

THE CATALYSTS OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION DEVELOPMENT IN EUROREGIONS

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Abstract: The research problem of the paper concerns multiple catalysts for the development of cross-border cooperation in Euroregions, and in particular their impact on public institutions and NGOs. The aim of the paper is to determine whether in a specific Euroregion environment, cooperating public institutions and non-governmental organizations are affected by similar or different catalysts for the development of cross-border cooperation. Based on the literature review as well as desk research analyze, the theoretical part of the paper presents three key sets of catalysts for the development of cross-border cooperation, related to: the adopted model of cooperation; cooperating organizations; implemented cross-border activities. In order to solve the paper's research problem the qualitative research were conducted. The co-authors analysed the results of focus group interviews and a survey conducted on a group of 100 Polish and Czech respondents developing cross-border cooperation in the Polish and Czech part of the Beskidy Euroregion were used. The sets of catalysts: "the model of cooperation", "the resources and potential of partners" refer in a universal way to the processes of development of cross-border cooperation, while the third set - joint activities of partners is strongly correlated with Euroregional determinants. The analysis confirms that for non-governmental organizations the strong catalysts for the development of cross-border cooperation are the resources and potentials of the cooperating organizations and joint activities of the partners, while the set including the cooperation model is not important. On the other hand, in the case of public institutions, the cooperation model and the resources and potentials of cooperating organizations can be considered weak catalysts, while the set including joint activities of partners is not important.

Key words: cross-border cooperation (CBC), euroregions, inter-organizational cooperation, cross-border partnership management

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Introduction

Euroregions The normative and institutional framework for cross-border cooperation results from the European Framework Convention for Cross-Border Cooperation between the Communities and Territorial Authorities and the European Charter for Border and Cross-Border Regions, which includes standards

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for the creation of Euroregions. Cross-border cooperation is most often based on similarities between the neighbouring areas, e.g. historical, linguistic, cultural, political, social or economic. The real picture of cross-border cooperation is shaped as a result of activities undertaken in the organization's partnerships on the borderlands, i.e. between public institutions and non-governmental organizations. Increasingly, these activities are implemented in larger areas, in cooperation networks (Sohn and Reitel, 2016). Another trend is the growing role of cross-border regions in joint cross-border management, as well as taking integrated actions to solve common, trans-national problems (Suchacek, 2011). Such activities are carried out in various forms of cross-border inter-organizational cooperation, including the Euroregions and through cross-border projects. Thus, Euroregions can be considered as specific incubators for the development of cross-border cooperation, above all, for those organizations that implement cross-border projects (Howaniec and Kurowska-Pysz, 2014).

Although the need for cooperation and communication between organizations and people from the neighbouring parts of the borderland is natural and obvious (Spierings and van der Velde, 2013), in practice, it depends on many factors that can act as barriers or catalysts for this process (Castanho et al., 2016). They primarily affect the ability to undertake and develop cross-border cooperation, including communication between partners, as well as the transfer of resources such as information, knowledge, human capital (Szczepańska-Woszczyzna, 2015) and intellectual capital (Castanho et al., 2016; Štefko et al., 2015; Bojar et al., 2013). In order to successfully develop cross-border cooperation in Euroregions, it is necessary to know the incentives that encourage and mobilize the development of partnerships (Kurowska-Pysz and Szczepańska-Woszczyzna, 2017). Therefore, it is necessary to select the catalysts for the development of cross-border cooperation in Euroregions, which have the strongest impact on public institutions and non-governmental organizations. This problem is the research question for this paper. The solution will enable us to determine which catalysts for the development of cross-border cooperation affect public institutions and non-governmental organizations cooperating in a specific Euroregional environment.

The Development of Cross-border Cooperation in Euroregions - Theoretical background

The financial support for the cross-border cooperation in European Union territory, contributing to redraw a new political map of Europe, by reducing the barrier effect and reinforcing common development strategies. In last twenty years several new partnerships and institutions have been established, creating networks that connect a wider range of local and regional actors into the CBC process, on both sides of the borders. Some of these entities have gradually started to call themselves Euroregions, based on non-rigid criteria, even though, in some cases, they lack legal personality and operate on an informal basis (Medeiros, 2011). Euroregions'

activities reduce persistent barriers and implementing cross-border planning strategies at the core of cross-border cooperation programmes (Medeiros, 2017). The Euroregionalisation process significantly stimulates the growth of competitiveness for border regions. It involves the creation of formal structures for cross-border cooperation (Euroregions), set up by at least two units representing border regions of two or more countries (e.g. municipalities, districts, non-governmental organizations, etc.) (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 1999). Euroregions are also referred to as permanent structures of cross-border cooperation between directly neighbouring authorities of local and regional units, located along the common national borders (Dziennik Urzędowy Unii Europejskiej, 2007). The task of Euroregions is to take actions to remove socio-economic inequalities, solve problems of peripheral and marginalized areas, build mutual trust and cooperate across borders. Euroregions create cross-sectoral and cross-border cooperation, and thus try to effectively respond to contemporary social, economic and environmental challenges on the borderland (Sohn, 2014). The priority of Euroregional cooperation is the development of all areas of life on the borderland. The implementation of these plans is realized through specific undertakings and joint investments. The cross-border cooperation of small and medium-sized enterprises, the development of cooperative relations between suppliers and recipients as well as the elimination of various barriers to entrepreneurship development play an important role in the economic development of border regions (Suchacek et al., 2017). It is also important to support business environment institutions and create a favourable economic climate for the development of entrepreneurship (Mynarzová and Štverková, 2015), cross-border cooperation in the field of research and development, the use of assistance programs for enterprises, and the improvement of the conditions for creating enterprises on the border. The dynamics and development trends of Euroregions are variable over time. Not all borderlands are saturated to the same extent with forms of cross-border cooperation. If the processes of Euroregionalisation develop dynamically on the borderland, then cross-border connections multiply. There are: economic, administrative, cultural or educational, both bilateral and multilateral, e.g. clusters and networks. In general, it can be said that cross-border cooperation serves the development of a network of connections at the local and regional level due to which cooperation in social, economic or environmental matters develops, and also numerous barriers in local communities surrender. The key barriers to the development of cross-border cooperation include (Kurowska-Pysz, 2013): shortage of capital for this purpose, differences in interests and goals to which partners strive, lack of knowledge of cross-border partnership management principles, lack of strategy for long-term cooperation between partners, hindered cooperation because of communication distance, poor knowledge of the neighbouring country language, different administrative procedures; asymmetry of economic and financial potential of partners; cultural, religious, social, political, and social differences, etc. Some previous research identified 'external' barriers to the

development of cross-border cooperation, which are characteristics of peripheral regions, distant from national and regional decision centres. The same studies identified ‘internal’ barriers to the development of cross-border cooperation, which most strongly affect the social objectives of cooperation (Kurowska-Pysz et al., 2018). In addition to barriers, it is also possible to indicate many factors favourably affecting the development of cross-border cooperation, which can be classified in various ways (Van Houtum, 2000; Brunet-Jailly, 2013; Castanho et al., 2016; Wróblewski et al., 2018). As catalysts for cross-border cooperation, they can merge into coherent sets that group together related elements (Wróblewski et al., 2018). Based on analyses of cross-border cooperation development processes, three key collections of elements have been distinguished: implementation of the cross-border cooperation model; potentials and resources of cooperating organizations; and the scope of jointly implemented cross-border activities (Table 1).

Table 1. Sets of catalysts for the process of developing cross-border cooperation

Cooperation model	Potentials and resources of partners	Joint activities of partners
1. Joint implementation of EU and other projects 2. Joint implementation of only EU projects 3. Permanent cooperation, outside of projects 4. Constant cooperation with one partner only 5. Constant cooperation with one partner and periodic with many partners 6. Only periodic cooperation with many partners	1. Own financial resources 2. External resources 3. Infrastructure for cooperation 4. Motivation to cooperate 5. Competent employees developing cooperation 6. Information, knowledge and know-how to develop cooperation 7. Experience in cooperation 8. Trust 9. Political support 10. Support of stakeholders	1. Joint cross-border projects 2. The desire to obtain EU funds 3. Joint learning and exchange of experiences 4. Personal contacts and inter-organizational contacts 5. Implementation of the borderland development policy 6. Development of new thematic areas of cooperation 7. Implementation of innovations

The presented sets of catalysts for the development of cross-border cooperation with varying intensity apply to all partnerships of organizations operating on the borderlands. Some organizations are able to use these catalysts appropriately, and thus obtain better results of cross-border cooperation. The impact strength of these catalysts is variable and also depends on the cross-border environment, e.g. in Euroregions. Euroregions, as organizations promoting cross-border cooperation, should focus on stimulating all three bundles of cross-border cooperation catalysts listed in Table 1, using the knowledge of their real impact on at least two key stakeholder groups (Kurowska-Pysz, 2012): public institutions and NGOs. This impact may vary, which results from the different conditions of the activity, shaping the models of cross-border cooperation, as well as the diversity of potentials and resources of the partners and various directions of cross-border activities undertaken by public institutions and non-governmental organizations.

Methodology

The research problem of this paper concerns the issue of support for the development of cross-border cooperation in Euroregions through the use of catalysts - sets of related factors that have a positive impact on these processes. In the theoretical part of this paper, three sets were determined regarding:

- a cross-border cooperation model,
- potentials and resources of cross-border cooperation partners,
- joint activities of cross-border cooperation partners.

It was also proposed that catalysts for the development of cross-border cooperation have a different impact on two key groups of stakeholders: public institutions and non-governmental organizations.

The aim of the paper is to determine how individual sets affect the development of cross-border cooperation in Euroregions in relation to public institutions and non-governmental organizations. The intention of the authors was to indicate the group of catalysts, which most strongly stimulates the development of cross-border cooperation between public institutions and non-governmental organizations in a specific Euroregional environment. The Euroregion Beskidy where the research were conducted, covers the border area of the Silesian and Malopolskie Voivodeships - on the Polish side and communes around the city of Frýdek-Místek in the Czech Republic. The Euroregion has been operating since 2000 and focuses primarily on joint activities in the fields of culture, education, sport and recreation, tourism, transport and economy. Its members are primarily local government units and non-governmental organizations (Euroregion Beskidy, 2014).

To solve the research problem, the results of qualitative research were used: a focused group interview (FGI) and a questionnaire survey (CATI, CAWI) carried out in the Polish and Czech part of the Euroregion Beskidy. The FGI group interview was conducted with representatives of various public institutions and non-governmental organizations active in the Beskidy Euroregion (ten entities: five public institutions, five non-governmental organizations). During the interview, respondents assessed the collection of factors presented in Table 1 in the areas of: cooperation model, potentials and resources of partners, joint activities of partners. They pointed out those factors, which in their opinion may play the role of catalysts for the development of cross-border cooperation in Euroregions for two groups of stakeholders: public institutions and non-governmental organizations. They also suggested additional factors to be included in the survey. The selection of participants in the FGI interview was based on their specialist knowledge and experience regarding cross-border cooperation.

Based on the results of the FGI interview, a collection of factors was selected, which were assigned to the above-described sets, and which according to the interviewees may be a catalyst for the development of cross-border cooperation in the Euroregions. Next, a research tool (survey questionnaire) was prepared containing questions about the evaluation of this research problem. Survey research

was performed using CATI and CAWI techniques, on a group of 100 randomly selected Polish and Czech respondents, i.e. employees of the public institutions and non-governmental organizations (managers, decision makers) (Table 2), which develop cross-border cooperation in the Euroregion Beskidy. Respondents pointed out those factors which in their opinion may be a catalyst for the development of cross-border cooperation in Euroregions for two groups of stakeholders: public institutions and non-governmental organizations.

Table 2. Characteristics of respondents

Type of entity	Number of respondents		Nature of cross-border cooperation		
	on Polish side	on Czech side	within projects and outside	only in projects	only outside projects
Public institutions	34	40	32	28	14
Non-governmental organisations	16	10	7	14	5
In total	50	50	39	42	19

The results of the survey were analysed separately for public institutions and non-governmental organizations. The results were then compared and, on this basis, it was determined whether the same or different catalysts for the development of cross-border cooperation could be identified for these two groups of respondents. Respondents' answers were not analysed by nationality because the comparative analysis of catalysts for the development of cross-border cooperation in each part of the Euroregion is a separate research topic.

Results

The participants of the FGI study selected the key elements of three sets of catalysts for the development of cross-border cooperation in Euroregions, which were then assessed by the respondents of the CATI and CAWI survey, i.e. employees of the public institutions and NGOs. In the 'cooperation model' set, the factors presented in Table 3 were assessed. The analysis shows that in both groups of respondents, project cooperation outweighs non-project co-operation, while permanent cooperation with one partner dominates in relation to different forms of cooperation with many partners.

Table 3. Evaluation of catalysts for the development of cross-border cooperation in the set: cooperation model, public institutions and non-governmental organizations

Type of entity	Percentage of indications of the following factors as catalysts for the development of cross-border cooperation in the 'cooperation model' set (in %, multiple-choice question)				
	a) joint implementation of projects e.g. EU-related	b) cooperation outside projects	c) constant cooperation with one partner	d) constant cooperation with one partner and periodical with numerous partners	e) only periodical cooperation with numerous partners
Public institutions	54	46	65	32	3
NGOs	75	25	78	12	10

Subsequently, the set ‘resources and potentials of partners’ was analysed and the factors presented in Table 4 were taken into account. They were assessed separately by public institutions and non-governmental organizations. Both groups of respondents evaluate their resources and potentials differently as catalysts for the development of cross-border cooperation. The only convergence concerns the high demand for own resources and subsidies. Public institutions highly assess infrastructure for project needs and factors, such as motivation or experience, considerably lower. NGOs assess knowledge, know-how and experience much better than infrastructure, whereas motivation slightly lower.

Table 4. Evaluation of catalysts for the development of cross-border cooperation in the set: resources and potentials of partners’ bundle, public institutions and non-governmental organizations

Type of entity	Percentage of indications of the following factors as catalysts for the development of cross-border cooperation in the set ‘potentials and resources of cross-border cooperation partners’ (in %, multiple-choice question)					
	a) own resources / subsidy	b) infrastructure	c) motivation	d) knowledge and know-how	e) experience	f) trust and support
Public institution	75	57	35	48	42	38
NGOs	95	15	77	85	89	56

Table 5. Evaluation of catalysts for the development of cross-border cooperation in the set: joint activities of partners, public institutions and non-governmental organizations

Type of entity	Percentage of indications of the following factors as catalysts for the development of cross-border cooperation in the set ‘joint activities of cross-border cooperation partners’ (in %, multiple-choice question)					
	EU projects in Euroregion	Joint learning	Personal and inter-organizational contacts in the Euroregion	Development of new areas of Euro-regional cooperation	Implementation of innovation	Implementation of the Euroregion development policy
Public institution	78	12	25	19	10	25
NGOs	95	32	49	33	23	40

The last of the assessed sets concerned the joint cross-border activities of the partners. The results of the assessment of this set by public institutions and non-governmental organizations are presented in Table 5. The respondents agree that cross-border cooperation in Euroregions is based primarily on EU projects and must therefore be consistent with the territorial management priorities set by the European Union for Euroregions. Significant differences occur in the assessment of other factors, e.g. joint learning, implementation of innovations and development

of new areas of cooperation. Generally, these activities are better evaluated by non-governmental organizations than by public institutions.

Results, Discussion and Conclusions

Sets of catalysts: “the model of cooperation”, “the resources and potential of partners” refer in a universal way to the processes of development of cross-border cooperation, while the third set - joint activities of partners is strongly correlated with Euroregional determinants.

The set: “model of cooperation” determines the nature of relationships between organizations, which has a very large impact on the quality and effectiveness of cross-border cooperation, also in Euroregions. The forms of cooperation prevailing in both groups of respondents: project cooperation and permanent cooperation with one partner prove that the examined entities treat cross-border cooperation quite precautionary. Project cooperation usually refers to a specific time horizon and is implemented with a minimum commitment of one’s own funds (subsidies predominate), which is quite safe and allows partners to possibly withdraw from continuing cooperation as soon as all project sustainability requirements are met. It seems, however, that public institutions (perhaps due to the possibility of securing budget funds for this purpose) are definitely more interested in the development of non-project cooperation than non-governmental organizations.

The dominant attitude of respondents to permanent cooperation with one partner is the second factor indicating that both non-governmental organizations and public institutions do not show a visible tendency to expand this cooperation with new entities. In public institutions, such an opportunity is noticed by as many as 35% of respondents, while in non-governmental organizations only 22% of respondents. Thus, the developed model of cross-border cooperation can only partly be regarded as a catalyst for its development in the case of public institutions. However, this is not a catalyst for the development of cross-border cooperation for NGOs - due to the very conservative nature of the relations between them.

From the set analysis: the resources and potentials of the partners show that both groups of respondents treat their own funds and subsidies as one of the key elements for the development of cross-border cooperation. This proves the need for further support of these relations by Euroregions with EU funds, but also for education in the use of other sources of financing. It can therefore be concluded that the mere availability of EU funds in Euroregions may be an incentive to develop cross-border cooperation, regardless of other resources and potentials.

Figure 2 clearly shows the differences between public institutions and non-governmental organizations in relation to the remaining resources and potentials. Public infrastructure is important for public entities, i.e. material elements such as equipment, fixed assets, and appropriate organizational conditions for cooperation.

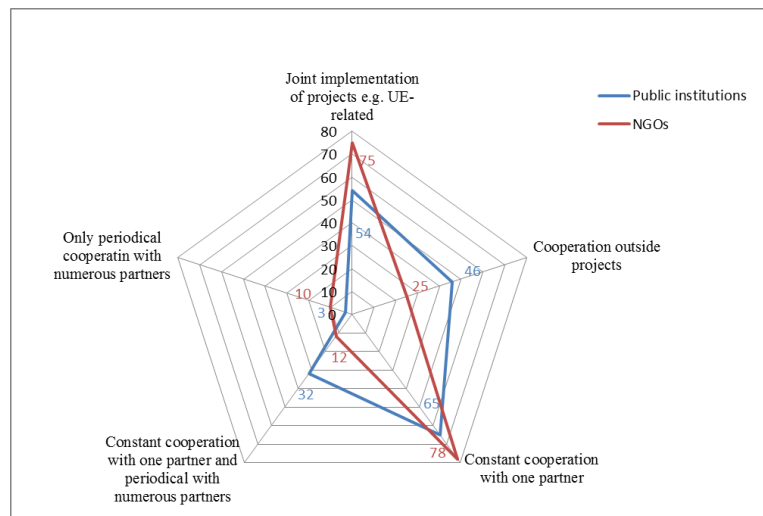


Figure 1. Evaluation of catalysts for the development of cross-border cooperation in the set: model of cooperation - public institutions and non-governmental organizations

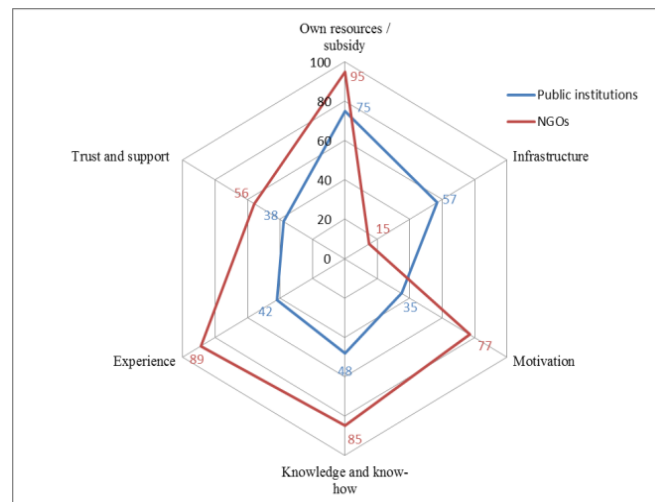


Figure 2. Evaluation of catalysts for the development of cross-border cooperation in the set: resources and potential of partners - public institutions and non-governmental organizations

Meanwhile, non-governmental organizations focus on knowledge, expertise and experience as definitely more important elements developing cross-border cooperation, and this approach should be considered more promising in the context of the sustainability of this cooperation. Non-governmental organizations are also definitely more motivated to develop cross-border cooperation than public institutions. It can therefore be concluded that resources and potentials only

partially mobilize public institutions for cross-border cooperation, and definitely to a greater extent non-governmental organizations.

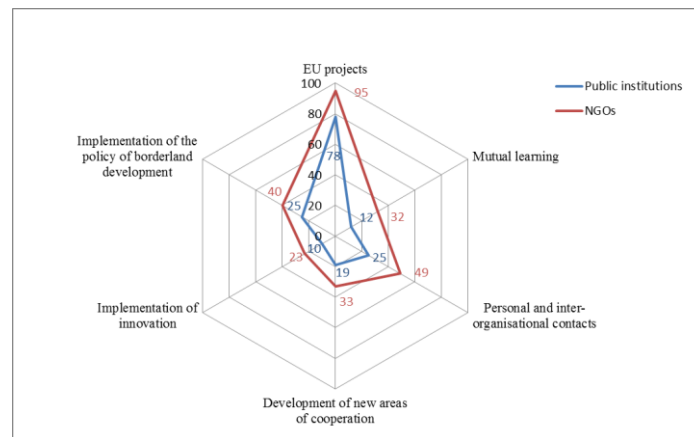


Figure 3. Evaluation of catalysts for the development of cross-border cooperation in the set: “joint activities of the partners” - public institutions and non-governmental organizations

Set assessment: joint activities of partners confirm that both public institutions and non-governmental organizations pay the greatest attention to EU projects. This is the leading activity of public institutions when it comes to cross-border cooperation. In contrast to non-governmental organizations, public institutions are much less interested in the development of new areas of cooperation; joint learning, personal and inter-organizational contacts, implementation of innovations or the development of the borderland. Non-governmental organizations declare the implementation of such activities to a much greater extent. Set analysis: joint actions of partners prove that this group of factors is a catalyst for the development of cross-border cooperation only in the case of non-governmental organizations. Below, there is a summary of the examined sets of factors as catalysts for cross-border cooperation in public institutions and non-governmental organizations (Table 6).

The analysis confirms that for non-governmental organizations the strong catalysts for the development of cross-border cooperation are the resources and potentials of the cooperating organizations and joint activities of the partners, while the set including the cooperation model is not important. On the other hand, in the case of public institutions, the cooperation model and the resources and potentials of cooperating organizations can be considered weak catalysts, while the set including joint activities of partners is not important. The above analysis results in two key recommendations regarding the development of cross-border cooperation in Euroregions.

Table 6. Catalysts of cross-border cooperation in public institutions and non-governmental organizations

A set of cross-border cooperation factors	Impact on the development of cross-border cooperation in public institutions			Impact on the development of cross-border cooperation in non-governmental organizations		
	Fully positive – strong catalyst	Partially positive, partly negative - weak catalyst	Negative – it is not of a catalyst nature	Fully positive – strong catalyst	Partially positive, partly negative – weak catalyst	Negative – it is not of a catalyst nature
Cooperation model						
Resources and potentials of partners						
Joint actions by partners						

At the same time, due to the special role of public institutions in managing borderland development, the increase of their involvement in the intensification of cross-border cooperation is of great importance for the success of this process. As far as public institutions are concerned, it is particularly important to educate on the possibilities of better use of one's own resources and potentials, as well as resources and potential of the partner to extend the scope of joint activities, e.g. joint learning, implementation of innovations and actions for the development of the border area. This is especially important because public institutions are essentially focused on the implementation of their missions and motivating them to other activities requires special incentives. At the same time, due to the special role of public institutions in managing borderland development, their increased involvement in the intensification of cross-border cooperation has an important bearing on the success of this process.

Research Limitations and Further Study Directions

The paper is based on qualitative research, including CATI and CAWI, which were conducted on a random chosen sample, but relatively small, non a representative one. This sample was sufficient to study the catalysts in Polish and Czech parts of Euroregion Beskidy. More accurate results would be based on statistical analysis that would build an economic model for this problem, which could be done using MANCOVA analysis followed by univariate ANOVAs with some dependent variables in rounds. The authors intend to use these methods in subsequent studies. Further areas of research that the authors intend to pursue will primarily concern the assessment of catalysts of cross-border cooperation development in three parts of Euroregion Beskidy: Polish, Czech and Slovak. The authors are also going to extend the research regarding the development of cross-border cooperation impact to entrepreneurs operating in Euroregions.

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KATALIZATORY WSPÓŁPRACY TRANSGRANICZNEJ W EUROREGIONACH

Streszczenie: Problem badawczy niniejszego artykułu dotyczy wielu katalizatorów rozwoju współpracy transgranicznej w euroregionach, a w szczególności ich wpływu na instytucje publiczne i organizacje pozarządowe. Celem artykułu jest ustalenie, czy w specyficznym środowisku euroregionów na współpracujące instytucje publiczne i organizacje pozarządowe mają wpływ podobne lub różne katalizatory rozwoju współpracy transgranicznej. Na podstawie przeglądu literatury, a także analizy badań źródeł zastanych, teoretyczna część artykułu przedstawia trzy kluczowe zestawy katalizatorów rozwoju współpracy transgranicznej, związane z: przyjętym modelem współpracy, organizacjami współpracującymi oraz realizowanymi działaniami transgranicznymi. W celu rozwiązania problemu badawczego przeprowadzono badania jakościowe. Autorzy przeanalizowali wyniki wywiadów grupowych i wykorzystali ankietę przeprowadzoną na grupie 100 polskich i czeskich respondentów rozwijających współpracę transgraniczną w polskiej i czeskiej części Euroregionu Beskidy. Zestawy katalizatorów: "model współpracy", "zasoby i potencjał partnerów" odnoszą się w sposób uniwersalny do procesów rozwoju współpracy transgranicznej, podczas gdy trzeci zestaw - wspólne działania partnerów, są silnie skorelowane z determinantami euroregionalnymi. Analiza potwierdza, że dla organizacji pozarządowych silnymi katalizatorami rozwoju współpracy transgranicznej są zasoby i potencjał współpracujących organizacji oraz wspólne działania partnerów, a zestaw obejmujący model współpracy nie jest istotny. Z drugiej strony, w przypadku instytucji publicznych, model współpracy oraz zasoby i potencjał współpracujących organizacji można uznać za słabe katalizatory, natomiast zestaw obejmujący wspólne działania partnerów nie jest istotny.

Słowa kluczowe: współpraca transgraniczna (CBC), Euroregiony, współpraca międzyorganizacyjna, zarządzanie partnerstwem transgranicznym

欧洲跨境合作发展的催化剂

摘要: 本文的研究问题涉及多个催化剂, 用于发展欧洲地区的跨境合作, 特别是它们对公共机构和非政府组织的影响。该文件的目的是确定在特定的欧洲区域环境中, 合作的公共机构和非政府组织是否受到类似或不同催化剂的影响, 以促进跨境合作的发展。在文献综述和案头研究分析的基础上, 本文的理论部分提出了三个关键的跨境合作发展催化剂, 涉及: 采用的合作模式; 合作组织; 实施跨境活动。为了解决论文的研究问题, 进行了定性研究。共同作者分析了焦点小组访谈的结果, 并对使用Beskidy Euroregion的波兰和捷克部分开展跨境合作的100名波兰和捷克受访者进行了调查。催化剂组合: “合作模式”, “合作伙伴的资源和潜力”是指跨界合作发展过程的普遍方式, 而第三组合作伙伴的联合活动与欧洲地区密切相关决定因素。分析证实, 对于非政府组织而言, 发展跨境合作的强大催化剂是合作组织的资源和潜力以及合作伙伴的联合活动, 而包括合作模式在内的集合并不重要。另一方面, 在公共机构的情况下, 合作模式和合作组织的资源和潜力可以被视为弱催化剂, 而包括合作伙伴的联合活动在内的集合并不重要。

关键词: 跨境合作(CBC), 欧洲区域, 组织间合作, 跨境合作管理。