

# INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL COLLABORATION AND PUBLIC SECTOR INNOVATIVENESS – THE CASE OF POLAND

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## Abstract

**Background.** Innovations in public management tend to be defined as creative ideas put into practice by management seeking to resolve persistent problems that are faced while pursuing the public interest. Inter-organizational collaboration fuels the effective accomplishment of ventures launched within organizations and is regarded as one of the methods for creating and implementing innovations.

**Research aims.** Therefore, the overarching objective of this paper is to investigate the correlations between inter-organizational collaboration and the creation of organizational innovations.

**Method.** The paper was drawn from literature studies and empirical research. It gives an insight into the requirements for inter-organizational collaboration in public management with an emphasis on creating innovations. Literature studies were partly illustrated using empirical findings from research conducted in 2010 in commune offices located in the south of Poland (in the Małopolskie province).

**Key findings.** Surveys were carried out which led to the affirmation that the needs and benefits, in terms of creation of innovations as part of inter-organizational collaboration in public management, attained visibility and recognition, although common practice within local government units fails to reaffirm this. Different replies to the implementation gaps of inter-organizational collaboration have been rendered, but there was no conclusive answer about how to achieve implementation.

**Keywords:** Inter-organizational collaboration, Innovation, Public management, Collaborative relationships, Public sector

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## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The increased degree of complexity inherent in the processes occurring today in organizations and their settings generates an urgency for collaboration which transcends the boundaries of the single organization and increasingly even the boundaries of whole sectors. This process comes to the forefront in both private enterprises as well as in contemporary public institutions.

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The need for inter-organizational collaboration within the public sector originates from the fact that an organization and the course of social life hinges on the complex system of operations run by multiple organizations, institutions and services included in the process of delivering public services. In essence, public services may have administrative character (e.g. granting documents, permits, licenses), social character (e.g. health protection, public safety, culture, education system, social welfare) or technical character (e.g. water and sewage management, energy supply, waste management) (Kożuch & Kożuch, 2011). Also, they may assume the form of e-services. The scope and configuration of public services are contingent on the needs reported by society and the capacity of the government and territorial local government to respond to the demand reported, and the responsibility for their fulfilment within a specific territory was statutorily assigned to basic units of public administration – local government. Meanwhile, the growth of social and economic life increasingly outstrips the potential for meeting citizens' expectations by local government authorities as to the type, quality and creation of innovations while delivering public services, thereby producing a gap in their provision. Inter-organizational collaboration due to the improvement in efforts made, in the wake of consolidation of resources, goals and actions, play a significant role in closing the gap (Bogacz-Wojtanowska, 2011; Linden, 2010). Therefore, it appears to be of primary importance to identify the correlations between inter-organizational collaboration and the creation of organizational innovations in the public sector.

### **Innovation in the Public Sector**

Innovation research, initiated by Schumpeter's study, currently embraces a variety of scholarly domains (e.g. management, sociology, psychology), analysis levels (e.g. team, organization, economy) and occurrence aspects (e.g. processes, types, attributes, consequences) (Damanpour & Aravind, 2012; Schumpeter, 1960). The issues concerned with innovativeness have moved into the mainstream of research carried out in the public sector, and are today considered as an essential driver propelling the enhanced accomplishment of government and local government tasks, a source of competitive advantage and economic growth (Damanpour & Schneider, 2006; Walker, 2006; Salge & Vera, 2012).

Innovative shifts in the sphere of organization and management are distinguished by: varied degree of saturation with innovations, adequacy for new theories and concepts, step changes in operational circumstances, technological breakthrough, capability to produce results that match its modified mission (Kożuch, 2011, p. 138; Martínez-Sánchez, Vela-Jiménez, Pérez-Pérez & De-Luis-Carnicer, 2009; Guisado-González, Guisado-Tato, &



Vila-Alonso, 2013). In literature four categories of innovation can be found as follows (Johannessen, 2009, p. 160):

1. Individual-oriented, which emphasises concepts like: educational level, personal features, cognitive style, creativity etc.;
2. Structure-oriented, which focuses on structural functionalism, system and contingency theory and the relationship between an organization and its environment;
3. Interactive, which contains dynamic political, organizational and social changes over a period of time;
4. National and regional systems of innovation, a focus on organization and distribution of knowledge.

Specifically, it is assumed that a minimal requirement for enabling innovation is to introduce a new or significantly advanced service, process, marketing method or organizational method. These include services, processes and methods, that have been devised for the first time, as well as those adopted from other organizations (Damanpour & Aravind, 2012; Lee, Olson & Trimi, 2012). Drivers behind innovations encompass the external environment (among others, a level of urbanization, natural resources, unemployment rate and birth-rate), the internal environment, that is the organization itself (among others, organizational complexity, funds, external communication, collaborations and trade unions activities) and its leader (Damanpour & Schneider, 2006; Wejnert, 2002; Hansen, 2011; Elenkov, Judge & Wright, 2005). Similarly, the cross-country analysis lead by The European Commission identified the main drivers and barriers of Public Sector Innovation, which contain internal, external and political factors. They are presented in Table 1.

Internal barriers and drivers contain organization factors such as sceptical attitudes, difficulty in co-coordinating organizations, logistical problems or public sector opposition to entrepreneurial action. External determinants also exist in this environment, e.g. uncertainty, variability. The political barriers and drivers include among others; policy and political decisions, budget reductions, inadequate funding or resources and political opposition.

According to Osborne and Brown (2011), "research, policy and practice about public services innovation all need to embrace a service oriented approach that emphasizes the distinctive characteristics of services, the primacy of process in services delivery and the role of the service user as the co-producer of innovation" (p. 1344). Moreover, innovations presuppose a wide range of different types of change depending on the organization's resources, capabilities, strategies, and requirements (Baregheh, Rowley & Sambrook, 2009).



**Table 1.** Drivers and Barriers to Public Sector Innovation

Factor	Driver / Barrier	Countries	
Internal	Human resources-related factors	Education and training of public servant	Belgium, Bulgaria, Spain, France, Italy, Nederland, Romania, Slovakia
		Availability of incentive schemes for motivating public servants	Latvia, Malta, Spain, Nederland, Romania, Slovenia, United Kingdom
		Leadership and good management	Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Italy, Lithuania
	Other (e.g. availability of time, shortages in personnel)	Lithuania, Denmark	
Internal	Bureaucracy and organizational structures and design	Internal organizational processes	Spain, Ireland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia
		Performance management, including monitoring and evaluation practices	Bulgaria, Ireland, Spain, Italy, Greece
		Internal innovation culture	Denmark, France, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Bulgaria
External	International good practices and knowledge transfer	Belgium, Spain, Latvia, Germany, Malta, Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia,	
	International rankings	Germany, Hungary, Portugal	
	National awards	Austria, Bulgaria, Ireland, Latvia, Portugal, Romania	
	Co-creation/service user participation /collaboration between public-private sectors	Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Finland, Nederland, Portugal, Romania, United Kingdom	
	Citizens and businesses demands	France, Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary	
Political	Budget reductions/restrictions	Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, France, Latvia, Hungary, Portugal	
	Availability of funding/financial resources	Belgium, France, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia	
	EU policy decisions (i.e. EU funds) and requirements at EU level	Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Ireland, Spain, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia	
	Political support (More flexible) Laws and regulations	Latvia, Romania Latvia, Hungary, Romania	

Source: adapted from León, Simmonds & Roman (2012, p. 17-21).

For this reason innovation in the public sector can be divided into several types, which include (Cunningham & Karakasidou, 2009, p. 8):

1. Organizational innovations (involving new structures and operating systems);
2. Process innovations (new forms of service, new operational procedures, etc.);



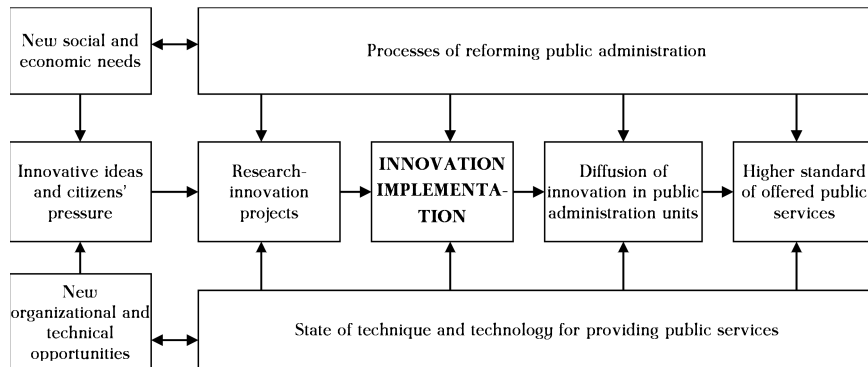
3. Delivery innovations (new ways of offering services to clients, new modes of interaction and access);
4. Governance innovations (new ways and modes of interacting with the public, business and other 'customers');
5. Technological innovations (adoption and utilisation of new technologies).

Innovations in public management are typified as creative ideas implemented in management practice geared for resolving persistent problems faced when realizing public interest. They cut across the boundaries of organizations, enlarge the range of resources, involve change in using governmental instruments and also alter the configuration of decision-making rights (Osborne, 2010, p. 69). The majority of them include organizational innovations (Kozuch, 2011, p. 138). Organizational innovation compared with other organizational changes is widely defined as the first-time implementation of a new organizational method, embraced by the organization, in the manner of conducting business, workplace organization, and external relations which are a consequence of strategic decisions made by managing personnel in the organization (*Oslo Manual*, 2005; Damanpour, Walker, & Avellaneda, 2009; Lee et al., 2012). This means that successful organizational innovation is based on coordination mechanisms that support the problem-solving efforts, the dynamic processes of sense making, and the collective expertise of actors (Coakes & Smith, 2007).

An analysis of innovation in the public sector needs to consider immediate improvements in service quality, fitness for purpose, as well as public value (Hartley, 2005). The core nature of organizational innovations relies on implementing organizational changes that tend to be characterized not only as cutting-edge in terms of management principles but also as crafting relations throughout organization and with its environment. An inherent feature of organizational innovation is its implementation (Figure 1). It takes place when new organizational methods are actually utilized in the organization (Kozuch, 2011). Similarly, Popescu (2007) states, that "public managers must not only acquire innovative and creative abilities necessary to define new horizons rapidly, but also facilitate their putting into practice" (p. 77).

However, implementation of innovation in the public sector requires organizational and environmental sensitivity, open systems orientation and also working across horizontal networks and interactions in services provision (Osborne & Brown, 2011). It is needed for identifying problems, finding the best and most acceptable solution, and then implementing it successfully.





**Figure 1.** Complex Model of the Innovation Process in Public Administration

Source: (Koźuch, 2011, p. 139).

## Inter-Organizational Collaboration in the Public Sector

Inter-organizational collaboration, that is positive cooperation, covers lasting and well-structured relationships, resource flow and other interactions between specific organizations seeking to attain both common as well as individual targets (Koźuch, 2011; Damanpour & Schneider, 2006; Kratzer, Leenders & van Engelen, 2004; Bullinger, Neyer, Rass & Moeslein, 2010; Koźuch & Przygodzka, 2012). The four-dimensional model of collaboration prepared on the basis of healthcare organizations includes (D'Amour, Goulet, Labadie, San Martín-Rodríguez & Pineault, 2008):

1. Shared Goals and Vision, which refers to the existence of common goals and their appropriation by the team, the recognition of divergent motives and multiple allegiances, and the diversity of definitions and expectations regarding collaboration;
2. Internalization, which refers to an awareness by professionals of their interdependencies and of the importance of managing them, and which translates into a sense of belonging, knowledge of each other's values and discipline and mutual trust.
3. Formalization, which clarifies expectations and responsibilities.
4. Governance, that gives direction to and supports professionals as they implement innovations related to inter-professional and inter-organizational collaborative practices.

These dimensions are interrelated and influence each other, and the model can be used to analyze the ways of collaboration between actors. From the perspective of relationship strength, inter-organization collaboration proves to be more potent than network relationships, cooperation and coordination, and may precede full organizational integration (Axelsson & Axelsson, 2006; Camarinha-Matos & Afsarmanesh, 2012). Partnership inter-organizational collaboration is open-ended in its nature, which marks



the principles guiding this collaboration including, among others, honesty, trust and mutual respect. Beyond that, this collaboration is an effect of the evolution of mutual linkages. Similarly, as in the case of innovation, inter-organizational collaboration can be analyzed by taking into account the following determinants (Porumbescu, Park & Oomsels, 2013; Devine, Boyle & Boyd, 2011; Lönnqvist & Laihonen, 2012; van Winkelen, 2010; Tubin & Levin-Rozalis, 2008; Caceres & Paparoidamis, 2007; Camén, Gottfridsson & Rundh, 2011):

1. Internal: trust, commitment, organizational culture, resources, technology, structure, communication, leadership, capabilities;
2. External: risk, uncertainty, environmental dynamism, being trusted;
3. Political: legislations, policies and authority.

These conditions set out the principles of conducting collaborative activities, such as legal regulations requiring cooperation, common procedures and organizational structure. They also point out the importance of relational competence, such as the ability to establish and maintain contacts, trust, commitment or organizational culture.

The growing importance of inter-organizational collaboration results mainly from seeking a competitive advantage in dynamic environments and the fact that nowadays it is impossible to act alone (Sienkiewicz-Małyjurek, 2010). It is viewed as a method for solving problems of organizational fragmentation which then enables professional distribution of tasks (Berlin & Carlström, 2011; Bradshaw & Brown, 2008). The effects produced by the accomplishment of activities within inter-organizational collaboration principally include (Kozuch, 2011):

1. In the field of relations: (a) transfer of information and knowledge, (b) mitigated risk of opportunistic behaviours, (c) heightened trust and partner relationships between participants of the network, (d) refined learning processes;
2. With regard to activities: (a) decreased costs, (b) mitigated risk of failure, (c) enhanced efficiency and flexibility of activities, (d) acquisition and more efficient flow of resources, (e) quicker mobilization through a strengthened coordination of activities, (f) limited access for competitors, and (g) constrained uncertainty through alignment to turbulent environments;
3. With regard to expansion: (a) innovativeness, (b) creation of knowledge, (c) boosted synergy effect, (d) complementarity, (e) increased value, and (d) streamlined processes.

All in all, legal regulations exert the utmost influence on collaborations between public organizations (Kozuch, 2011, p. 5; Sienkiewicz-Małyjurek, 2012). They set out the assignments and entitlements for these organizations as well as obliging them to enter into contacts and undertake joint



initiatives. Additionally, central to this are organizational requirements such as objectives, values and resources possessed, allocation of tasks and competencies, responsibility and authority, as well as circumstances under which organizations operate and their relations with external settings (Koźuch, 2004, s. 96; Tubin & Levin-Rozalis 2008; McGuire & Agranoff, 2011). According to Henning and Ng (2009), collaboration means power sharing and requires rules and structures governing relationships (p. 30).

In the private sector typical objects of research on inter-organizational bonds include: alliances, joint ventures, associations, consortia, cartels, licenses, franchising etc. Whereas in the public sector, the core of the research is focussed on collaboration between public organizations as well as with private companies, non-governmental organizations, media and society. In this respect, such mechanisms are analyzed through participation in public service value chains with regards to (Karbownik et al., 2012): public procurement, territorial marketing, financial instruments, legal instruments, privatization, public-private partnership, the activities of the institutions of supporting innovation, outsourcing, clusters, or digitization. These mechanisms are subjected to complex analysis of their use in public service delivery. Furthermore, in the public sector an entirely different situation prevails which affects inter-organizational collaboration. Evidently, when compared with business management, management of public organizations are characterized by: enhanced authoritarianism, confined autonomy in activities, higher complexity of impact exerted by the environment, greater openness to influence its surroundings, increased formalization of function, functioning in a less stable environment, and little or no pressure coming from competitors (Koźuch, 2011; Jamali, 2004; Kearney, Hisrich & Roche, 2009; Boyne, 2002).

The significance of collaboration in innovative economy and regional development is highlighted in the Strategy 'Europe 2020' which is a long-term programme for social and economic growth within the European Union. One of the priorities adopted in the model for European social market economy is smart growth; that is the development of an economy based on knowledge and innovation. In this realm, the flagship initiative launched by member states, regional and local authorities of the EU is the "Innovation Union". The project posits that across the global world it is essential to incorporate all entities and regions: small, medium-sized and large enterprises, all sectors, including public organizations and social economy and citizens themselves (social innovations) into the innovation cycle.

Inter-organizational collaboration, through boosting activity, creates a new value in the form of the manner for accomplishing the objectives set. It may, thus, be a source for organizational, product, process, service and other innovations.





## METHOD

Literature studies embraces an extensive body of international scholarly output with regard to inter-organizational collaboration and management innovations. Additionally, the organizational documents of the European Commission, e.g. the flagship strategy of the Europe 2020 strategy, or the strategy for smart, sustainable growth being conducive to social inclusion were analysed. Whereas empirical studies were conducted in 2010 in commune offices located in the Małopolskie province as part of a project funded by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education in Poland entitled 'Intra-organizational requirements for effective collaboration between public and non-governmental organizations within a local environment', the project was run between 2008-2011 (project number: NN115 123534). The surveys centred on the persons involved in making and implementing the decision on collaboration, as well as staff decisions. These include commune mayors or persons serving as their deputies, specialists servants charged with personnel issues and collaboration with non-governmental organizations. The following tools were applied in the survey:

1. Framework methodology for examining internal documents of the organization;
2. Individual survey questionnaires designed for commune mayors, personnel specialists and specialists responsible for collaboration with NGOs;
3. Research auditorium questionnaires developed for public management experts; and
4. Non-standardized interviews.

All survey questionnaires contained common questions, most of which were targeted to commune mayors and personnel officers, that is, the persons exercising a critical impact on people as participants of organizational processes, thereby allowing for exposure of the core issues from varied perspectives.

On the whole, the survey attracted 140 persons, including 24.3% commune mayors, 24.3% personnel specialists, 24.3% collaboration specialists and 27.1% public management experts. In view of the inconsistency and deficiency of the answers given, a portion of the questionnaires were discarded. Overall, only fully completed questionnaires, as well as those comprising more than single answers, were retained. In the interests of obtaining unequivocal answers, choices such as "I don't know" were excluded from the questionnaire. An aggregate of 92.8% questionnaires, 85.3% questionnaires by commune mayors, 94.1% by personnel specialists, 91.1% by collaboration specialists and 100% questionnaires by experts were qualified for further analyses.



The expert group was scarcely differentiated due to the profession practised and the function held. The majority of them (86.8%) were employed in higher education institutions. Among them there were 21.2% professors and 75.8% holding doctorate titles. Local government officials included 7.8% respondents and 5.4% from consultancy companies. All experts had experience in public management – the largest group (42.4%) declared their interest in public management for 5 years and less, whereas 24.3% respondents each reported their interest for 6-10 and 11-15 years. In occasional cases the interest in the scientific field under analysis was reported to be several dozen. Accordingly it was presumed that public managers and civil servants – autonomous specialists and experts in public management – were individuals possessing sufficient experience and expertise on issues concerned with handling public matters at the local level, and their opinions may serve as an appealing illustration for discussions surrounding the linkages between inter-organizational collaboration and creation of organizational innovations in the public sector.

## **RESULTS**

### **Main Interdependencies between Inter-Organizational Collaboration and the Creation of Organizational Innovations**

The empirical studies executed show that responsibility for inter-organizational collaboration largely rests on the commune mayors as executive authorities in the communes. Equally, the tasks in this respect are also performed in such departments and offices such as: organization and social affairs department, local social welfare centre, education and department of health care development, promotion and development department, citizen affairs department, crisis management and commune development division, commune secretary together with an organizational department of the commune. In essence, it was determined that the primary manner driving inter-organizational relationships is a straight establishment of collaboration.

About 75% of the respondents reported that tasks which were part of inter-organizational collaboration are frequently or very frequently executed. These findings are corroborated by the number of annual schemes for collaboration with NGOs. Over recent years such programmes have developed in a growing number of offices. For instance, from among 34 offices surveyed in 2005, 50% pursued such programmes. In consecutive years the number burgeoned up to 91.1% in the years 2008 and 2009. However, it should be stressed that – as proved by non-standardized interviews with management practitioners – the prevailing situation is that many programmes adopted often failed to be accomplished. Meanwhile, informal collaboration hardly ever occurs. In practice it becomes com-



monplace that collaboration between an office and civic organizations takes on a formal character, not necessarily abuzz with definite actions.

An analysis of the involvement of stakeholder groups in setting objectives and harnessing opportunities for collaboration reveals that these tasks are chiefly performed by commune mayors (21.5% answers) and commune councillors (19.1%) who are in charge of setting strategic objectives. Then, this role is performed by selected civil servants (15.4%) and afterwards, fourth in the rankings, all non-governmental organizations (12.3%) and selected non-governmental organizations or organizations representing them (7.7%). Thus, the bigger role in setting the objectives for inter-organizational collaboration was attached to the offices investigated. By and large this supports the role of the office as a dominant partner repeatedly emphasized by civic organizations.

The studies have found that collaboration is pursued with a possibly marginal commitment from both parties. The potential for collaboration entailing coordination, cooperation and partnership collaboration are barely fulfilled in the practice of local government management. Work in advisory teams, joint participation in national and regional contests or designing a local partnership programme for promoting successes of collaborating non-governmental organizations rather defines future possibilities for collaboration. Furthermore, modelling the relations between offices from local government administration with civic organizations is typified by a high level of inertia. Civil servants are more apt to respond to social initiatives than to form conditions for joining in the processes of co-governance of territorial communities. The civil servants surveyed declare that they understand the weight of collaboration between public and civic organizations, though it fails to trigger systemized activities fostering this collaboration. In effect, this implies that the declarative character, or the putting into practice of legal regulations to a lesser extent, is aimed at obligating offices to efficient collaboration across sectors.

According to civil servants, the critical reasons behind taking decisions to collaborate are: undertaking activities beneficial for the local environment (19.1% answers) and the discharge of legal duty (10.7% answers). Nearly 25% of those surveyed argued that boosting the efficient functioning of the office tends to be a driving force behind collaboration. Such opportunities such as fulfilment of previous obligations, acquiring additional resources and good interpersonal relations emerged in 1.5-3% answers. Importantly, respondents also revealed that the crucial benefits gained from inter-organizational collaboration involved: devolution of powers in the process of public affairs management (86.1% answers), effective satisfaction of citizens' needs (80.7% answers), sharing of knowledge (29.2%), opportunities of exchanging information (22.3%), more efficient functioning of an office (16.2%).



An analysis of the day-to-day operations in offices from the context of inter-organizational collaboration enabled the claim that experts (78.9% answers) clearly underlined the prevalence of the culture of avoiding collaboration. In their opinion, offices focussed on their own tasks and internal stakeholders. Yet, mayors (44.1% answers) and employees dealing with collaboration (47% answers) predominantly argued that they bolster their own efficiency due to collaboration with other organizations based on the principles of reciprocity. Some mayors (20.6% answers) and specialists (23.5% answers) acknowledged that their offices concentrated on their own tasks and internal stakeholders. A group of several personnel officers discerned that offices value the collaboration with NGOs, and thus they strive to preserve the present structure, thereby favouring consensus. Although the fewest indications were given to situations when the atmosphere in the office was not amicable, not dynamic and not turbulent, which would imply a continual boost to competitiveness.

For those surveyed some of the key constraints and barriers lay in the lack of sense of responsibility for the final outcome specified in plans and schemes (88.5%). This constraint was ranked first by – 49.2%, second by – 13%, and third by – 8.5%. Specifically, this suggests that the surveyed civil servants are unfamiliar with a results-oriented approach and they have inadequate understanding of their own contribution to the delivery of public services. It may also indicate shortcomings in planning and strategic management.

Other barriers and constraints frequently cited were goals which were too broadly formulated or an unawareness of the link between the actions undertaken and the mission of the office. Adopting too many procedures is perceived as a further obstacle thwarting effective operations by office employees. Principally, it results, as equal to the lack of the sense of responsibility, in a huge barrier of red tape whose origins may be chiefly traced to the necessity for compliance with legal regulations and, paradoxically, to the urgency of operations transparency. Nevertheless, in practice the level of bureaucracy is excessive as civil servants are not groomed to handling public affairs in any manner other than bureaucratic ones. Changes to electronic document circulation or elements of e-administration as well as methods of communication with citizens and other clients of offices have not transformed organizational behaviour patterns. Such a barrier scored as one of the top three ranks among 21.5% persons.

Slightly fewer respondents, 18.5% persons, reported that an impediment to effective operations may lie in prioritizing particular private interests of organizational cells. Fundamentally, this is a typical threat prevailing in all types of organizations. To overcome such ineffectiveness requires possession of a high degree of universal competencies by public managers.



The surveys completed, in effect, led to identifying essential determinants for the launching of development and innovation actions in the field of collaboration between non-governmental and public organizations whose compilation was illustrated in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Requirements for Collaboration between Public and Non-Governmental Organizations to Promote Innovation Creation

	<b>Collaboration initiated by public organizations with NGOs</b>	<b>Collaboration initiated by NGOs with public organizations</b>
Internal require-ments	Democratic and participatory management style; Competencies of public managers (among others: self-awareness of attributes and competencies, ability to set strategic objectives, proficiency in creating conditions for collaboration, capacity to coordinate public policies, programmes and projects carried out with varied partners, ability to participate in social life, motivation to initiate activities for the benefit of others); Flexibility of public organizations, including simplified process for taking decisions and propensity for harnessing a variety of collaboration forms; Creation and transformation of organizational cells into task forces; Networking linkages, e.g. social networks, consortia and networks based on ownership rights such as public-private partnership; HRM in offices	Transformational leadership co-creating culture and organizational structures reinforcing collaboration and innovations; Commitment to collaboration with public organizations, among others, in the area of workplace organization, creation of organizational structures favouring collaboration; Propensity for creating extensive Networks outside an organization; Exploitation of cooperation within Larger public structures; Trust to public organizations; Institutionalization and professionalization of management (among others, employment of in-house staff, an extensive and purposefully designed track record of projects completed, stability of operations); High organizational competencies, strong specialization of goals and concentration of operations
External require-ments	Legal regulations; Applied management model; Exploitation of democratic mechanisms; Ethics in operations; Level of involvement of stakeholders in management processes	Funds from the European Union and a system of its application (enhance independence and activity of NGOs); Creation of cross-sector teams focused on vital social problems and a quality of public services; Symmetry in establishing objectives and manners for execution of public tasks between public and non-governmental organizations; Economic potential of public organizations (communes, districts and regions) as the source of innovations in local government units may lie in the capacity of local government units to acquire external funds and multi-organizational horizontal bonds in the form of local governance

Source: study based on the conducted research and illustrated in Kożuch (2011) and Bogacz-Wojtanowska (2011).



The determinants for innovative collaboration between public and non-governmental organizations outlined in table 1 point out that the creation of innovation in public services necessitates not only the appropriate organizational and legal conditions as well as the strong financial potential of public organizations, but also, and most importantly, a collaboration culture embedded in trust and engagement.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

Drawing on the completed research, it was argued that inter-organizational collaboration in public management has the character of a traditional activity when providing services, without effecting alterations or innovations. It was noted that the launching of joint actions is a barely exploited way of handling public affairs by basic territorial units. Meanwhile, all organizations may take well-orchestrated measures in favour of the common good. Besides, it is imperative not to infringe on the functioning principles typical of each organization.

On top of that, it was underscored that internal matters of the offices surveyed and their settings are approached differently, which leads to the assumption that a bigger emphasis is placed on the procedures of formulating objectives and tasks, and less on the procedures connected with their accomplishment. Probably it is an effect of a long-standing stressing of the importance of strategic management and at the same time underrating the capabilities of operational management.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that the benefits yielded by inter-organizational collaboration are identified in Polish practices more seldom than in the referenced literature, and they pertain to their poorly advanced forms. Such collaboration, in effect, is formal in its character and is constrained to a handful of initiatives, and it is only pursued to an extent which does not involve changes to the structure and organizational culture.

As a consequence, the restricted level of inter-organizational collaboration impedes the creation of innovations in public management. Meanwhile, social and economic needs and technical possibilities initiate innovative solutions and form the conditions fostering collaboration. Specifically, this is corroborated by the findings which expressly reveal that in the practice of offices, direct responsibility for inter-organizational collaboration is vested in civil servants as one of their tasks specified in their scope of activities. Civil servants are rather bent on responding to initiatives and ideas put forward by these organizations as they are saddled with other assignments in the office, they fail to centre on the incentives to collaborate, and fail to take the initiative to commence joint and innovative pro-



jects. Nevertheless, it may be observed that in local government management, inter-organizational collaboration is gaining in importance.

Offices do attach certain significance to inter-organizational collaboration as it is required by applicable regulations. However, until now organizational behaviour patterns which would prompt partnership collaboration have not been established and are widely disseminated. Therefore, inter-organizational collaboration, being in the initial developmental phase, fails to be a tool for resolving problems underlying management of public affairs in basic local government units throughout Poland, and it is, hence, not fully harnessed to create innovations in public management. Given the ongoing tendencies in the development of European societies, it may be concluded that the commitment of offices to collaborate with stakeholders is a matter close at hand.

Thus, the deliberations held support the view, present in current public management output, that collaboration between organizations serves as the source for innovative ideas and solutions. In the same vein, its paucity stifles creative ideas. Whereas the need to implement new activities or measures, in the case of local government management, facilitates an entering into inter-organizational relationships. This enables us to arrive at the conclusion that there are positive interdependences between inter-organizational collaboration and innovation creation in public management. Beyond that, beneficial conditions for collaboration, furthering the creation of innovation, may be labelled as innovative inter-organizational collaboration which may be defined as the creation of novel ideas, concepts and methods for addressing specific problems underlying management by multiple organizations through their engagement into common ventures, and consolidation of resources, expertise and ingenuity. Such collaborations integrate organizational and legal requirements and rests on previous positive relationships and capacities, enjoyed by individual organizations, of forming and strengthening relations with other organizations.

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## WSPÓŁPRACA MIĘDZYORGANIZACYJNA A INNOWACYJNOŚĆ W ZARZĄDZANIU PUBLICZNYM – STUDIUM PRZYPADKU NA PRZYKŁADZIE POLSKI

### Abstrakt

**Tło badań.** Innowacje w zarządzaniu publicznym definiuje się jako twórcze idee wprowadzane do praktyki zarządzania nakierowane na rozwiązanie uporczywych problemów w realizacji interesu publicznego. Za jedną z metod kreowania i wdrażania innowacji uważa się współpracę międzyorganizacyjną, która przyczynia się do skuteczniejszej realizacji przedsięwzięć podejmowanych w organizacjach.

**Cele badań.** Z tego względu celem niniejszego artykułu jest poznanie współzależności pomiędzy współpracą międzyorganizacyjną a kreowaniem innowacji organizacyjnych.

**Metodyka.** W niniejszym artykule przedstawiono uwarunkowania współpracy międzyorganizacyjnej w zarządzaniu publicznym z ukierunkowaniem na kreowanie innowacji. Studia literaturowe w części zilustrowano wynikami badań empirycznych przeprowadzonych w 2010 roku w urzędach gmin zlokalizowanych południowej Polsce (w województwie małopolskim).

**Kluczowe wnioski.** Przeprowadzone badania pozwoliły stwierdzić, że chociaż widoczne i dostrzegane są potrzeby i korzyści w zakresie kreowania innowacji w ramach współpracy międzyorganizacyjnej w zarządzaniu publicznym, powszechna praktyka w jednostkach samorządu terytorialnego w Polsce tego nie potwierdza. Opinie na temat współpracy międzyorganizacyjnej są różnorodne i nie ma jednoznacznej odpowiedzi, jak kształtować współpracę między organizacjami w zakresie kreowania innowacyjnych rozwiązań.

**Słowa kluczowe:** współpraca międzyorganizacyjna, innowacje, zarządzanie publiczne, relacje partnerskie, sektor publiczny

