration continuum by Austin (2000, p. 72) was found to be the best applicable to the analysed CSSP approaches. This is because it is not a normative model and partnerships can move along the continuum to different stages. Furthermore, it seemed accepted as it was also deployed in other studies (Berger et al., 2004; Jamali et al., 2011). The continuum distinguishes three stages of CSSPs – philanthropic, transactional and integrative – which signify different types of collaborations (Austin, 2000, p. 71). They are reflected in the ‘nature of the relationship’ that consists of seven categories which are applicable throughout all phases of the partnerships. It was found that the added value of applying the continuum was to determine the ‘nature of relationship’, as proposed by Austin (2000), by means of the seven parameters and not to identify the respective stage in the continuum. By way of assessing these parameters, for example in the formation phase, researchers and practitioners are able to answer “What kind of collaboration do we have, how might it evolve over time?” (Austin, 2000, p. 71).

In light of the finding that the TSO and PSO perspectives tend to differ across categories, they were included separately in the CSSP cases to allow for identifying these differences. This was unlike Austin (2000, p.72) who applied the continuum on the CSSP level. The following figure depicts the continuum applied to the empirical data in this thesis study.

The application of the collaboration continuum by Austin (2000) to the empirical data in this thesis study allowed taking account of the different relationships and intentions of the cases and the two individual perspectives. The distinction between ‘informal’ and ‘formal’ project management on the continuum, refers to the extent to which activities were documented and explicitly addressed. Firstly, it became clear that the majority of data belongs to the second stage which is in line with Berger et al. (2004, p. 59), who note that the majority of CSC research focuses on the first and second stages in the continuum. Secondly, it can be agreed to Googins and Rochlin (2000, p. 140) who suggest that as partnerships are becoming more strategic and long-term oriented, the level of required engagement and complexity rises which requires more formal management structures. Third, based on the findings of this thesis study, we propose extending the collaboration continuum by Austin (2000) in a way that the ‘nature of relationship’, which ultimately determines the stage in the continuum, reflects the degree of project management to be deployed. The implications of this are outlined in the concluding chapter.

17 For information how the collaboration continuum was applied to the data, please see appendix 7
7. Conclusions

The concluding chapter integrates the aspects addressed in the previous chapters to an emergent theory on the deployment of project management in the formation of CSSPs. The thesis is brought to a close by discussing the validity and reliability of the study, the limitations and strengths of the study and provides recommendations to practitioners and for further research.

7.1. Answering the research question

The prime research objective in this thesis study was to explore, describe and analyse the context and use of project management in the formation phase of CSSPs. Consequently, the research was conducted by means of literature search and interviewing ‘experts’ (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 140) and by deploying a case study strategy in line with the ‘methodological tradition’ in the CSC literature (Gray & Wood, 1991, p. 4; Sakarya et al., 2012, p. 1710). The three objectives, derived from the prime research objective, were the structural elements for the research until the previous chapter. The derived findings are used at this point to address the research question which guided this thesis study:

✓ How is project management deployed during the formation of cross-sector social-oriented partnerships between private sector organisations and third sector organisations?

The study found that project management is deployed differently in the formation of CSSPs, depending on contextual elements and the intention with which the CSSPs is formed. This is reflected in the interaction of partners, the level of trust between them, the way knowledge is shared and ultimately in the use of project management. In light of the generated findings, it is proposed to integrate project management as parameter in the collaboration continuum by Austin (2000) thereby extending the model to reflect project management in this context. Notwithstanding that the collected data did not allow for an uniform answer to the research question, the research yielded valuable findings concerning the CSSP formation phase, contextual elements and managerial responsibilities.

In terms of the formation phase in CSSPs, the reviewed literature lacked an overarching conceptual agreement on the CSC process. Similarly, the managers in the four CSSPs rather outlined activities than phases or milestones and hence did not showed process-oriented thinking about the partnerships. This resulted in the mainly informal unfolding of the partnerships and not according to a pre-described pattern. Notwithstanding this, the identification of distinct activities and proposed steps in the reviewed literature enabled the critical discussion of the resulting frame of reference with the four CSSPs and two individual TSO perspectives from the empirical data. It was found that TSOs and PSOs perceived this phase differently which suggests alignment with Ward and Chapman (1995), who differentiate between the client and the contractor perspective in projects. Furthermore, it can be agreed to Seitanidi and Crane (2009, p. 415) as well as Clarke and Fuller (2010) that the formation phase as such can consist of sub-processes.
In conclusion, the conceptualisation of the frame of reference from the literature held for the more experienced partners as the level of experience was reflected in the degree of professionalism and formality in the management of CSSPs. This finding is in line with Googins and Rochlin (2000, p. 140) who suggest that the level of required engagement and complexity rises as partnerships are becoming more strategic and long-term oriented which was the case for the more experienced partners in the data.

Partnerships are unique and subject to the respective context in which they are embedded (Gray, 1989, p. 29; Project Management Institute, 2013; Seitanidi et al., 2010). It was found that the motivational drivers to engage in CSSPs were largely in line with the reviewed literature. Access to new, scarce or complementary resources for the respective organisation was stated across the four CSSPs as well as the reviewed literature (Austin, 2000, p. 69; Gazley & Brudney, 2007) just as the possibility for the creation or sharing of new knowledge (Holmes & Smart, 2009, p. 395; Sakarya et al., 2012). Although two CSSPs (cases 1 and 3) had partnership-level and organisational-level objectives, which was in line with Sakarya et al. (2012, p. 1718), it was found that objectives and motivational elements occurred primarily on the organisational level and were similar across TSOs and across PSOs in the four CSSPs. Concerning objectives, the TSOs focused primarily externally on project objectives, whereas PSOs had mainly business-oriented objectives such as customer or employee satisfaction (cases 1, 2) or visibility (cases 3, 4). In terms of the motivation to engage in CSSPs, TSOs identified PSOs’ reputation and the need for financial resources and volunteers. On the other hand, reputation of or prior ties with the TSO or the possibility for publicity and marketing were found relevant for the PSOs (cases 2, 3, 4). CSSP restraining factors in terms of challenges varied across the four CSSPs but were found to be related to the type of project (social or environmental), whether it was an internal or external challenge and to the degree of interaction between the partners. The industry and country as well as the presence of an intermediary were found to be relevant external contextual elements that had an impact on the analysed CSSPs. Furthermore, the contributions of the partners differed. While TSOs were responsible for project implementation, they contributed with expertise and PSOs provided resources in the form of funding and volunteers (cases 1, 2, 3). Although the financial contribution of the PSOs enabled the project, it depended on the mutual contribution of partners.

From a managerial perspective, this study showed that the intention with which a CSSP is formed (in the empirical data: service provision, joint problem solving, event-based) has an impact on the nature of the project and consequently how project management is deployed. It was found that if the partnership is formed to provide a service, then one side (here: the TSO) is fully in charge of the project and the interactions of partners in the partnership as such are mainly at its beginning and its end (Unity Enterprise); in event-based CSSPs, the interaction is mainly at the beginning and project management is deployed by the respective organisation for the individual events (case 1, 2, 4). CSSPs that are formed for joint problem solving necessitate that both partners have more intersections than in the previous two cases. This manifests in joint activities as well as primarily formal deployment of project management (case 3, Plan UK). Furthermore, it was found that the perspectives of the involved TSO and PSO are highly relevant to consider in this regard, because their stance towards the timeframe of a project can be different, as the partnership and the project do not necessarily have the same duration.
While the TSOs considered the entire project period, the PSOs’ involvement was limited to the period of the partnership (cases 1, 2, 3). This was in line with Clarke and Fuller (2010, p.88) and Koppenjan (2005) who note that a partnership can emerge at any stage of the project, not necessarily during the exploratory and planning phases. As a result, not only the organisations’ notion towards the project differed, but also the corresponding management responsibilities. In fact, the absence of joint project teams or managerial concepts such as the joint definition of objectives, joint identification of resources, joint risk or stakeholder analysis in most cases showed that project management was largely informally deployed in the four CSSPs. This informality was also reflected in the way knowledge was managed within and across the organisations.

Based on the data, it can be agreed to Hobday (2000, p. 855) that knowledge sharing mostly occurs in informal settings and only the most experienced organisation had established knowledge capturing entities, in line with Nonaka et al. (2006). The mainly informal character of the four CSSPs was further reflected in the absence of a formal partnership agreement from the start; however, in one case this was done after mutual agreement on the implementation (case 3) or with the intermediary (case 2). Finally, prior coalitions or collaborations have an impact on the project (Bryson & Bromiley, 1993, p. 335), particularly on the level of trust, knowledge creation, partner selection and the degree of formality in the way project management is deployed.

Among the areas with potential for further research, this thesis study addressed the following. The empirical data base was expanded by field-based research as four holistic CSSPs and two individual TSO viewpoints were the subject of this study (Sakarya et al., 2012, p. 1718). The holistic consideration of both perspectives aligned with the call to adopt a perspective different to the business standpoint (Holmes & Smart, 2009, p. 407). Comparisons of CSSPs in different institutional contexts and cross-field analysis were performed (Sakarya et al., 2012, p. 1719; Vurro et al., 2010, p. 91). The application of the collaboration continuum by Austin (2000) provided not only a structure to the empirical data, but conversely, the empirical findings facilitated the extension of the model to be applicable for project management research. Based on the empirical data of the thesis study, it is proposed that the way in which project management is deployed in a CSSP is connected to the stage in the continuum; while this was mainly informally in CSSPs in the transactional stage, CSSPs in the integrative stage deployed a wide range of project management practices. This means for practitioners that are involved in a transactional CSSP that a more formal deployment of project management practices is required so as to move along the continuum towards integrative CSSPs.

Taken together the presented findings, this thesis study showed that the deployment of project management depends on the individual circumstances in which CSSPs are embedded in. It was found that project management was not only applied but that it is expedient because its use bolsters not only the project but also the partnership as such and allows addressing today’s challenges by means of CSSPs. We believe that, by way of exploring this novel field, namely the intersection of project management and CSC, the presented findings contribute not only to its understanding but will give rise to further research and more deliberate application of managerial techniques for which project management provides great potential.
7.2. Validity and reliability

Qualitative research has been criticised for the difficulties in replicating and generalising its finding and for being subjective which is why terms such as ‘trustworthiness’ and ‘authenticity’ are suggested as more appropriate (Bryman & Bell, 2011, pp. 408–409). However, the more common concepts in the reviewed research literature are ‘validity’ and ‘reliability’ which tend to be discussed jointly when evaluating research findings (Gibbs, 2007, p. 90; Hammond & Wellington, 2013, p. 131; Saunders et al., 2009, pp. 156–158).

Validity is about the integrity of conclusions and if explanations are true and accurate (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 42; Gibbs, 2007, p. 91). There are four types of validity: internal, external, measurement and ecological validity. Internal validity refers to the credibility of the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 278). In this thesis study it was insured in four ways: firstly, primary data was only collected from those directly involved in the partnerships; secondly, all respondents validated the transcripts to ensure that only correct information was used; thirdly, this primary data was supplemented with secondary data from documents, websites and other qualitative sources; fourthly, findings from the first level of analysis were validated and challenged with expert interviews. This form of triangulation contributed to the internal validity of the data (Creswell, 2013, p. 251). Furthermore, internal validity was aimed for by selecting appropriate research methods: data collection techniques (mainly interviews), research strategy (comparative case studies), means of analysing the data (two level analysis) (Biggam, 2011, p. 144). By ensuring anonymity of respondents, we decreased the possibility of bias of the responses and allowed respondents to provide real, trustworthy answers (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 331).

External validity refers to the generalisability of the findings to other settings or contexts (Sekaran, 1992, p. 134). This was aimed for by selecting CSSPs that focus on social and environmental aspects and by analysing collaborations from different countries which enabled the comparative assessment of findings from four contexts. Thereby, we aimed to contextualise our findings. Although having four case studies in different contexts, enhanced generalisability of findings (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 173), the sample was not meant to be representative for a known population (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 408). Moreover, by enfolding literature – comparing emergent theories and patterns with extant literature – we aimed for wider generalisability with theory (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 544). This is what Yin (2009, p.37) referred to as ‘analytical generalisation’. Measurement validity asks whether “the measures really represent the concepts they are supposed to be tapping?” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 42). We believe this was achieved by constructing the interview guide according to three main themes identified in the frame of reference from the literature review, while both, the literature review and the interview guide, were developed having in mind the objectives of this thesis. Finally, ecological validity refers to the applicability of findings to the natural social setting and people’s day-to-day life (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 42). We believe that ecological validity was ensured as a case study strategy was chosen which allowed investigation of phenomena in the setting where they occur. In fact, we were able to speak to the responsible representatives of organisations involved in CSSPs who were able to contribute to this research and efforts were made to avoid constrained or unnatural settings for data collection.
Reliability concerns the consistency of findings “across repeated investigations in different circumstances” (Gibbs, 2007, p. 91; Saunders et al., 2009, p. 156). This means that the same findings can be achieved by other investigators using the same cases and following the same procedures (Yin, 2009, p. 37). As it was acknowledged that this can only be achieved to a certain degree in qualitative studies (Hammond & Wellington, 2013, p. 131), the following measures were undertaken, in line with Gibbs (2007, pp. 98–99), to ensure the greatest reliability possible and to minimise bias and errors (Yin, 2009, p. 37): transcription checking (internally by the other researcher and externally by the respondent), prevention of definitional drift by constant checking during coding and shared working on parts rather than a strict division of work. This enabled comparisons of work between the researchers so as to enable critical review and ensure consistency. Moreover, both attended the interviews where the language and circumstances allowed it and the same interview guide was used for all respondents, with slight contextual adjustments.18 By way of clearly elucidating the research methodology in chapter 3, as well as providing explanations and further information in the appendix,19 we were as clear as possible on the procedures that we followed.

7.3. Limitations of the study

We acknowledge that the study has the following limitations, despite trying to minimise their impact. Means to overcome these have been identified and deployed throughout the research process:

1. Small sample size. While this is a drawback of qualitative research in general and case study strategy in particular, we draw the attention to the fact that the aim was not necessarily to generalise our findings as stated in the previous section on validity. Moreover, each case was unique for our research as it aimed to understand its own context and phenomena.

2. Personal interpretations. We acknowledge that the respondents’ answers can be interpreted in a variety of ways just as the open-ended questions in the interview guide could have been subject to personal interpretation by the respondents. Moreover, three transcript translations to English (from German and Romanian) were also subject to personal interpretation. However, we believe that this was the appropriate approach for the present thesis work and it is in line with our research philosophy.

3. Objectivity. In one interview, one of the researchers interviewed a former colleague and objectivity was aimed to be ensured as the other researcher attended the interview as well. In addition, cross-checks of the other transcripts thereby familiarising ourselves with the interviews which were not held face-to-face.

7.4. Strengths of the study

1. We believe that our research findings are applicable in the contemporary context as scholars and practitioners agree that CSSPs are growing phenomena in Europe. This is because, on the one hand, TSOs are evermore interested to cooperating with PSOs owing to shrinking governmental support. On the other hand, PSOs are not only subject to public scrutiny concerning the social and environmental impact of their operations but increasingly see the strategic importance of tackling societal challenges. However, as they do not have the necessary resources and knowledge to do that alone, CSSPs are a means to address them as the empirical data showed.

18 The interview guide can be found in appendix 5.
19 Appendix 6: final template; appendix 7: application of collaboration continuum to the data
2. We built on existing theory by proposing the expansion of the established collaboration continuum by Austin (2000) based on the empirical findings. This is, as we believe, an authentic contribution for project management researchers and practitioners alike.

3. Since we had a holistic approach by interviewing both organisations involved in CSSPs, we could thus identify differing perceptions, for example in terms of objectives, challenges and conflicts. Our aim was not, however, to confront the views of the TSO and the PSO, but to reach an overall understanding of the partnership, which was our primary unit of analysis.

4. We addressed a gap in the extant literature in three ways. First, we researched CSSPs, which, compared to PPPs, still provide great opportunities for research in the CSC literature. Second, in the context of CSSPs, we tackled the research gap regarding the identification and sharing of management responsibilities between the two partners. Thirdly, we propose a theoretical frame of reference (see section 2.3.) where the two fields are merged. Hence, the resulting findings contributed to the body of literature.

7.5. Recommendations for practitioners

In terms of collaborative management, the thesis study found the following aspects.

- Professionalism, responsiveness and communication are pivotal to prevent and solve conflicts. The empirical data showed that trust was built by fulfilling commitments and that the reputation of an organisation as well as its willingness to engage in a CSSP were closely connected to the level of trust between organisations.
- Proximity of partners was found to be essential for relationship building which is worth considering when selecting a partner, as it may influence the collaboration.

Although the thesis study focussed on CSSPs, the sub-unit of analysis resulted in the consideration of TSOs and PSOs that were involved in CSSPs. The empirical data was primarily based on interviews with TSO and PSO managers and it was found that certain categories applied differently to the organisational level which means that some of the presented findings have differing implications.

For TSO managers the data shows that

- PSO industry context influences its stance towards CSSPs, hence this is an aspect worth consideration before engaging in a CSSP (cases 3, 4)
- The field in which the TSO operates is linked to its attractiveness for PSOs, this concerns the possibilities for learning as well as the contribution to the PSO image
- Reliance on PSO volunteers is not always the best choice and needs careful consideration as their training can imply more effort
- The project implementation was on the side of the TSO (cases 1, 2, 3), hence managerial competences in addition to subject expertise are essential for TSOs

For PSO managers, the data yields the following insights

- Although PSOs were identified as the CSSP initiators, there are signs that TSOs increasingly approach PSOs to form partnerships, hence a formal managerial element such as a policy (PSO case 3) can be advisable
- The contribution with volunteers to a CSSP requires careful consideration regarding the kind of tasks to be performed as well as the commitment towards the TSO in terms of the number of volunteers available (cases 1, 3)
The data showed different approaches for partner selection: either the PSO sets a budget for an activity and then looks for a suitable partner (case 1) or the PSO identifies a partner with a joint interest and approves the project implementation once a budget was developed and a plan was developed and agreed (case 3); prior ties impacted on the partner selection and the establishment of trust (cases 3, 4).

7.6. Recommendations for further research

Notwithstanding the outlined contributions of this thesis study at the beginning of this section, the presented findings give rise to further research potential.

- Although there is a need for a well-structured project definition process with practical rules and guidelines (Kähkönen, 1999), it was found that this is particularly challenging for collaborative projects. Despite the presented findings concerning the conceptualisation of the formation phase, we acknowledge that collaboration models are rather generic and the importance of a phase varies (Gray, 1989, pp. 56–57). This leads to the recommendation to deploy the proposed theoretical framework in other research settings, potentially by comparing experienced CSSPs with less experienced CSSPs so as to confirm or challenge the findings presented in this thesis study.

- The empirical data showed that knowledge management is a highly relevant area to be assessed and taken account of in collaborative projects. Consequently, we suggest the inclusion of knowledge management as a distinct knowledge area within the PMBOK with its own set of accepted principles, processes and techniques. Further research is suggested to explore the correlation between different knowledge management practices and the type of improvements that they lead to in CSSPs, in line with Lierni and Ribière (2008).

- The data showed that PSO industry context (cases 3, 4) and public events (case 2, Unity Enterprise) can be external driving factors. This was unlike Birkhölzer et al. (2001; 2005) who found that programmes by the European Union and national governments are external driving factors to engage in CSSPs although they had focused on local partnerships in Europe, as we have. Consequently, the propositions from Birkhölzer et al. (2001, 2005) and our findings, could be the bases for further research on the external contextual elements that impact on CSSPs.

- The role of marketing in CSSPs evolved in several contexts in the data and it was found that PSOs and TSOs had differing notions about it. Consequently, further research could explicitly address this aspect in other CSSPs.

- When applying Austin’s collaboration continuum it was found that the model is also applicable if the organisational level is considered. In fact, this yielded valuable insights on the differing perspectives of partners. Moreover, we suggest including project management as a characteristic of the nature of the relationship. Based on this, we encourage researchers in the area of project management and CSSPs to test this proposition if it holds for other empirical cases as well.

To sum up, we encourage further research to build on our findings by examining project management in later phases of CSSPs as we believe that this is not only a highly interesting and relevant, but also increasingly important topic for practitioners and researchers alike. Moreover, we believe that improving the management of CSSPs may not only benefit the partners involved but the society as a whole, since the very reason for organisations to engage in CSSPs is to address a societal challenge.
References


Appendices

Appendix 1: Additional terminologies

Collaboration is a process involving the activities of organisations who work together to achieve common or complementary and mutually determined goals and objectives underpinned by support structures, communication and information sharing (McDonald et al., 2011, p. 258; Sink, 1998). From an organisational viewpoint, collaboration can occur within or across organisations; the latter being ‘interorganisational collaboration’ which is subject in IOR theories (Austin, 2000, p. 70; Gray & Wood, 1991, p. 3; Gray, 1985, p. 912). When collaboration across organisations from different sectors occurs, the term ‘cross-sector collaboration’ is used. All in all, there are different terminologies for collaborative efforts across sectors. From a public sector perspective, the terms ‘interagency collaboration’ (Kelman et al., 2013), ‘inter-organisational frameworks of intervention’ (Williams, 2002) or ‘multi-stakeholder cooperatives’ (Noya, 2009, p. 265) were found in the reviewed literature.

The following figure is based on Pearce (2003, pp. 24–26) and informed by Billis (2010) and Defourny (2001). It underlines the description of differences across economic and institutional sectors and their differences which is discussed in section 2.1.1. – Introduction to cross-sector collaborations.

![Overview of the economy in societal sectors and actors](image)

**Figure: Overview of the economy in societal sectors and actors**

The private sector is, besides the public and third sector, one of the three economic and institutional sectors in society (Googins & Rochlin, 2000, p. 127; Pearce, 2003, p. 24; Ridley-Duff, 2008). There are other terminologies used such as “first system” (Pearce, 2003), “business sector” (Googins & Rochlin, 2000, p. 131) or “business bureaucracy” (Billis, 1993).

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20 See section 1.5. in the main part of this thesis work
The third sector is markedly different from the public and private sector regarding the values, actors, its characteristics and its focus. In the third sector, citizens are taking action to meet social needs and by caring for others. Based on the values on self-help and mutuality are domestic collaborations formed. Characteristics are a rather informal economy, a voluntary sector and a social economy within the third sector (Pearce, 2003).

Social Enterprise is a term for economic units of the social economy (Birkhölzer, 2005, p. 4). According to the social enterprise strategy of the UK Department of Trade and Industry, social enterprises are “businesses with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners” (DTI, 2002, p. 14). They differ from other organisational forms in six defining characteristics: serving a social purpose, achieving this social purpose by engaging, by at least in part, in trade in the market place, not distributing profits to individuals, holding assets and wealth in trust for community benefit; democratic member involvement in the governance, it is an independent organisation, accountable to a defined constituency and to the wider community (Pearce, 2003, p. 31).

Not-for-profit organisations follow the non-profit approach by strictly prohibiting profit distribution to owners and managers (Defourny, 2001, p. 10,11). Unlike social enterprises, NFPs do neither have an explicit goals nor a formal democratic requirement. Still, they rely on internal governing bodies for control and goal-setting (Defourny, 2001, pp. 10–11) and can belong to the social economy if they are in form of a voluntary organisation which trades (Pearce, 2003, pp. 24–26).
Appendix 2: Comparative review of CSC and project management literature

The following table provides an overview to the models used in the discussion in section 2.3.2. – Formation phase of cross-sector collaborations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Scholar(s)</th>
<th>Year, publication</th>
<th>Processes or phases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSC Literature</td>
<td>B. Gray</td>
<td>1989, book</td>
<td>problem-setting; direction-setting; implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M. Seitanidi</td>
<td>2010, book</td>
<td>formation; implementation (selection, design, institutionalization*); outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Clarke &amp; M. Fuller</td>
<td>2010, article (Journal of Business Ethics)</td>
<td>assessing the context and forming the partnership; formulation of the collaborative strategic plan; implementation on partnership and organization level; realization of outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D. Grudinschi et al.</td>
<td>2013, (Public Sector Innovation Journal)</td>
<td>collaborative governing, collaborative administration, reconciling interests, forging mutual relationships, building social capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ward &amp; Chapman, Mian &amp; Dai</td>
<td>1995 &amp; 1999</td>
<td>conceptualisation, planning, execution and termination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Project management Institute</td>
<td>2013, PMBoK</td>
<td>initiating, planning, executing, monitoring &amp; control and closing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K. Aaltonen &amp; J. Kujala</td>
<td>2010, article Scandinavian Journal of Management)</td>
<td>investment preparation phase, the project execution phase and the operations phase</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: Overview of literature on process models and project lifecycle

The selected models from the CSC literature were selected based on their recognition in the IOR field and their relevance for the focus of this thesis work. Concerning the CSC literature, the names of the three selected CSC models already indicate their different emphases. While Gray (1989) focuses broadly on ‘collaboration’, Seitanidi (2010) particularly targets ‘partnerships’, in particular CSSPs. Clarke and Fuller (2010) combine the collaboration concept with strategic management and thus have a rather narrow focus. Seitanidi (2010, pp. 140, 144) focuses on the factors that influence CSSP formation, thereby conceptualizing partnership formation as “a distinct and significant stage that can provide early indications of the partnership’s transformative potential for change”. Although Clarke and Fuller’s (2010) model is also fairly recent, it focuses on strategy formulation and implementation in the context of collaborative strategic management. Contrary to the previous two models, Gray (1985) is considered as a key article in the field owing to its acceptance among scholars.21

21 Note: 2,475 references on 08.11.2013 via Google scholar
Appendix 3: Data collection details

To supplement the table “Overview of selected respondents” in section 3.5.3, the following table contains more detailed information on each interview, including the interview type (the way how the interview was held), the location of interviewer/s and respondents, the length as well as information whether the interview was supplemented with secondary data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case study / Country</th>
<th>Respondent / interview type</th>
<th>Location (interviewer-respondent)</th>
<th>Length (min)</th>
<th>Interview supplemented with secondary data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 / Romania</td>
<td>1 / Skype</td>
<td>Umeå - Edinburgh - Bukarest</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>reports, websites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 / Skype</td>
<td>Umeå - Bukarest</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 / Sweden</td>
<td>3 / Face-to-face</td>
<td>Umeå</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>reports, websites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 / Face-to-face</td>
<td>Umeå</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 / United Kingdom</td>
<td>5 / Skype</td>
<td>Umeå – Girvan</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>journal article, email correspondence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 / Telephone</td>
<td>Edinburgh - Irvine</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 / Germany</td>
<td>7 / Face-to-face</td>
<td>Lieβ</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>websites, email correspondence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 / Telephone</td>
<td>Fernwald – Garbenteich</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- / United Kingdom</td>
<td>9 / Face-to-face</td>
<td>Glasgow</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>document, website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- / United Kingdom</td>
<td>10 / Skype</td>
<td>Umeå - London</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>websites</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: Data collection details

It is worth noting that if interviews were shorter than 30 minutes; this was owing to the availability of the respondent at that time. We do not see this as a major limitation of our study because the interviews still contained valuable information and were supplemented with documents and email exchanges thereafter.

Appendix 4: Background information: country context of cases

The information in this section refers to chapter 4 which presented the empirical data.

Romanian country-context (case 1)

The access to European funds since 2007 fuelled the CSR development in Romania. The areas mainly covered by the CSR initiatives in Romania are children welfare, education, art, religion, environment and sports (Anca et al., 2011, p. 6). Between March 2011 and February 2013, the National Association of Romanian Exporters and Importers conducted the project “Strengthening the capacity of Romanian companies to develop social partnerships” in cooperation with the United Nations. The project was co-funded by the European Social Fund as part of “Development of partnerships and encouraging initiatives for social partners and civil society”. Its main purpose was to promote the CSR principles in the Romanian enterprises. Among multiple objectives, it aimed to improve the knowledge of Romanian companies in CSR delivering working guides, strengthening their capacity to implement CSR and provide training to CSR managers (Vişinoiu, 2012, pp. 200-201).

Swedish country-context (case 2)

In Sweden, as in Romania, CSR has developed through the activities of multinational corporations, investors, non-governmental organisations, consultants and other actors (De Geer, Borglund, & Frostenson, 2009, p. 269). Nevertheless, authors and practitioners have raised the question whether CSR is a relevant concept in a country like Sweden which is seen as ‘traditional welfare state’ (De Geer et al., 2009, p. 271).
In Sweden there is scepticism regarding the role that the EU ascribes to businesses in this sense, (Frostenson & Borglund, 2006, p. 56), unlike Romania where the EU had a significant influence on the development of CSR. Even so, it has been promoted by different actors like the state, employers and trade unions. This was also underlined by the analysed TSO: “It is still quite new for everyone, so it is difficult to imagine how you can gain from it [...] Everything is changing in the Swedish society and in the cultural and arts sector”. Due to the lack of history in partnering, the same respondent raised that the private sector seems reluctant in partnering with cultural TSOs. This is because the outcome is not easily predictable and therefore the uncertainty of what the name of the PSO would be associated with depends on the outcomes of the event (e.g. theatre production). However, Umeå as European Capital of Culture in 2014 gave rise to more CSSPs. The analysed partnership in Sweden occurs in the context of Umeå being European Capital of Culture in 2014, together with Riga. A main concept in this programme is the “co-creation”, as most of the activities are run by associations, organisations, cultural institutions and other interested parties (Umeå2014, 2013).

**British country-context (case 3)**

Cross-sector partnerships are an alternative form of governance and tend to be a government-led concept that has been evolving as a trend since the labour government emphasised CSC in the UK in 1997 (Seitanidi, 2010, p. 18). While the UK is seen as a leader in the field of CSR, the concept is moving forward, as it suggests an emphasis on the ‘social’ and not the ‘corporate’, being replaced by ‘the business contribution to sustainable development’ (Ward & Smith, 2006, p. 3). Pearce (2003) confirms that the sector in which social enterprises operate is still growing and its contribution to the economy is increasingly acknowledged.

**German country-context (case 4)**

The translation of CSSP in German results in a term similar to ‘social partnership’ which holds the connotation that these partnerships are focused on social causes only and is thus more narrow than the definition deployed in this thesis work. Cross-sector partnerships in Germany exist on different levels. While some local partnerships and particularly innovative projects emerge 'bottom-up', meaning that they were instigated by local initiatives, others are based on EU programmes, government or workers' organisations initiatives (Birkhölzer et al., 2005, p. 123; Jansen, Heinze, & Beckmann, 2013, p. 377). Furthermore, intermediaries in particularly deprived areas in metropolitan areas have been set-up for the development and facilitation of local cross-sector social partnerships (Birkhölzer et al., 2005). A recent study (Jansen et al., 2013, p. 372) found that the term ‘social entrepreneurship’ to be highly heterogeneous in terms of perception and assessment of potential. To mitigate this, the targeted support of exchange and mutual rapprochement across organisation from different sectors was suggested in a reoccurring theme ‘interconnection of sectors’ (Jansen et al., 2013). Particularly ‘neutral agenda-setters’ -such as academics, foundations and administration- were suggested to initiate and implement cross-sector partnerships in Germany (Jansen et al., 2013, p. 373). The prediction that the social economy in Germany will grow until 2020 depends on two factors, the political and economic development (Birkhölzer, 2012). In light of a likely decrease of public funding, a growing challenge will become the economic self-help to ensure self-sufficiency and less dependency on charitable donations and funds.
Appendix 5: Interview guide

This interview guide was used in principle for all interviews to collect the primary qualitative data used in this thesis study. However, as elucidated in ‘methodological choice’ (section 3.4.2.), secondary qualitative data from documentation provided by the respondents were consulted to either complement the primary qualitative data or to prepare for the interviews. The interview guide was subject to adaptation prior to the interview to avoid asking redundant information which some respondents had provided us with in advance as presented in this section Note that: “X” stands for the name of the organisation, “Y” for the name of the partner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General information</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisation: X</td>
<td>Interview type (face-to-face/Skype/telephone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date: xx-mm-yyyy</td>
<td>Duration:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time: z:zz am/pm</td>
<td>Interviewee/interviewer:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interview begin**

Thank you for participating in the research for our thesis work
We would like to inform you that this thesis will be publicly available in the thesis database of Umeå University.

**Confidentiality & Anonymity**

- Your name will not be disclosed but “respondent#”, is that fine?
- Can we use the name of the organization?
- Can we use your job title?
  - What is your job title at X?
- The interview will be recorded, is that fine?

**Part 1 [Questions about the organisation]**

**Theme 1 - Collaborative context**
1. Could you outline the organisational structure of X?
2. What is X’s notion towards collaboration with PSOs/TSOs
3. Are you having CSC partnerships on a regular basis or occasionally?
4. When X collaborates, does it manage these partnerships like projects?

**Part 2 [Questions about the partnership]**

**Theme 1 - Collaborative context**
6. Did you collaborate with Y before?
7. What was X’s motivation to engage in this partnership?
8. What was X’s main challenges that had to be overcome?
9. How did X contribute to the partnership?
10. Have you clarified the expectations of each partner?
11. What was the partnership’s objective?
   11.1. Was the purpose documented in any way?

**Theme 2 - CSSP formation phase**
12. How would you characterize your partnership with Y?
13. What is the partnership’s timeframe?
14. Could you please outline different stages through which the partnership has gone up until now?
15. Who initiated the collaboration?

**Theme 3 - Collaborative management**
16. How did you manage the planning of the partnership?
17. Did you perform a risk analysis before engaging in the partnership?
18. Did you consider stakeholder analysis in the partnership?
19. How was the project team established?
20. How were the responsibilities divided in the project team?
21. Did you encounter conflicts during the partnership?
22. What have you learned from this project/partnership until now?
23. Did the team need to acquire new knowledge?
24. How do you think that the partnership experience contributed to the development of other members of X?
25. Considering that X has experience with partnerships, did you apply knowledge from other previous partnerships in this one?
26. How do you feel about the level of trust with Y?

• Is there anything you would like to add?

We will send you the transcripts of this interview so as to ensure that the correct information is used in the analysis.
Do not hesitate to get back to us in case you want to add information.

Thank you!
Appendix 6: Final template

The final template which was the outcome of the data analysis procedure (see 3.5.6.) is presented on the following pages. It was the basis for the data analysis (chapter 5) and consisted of three themes and, as template analysis allowed for this, emerging categories. It is worth noting that the majority of direct quotations that are deployed in the analysis and discussion chapters originate in the approved transcripts from respondents.

<p>| Theme 1 - Collaborative context (1/2) |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Theme</strong></th>
<th><strong>Experience with partnering</strong></th>
<th><strong>Motivation/Driving factors</strong></th>
<th><strong>Challenges/Restraining factors</strong></th>
<th><strong>Contribution</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Case 1 - Romania</strong></td>
<td>high, on three pillars - civic, social and environmental - 3-5 NGOs per pillar</td>
<td>1. Reputation of the TSO; 2. the TSO proposed an amount that was in the budget of the PSO; 3. internal employee engagement</td>
<td>1. the TSO asked for advance payment but PSO was reluctant given that they collaborated for the first time; 2. challenges mostly internal (reduction of the budget)</td>
<td>volunteers &amp; financial resources no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Case 2 - Sweden</strong></td>
<td>medium – fairly recent, due to country context and the occasion of Umea ECOC2014, Central at Stockholm office, occasionally at regional level. The partnerships are adapted to the needs of the community</td>
<td>1. Positive impact on Swedbank in the Northern region of Sweden; 2. The topic - using culture to create growth; 3. They looked for opportunities of project to reflect their strategy 3. ECOC 2014 is a unique event and they want to be part of it</td>
<td>no significant challenges because most of the work was intermediated and managed by Umea2014</td>
<td>1. monetary contribution 2. increase visibility of the year and promote the events no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Case 2 - Sweden</strong></td>
<td>medium and locally-recent, due to country context and the occasion of Umea ECOC 2014.</td>
<td>Involve children, students and professionals</td>
<td>1. Predict from the beginning the outcome; 2. re-perform the Opera in May, because of all the people involved. 3. Extra work and split the money so that the event in May can be sponsored as well.; 4. Limit artistic freedom; 5. Bureaucratic, uncertainty and long processes from PSO side; 6. Due to the fact that there is an intermediary, there is less interaction between Kulturverket and Swedbank. Hence some of the challenges are managed by Umea2014</td>
<td>implementation of the project, participants, artistic input and expertise of working with children in culture no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Joint identification of resource needs: No. Separately, they identified the same opportunity (ECOC2014), but had in mind different objectives.

CSSP objective: 1. Invest in society. 2. Customer satisfaction

Number of volunteers and number of trees to be planted: Plant 300 hectares of forest 50,000 volunteers; land recovery identification of forests cutting area

"The aim was to create something new extraordinary."

Involve participants in this extraordinary project 2. Potential for future collaboration
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case 3 - UK</th>
<th>Experience with partnering</th>
<th>Motivation/Driving factors</th>
<th>Challenges/Restraining factors</th>
<th>Contribution</th>
<th>Experience of collaborating with this partner</th>
<th>Joint identification of resource needs</th>
<th>CSSP objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Wildlife Trust/R6</td>
<td>high; increasing professionalisation of charitable-giving because increasing possibilities to donate; need to revise ‘charitable policy’. Main criteria: Scottish, can support cultural and endemic causes, money must make a material difference and generally not health-oriented”</td>
<td>1. Generating understanding 2. Doing something worthwhile in Scotland. 3. It fulfilled a number of useful development aspects 4. Personal interest in horticulture by R5</td>
<td>not really, because “The project does not require that much interaction with the distillery at this stage”</td>
<td>Monetary donation &amp; volunteers &amp; horticulture expertise and connections</td>
<td>medium. Previous donations for other projects, but no formal partnership.</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Learn about juniper plants; contribute to the preservation of endangered species in Scotland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case 4 - Germany</th>
<th>Experience with partnering</th>
<th>Motivation/Driving factors</th>
<th>Challenges/Restraining factors</th>
<th>Contribution</th>
<th>Experience of collaborating with this partner</th>
<th>Joint identification of resource needs</th>
<th>CSSP objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lebenshilfe Gießen/R8</td>
<td>No, because they do not feel the need to do marketing. Monetary donations can be used more directly for projects. Generally: organises events (e.g.”Social days”) where employees of large local employers are invited to participate (e.g. renovating buildings)</td>
<td>1. Possibility to collect donations during basketball games, 2. Participation of the basketball team</td>
<td>very direct way of communication has prevented challenges so far; generally: partnerships are a lot of work and</td>
<td>Sending people from the Lebenshilfe to support the TSO before and after the games</td>
<td>low, the two organisation had been in contact before as Lebenshilfe volunteers were supporting Basketbären already even before partnership</td>
<td>yes; joint planning and identification how to support each other; but because event-based, it was clear who was in charge of what</td>
<td>possibility to collect donations and visibility during basketball games, give disables people possibility to take part in social life by visiting basketball games; encouraging contact between professional basketball players and disabled children and adults</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Motivation/Driving factors**
- 1. Generating understanding
- 3. It fulfilled a number of useful development aspects
- 4. Personal interest in horticulture by R5

**Challenges/Restraining factors**
- 1. weather - that determines the participation from the PSO's volunteers.
- 2. Anticipating the interest of the employees
- 3. Anticipating the workload
- 4. Medium; no previous formal collaboration

**Contribution**
- Monetary donation & volunteers & horticulture expertise and connections
- Medium. Previous donations for other projects, but no formal partnership.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Theme 2 - CSSP formation phase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>CSSP process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GeBOC / R1</td>
<td>&quot;the relationship grew in an informal way&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plantam fapte bune / R2</td>
<td>planning from the TSO's side in the previous year look for PSO partners implementation media communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedbank / R3</td>
<td>The office manager decided on the project, Agreed with Umea2014 to be involved in the year and in the theme of young people, Umea2014 suggested Kulturverket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kulturverket / R4</td>
<td>Project stages: Music, lyrics and the opera performance Partnership stages: 1: discuss whether Swedbank was interested; 2: involvement of politicians, as the funds in Umea2014 have to be distributed throughout the different projects. Umea 2014 presented the idea to the municipality and proposed of using the financial resources provided by Swedbank for the Fair opera project. After the distribution of funds was agreed, the cooperation became stronger, with less involvement of the intermediary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Grant and Sons / R5</td>
<td>&quot;It is far more informal than actual milestones, it was just sort of 2-3 meetings, visit of the location itself, the refining of the plan, the identification of the financial resource need and then the agreement to fund&quot; the planning was made by the TSO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Wildlife Trust / R6</td>
<td>1. 1st milestone: drawing a plan; 2nd milestone: getting funds for the plan; 3rd milestone: launching the project; 2. planning stage - meetings - one month before plan + funding agreed, intense communication 3. Less communication after the first 2 milestones. Planning is ongoing - they plan for the next years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSO approached Lebenshilfe and initial meetings were held to discuss jointly how to contribute to the respective other organisation</td>
<td>Both partners profit equally; feels that more value on side of TSO, but no problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebenshilfe Gießen / R8</td>
<td>Rather event-based; Lebenshilfe can go to basketball games, basketball team participated at day of the open door at Lebenshilfe; as no distinct timeframe, no distinct phases distinguishable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Case 1 - Romania**

GeBOC / R1

"the relationship grew in an informal way"

Partnership stages: 1: discuss whether Swedbank was interested; 2: involvement of politicians, as the funds in Umea2014 have to be distributed throughout the different projects. Umea 2014 presented the idea to the municipality and proposed of using the financial resources provided by Swedbank for the Fair opera project. After the distribution of funds was agreed, the cooperation became stronger, with less involvement of the intermediary

**Case 2 - Sweden**

Swedbank / R3

Kulturverket / R4

**Case 3 - UK**

William Grant and Sons / R5

Scottish Wildlife Trust / R6

**Case 4 - Germany**

Licher Basketbären / R7

Lebenshilfe Gießen / R8
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Theme 3 - Collaborative management (1/2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Formal planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 1 - Romania</td>
<td>Informal, but formal only for justifying the budget; planning starts in the previous year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 1 - Romania</td>
<td>External and internal, in documents that are used for press releases and media communication. - keep track of the details. Planning starts in the previous year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 2 - Sweden</td>
<td>No formal planning, but planning is performed, particularly for the events in May. The lack of formal planning &quot;involved a lot of trust&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 2 - Sweden</td>
<td>the TSO drafted the plan and presented the plan to the TSO matters. For the events in May, the planning is done jointly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Formal planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSSP</td>
<td>The TSO made a plan that had a funding requirement and the respondent went to charitable and showed the plan and asked for funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R5: William Grant and Sons / R6</td>
<td>the TSO did the planning and it was presented to the PSO jointly agreed and it was documented by the TSO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R7: Scottish Wildlife Trust / R6</td>
<td>Joint planning; then each individual event was planned by the respective organisation who was in charge of it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R8: Lieber Baskëlbëren / R7</td>
<td>“We have met once briefly so far, initiated by the Baskëlbëren as they are interested to do something in the social arena”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R8: Lebenshilfe Gießen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** The text above is a summarized representation of the original content. It includes key themes, formal planning, risk analysis, stakeholder analysis, project team, level of trust, conflicts, learning points, and partnership agreement for the cases mentioned.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Emerging categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>PSO Industry context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GeBOC / R1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plantam / R2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedbank / R3</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kulturverket / R4</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Grant and Sons / R5</td>
<td>Mentioned that projects in the whiskey business, go on for decades”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Wildlife Trust / R6</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licher Basketbären / R7</td>
<td>“We do not have set a time frame. Sure, we are planning until the end of the basketball season. But I believe we will be able to gradually extend this social partnership”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebenshilfe Gießen / R8</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 7: Collaboration continuum applied to data

The collaboration continuum was deployed as, to put it in the words of Austin (2000, p.72) it “helps us think more systematically and strategically about the nature of the collaborative configurations”. It was deployed in section 6.4. because it was found in the empirical data that the intent with which a CSSP is formed impacts the way it is managed. The collaboration continuum was applied to the data and the figure on the next page depicts this. It becomes clear that the figure resembles the final template deployed for the analysis in this thesis work. Also, it was not surprising that most cases belong in the transaction stage given that one of the selection criteria for our case studies was that the partnerships should not be philanthropic. In fact, only the strategic partnerships at Plan UK complied with parameters of integrative partnerships.

Five aspects were extended to accommodate a “medium” category to facilitate the applicability to the 10 rows, four holistic CSSPs and two individual viewpoints. It is worth noting that the measurements are relative to each organisation and not across the cases, as the size of the organisations differed.

We found the continuum to be applicable to this thesis work because the seven parameters have, to some extent, corresponded with the categories in this thesis work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaboration continuum parameters (Austin, 2000)</th>
<th>Corresponding categories (final template)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of engagement</td>
<td>Contribution, time frame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance to mission</td>
<td>Time frame, CSSP objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnitude of resources</td>
<td>contribution, project team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope of activities</td>
<td>CSSP process, CSSP characteristic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction level</td>
<td>Project engagement, joint identification of resources, level of trust,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial complexity</td>
<td>Reliance &amp; management of volunteers, CSSP process, project team, learning points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic value</td>
<td>CSSP objective, PSO industry context</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: Collaboration continuum and corresponding categories

It becomes clear in the table why it was proposed to extend the parameters to reflect the degree of project management to be deployed: the parameter ‘managerial complexity’ was not found to suffice for the needs of managers and the importance of project management in collaborative settings. Consequently, for the assessment of project management in CSSPs, the values low, medium or high, were defined for the analysis part. In the collaboration continuum this reflects whether project management is rather formally deployed (high) or informally (low) as the table on the following page depicts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of relationship</th>
<th>Level of engagement (low/medium/high)</th>
<th>Importance to mission (peripheral/central)</th>
<th>Magnitude of resources (small/medium/big)</th>
<th>Scope of activities (narrow/broad)</th>
<th>Interaction level (infrequent/regular/intensive)</th>
<th>Managerial complexity (simple/medium/complex)</th>
<th>Strategic value (minor/medium/major)</th>
<th>Project management (low/medium/high)</th>
<th>STAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case 1 - Romanian CSSP</td>
<td>PSO</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>peripheral</td>
<td>small</td>
<td>narrow</td>
<td>infrequent</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TSO</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>central</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>narrow</td>
<td>infrequent</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>major</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 2 - Swedish CSSP</td>
<td>PSO</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>peripheral</td>
<td>small</td>
<td>narrow</td>
<td>regular</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>minor</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TSO</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>central</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>broad</td>
<td>regular</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>major</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 3 - British CSSP</td>
<td>PSO</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>peripheral</td>
<td>small</td>
<td>narrow</td>
<td>regular</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TSO</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>central</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>broad</td>
<td>regular</td>
<td>complex</td>
<td>major</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 4 - German CSSP</td>
<td>PSO</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>peripheral</td>
<td>small</td>
<td>narrow</td>
<td>infrequent</td>
<td>simple</td>
<td>minor</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TSO</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>central</td>
<td>small</td>
<td>narrow</td>
<td>infrequent</td>
<td>simple</td>
<td>minor</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unity Enterprise</td>
<td>Business partnerships</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>central</td>
<td>big</td>
<td>narrow</td>
<td>regular</td>
<td>complex</td>
<td>major</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan UK</td>
<td>Strategic partnerships</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>central</td>
<td>big</td>
<td>broad</td>
<td>intensive</td>
<td>complex</td>
<td>major</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: Collaboration continuum applied to data