

# **Exploring the Role of the Stakeholder in Fast-Moving Consumer Goods Cross-sector Collaborations: a Phenomenological Study.**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis aims to explore the experiences of those individuals involved in the phenomenon of cross-sector collaborations within the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) global food sector. The research is situated within a landscape of diminished availability of funding for Non-profit organizations (NPOs) in which new ways of achieving sustained funding are being sought. Coupled with the emergence of increased Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activity from Commercial Entities (CEs), in part driven by societal pressure for companies to 'do more' and the resultant motivation for CEs to deliver effective CSR programmes, cross-sector collaboration appears to offer a methodology through which both sides can achieve their respective aims. The research gap identified focuses on the lack of understanding of the micro-processes, or attributes of the relationship, at the micro-level of partnership interaction.

The sample group was accessed from individuals with extensive experience of NPO-CE collaborations within the area of FMCG global food production. This access allowed the experiences of some of these individuals to be gathered and explored within this study. Data collection techniques took the form of semi-structured interviews with twelve senior executives. An interpretivist approach was employed using a phenomenological research design to elicit an understanding of the experiences of the respondents' involvement with NPO-CE collaborations. The intention was to afford the respondents the opportunity to recount their own experiences in their own terms and with their own emphasis on what was important to them within the broad structure provided by the three core categories drawn from the literature: value creation, partnership processes and relationship dynamics. A thematic data analysis was conducted using the framework developed from the initial literature review and subsequent agenda developed.

The findings of the study have numerous implications for both academics and practitioners. Firstly, the study contributes to knowledge through the increased understanding of the nature of NPO-CE collaboration at the micro-process level from the perspective of the individual and provides insight into the nature

of such relationships. It suggests a number of attributes that are viewed as significant by those involved in NPO-CE relationships at the individual level, including the confirmation of the importance of trust, effective leadership and formal and informal control measures. Secondly, numerous implications emerge for the practicing manager from the study, including perspectives on the demands, risks and rewards at both the individual and organizational level for managers engaged in cross-sector collaborations. Ultimately the study suggests that the traditional linear temporal framework for cross-sector collaboration development should be viewed as more cyclical in nature, and that the concomitant organizational demands of such an approach should be reflected in the decision-making processes ahead of any potential NPO-CE collaboration. The essence of this revised framework is presented in the form of a conceptual model.

The exploratory nature of the study has facilitated the identification of areas where future research is required, including: the challenges associated with implementing strategic agility within NPO-CE collaborations; exploring mechanisms for building and maintaining trust within a sustained collaboration; and the potential to develop the conceptual model into a decision-making framework for managers of future NPO-CE collaborations.

**Keywords:**

Corporate social responsibility; cross-sector collaboration, attributes; micro-processes; individual perspective; FMCG global food; phenomenology

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## List of Abbreviations

CE	Commercial entity
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COO	Chief Operating Officer
CS	Corporate Sustainability
CSP	Corporate Social Performance
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
CVC	Collaborative Value Creation
FMCG	Fast-moving consumer goods
NCVO/CAF	National Council for Voluntary Organisations/Charities Aid Foundation
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NPO	Non-profit organization
QUANGO	Quasi-autonomous non-governmental organization
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development

## **Declaration.**

I declare that this Doctorate of Business Administration thesis is my own work and that all critical and other sources (literary and electronic) have been properly acknowledged, as and when they occur in the body of the text.

Signed:

Date: 15 April 2016.

## **Chapter 1. Introduction.**

The research is concerned with the exploration of the experiences of individuals engaged in enabling sustained relationships between non-profit organisations (NPO) and commercial entities (CE). The study seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the attributes that underpin sustained NPO-CE relationships and, in particular, it intends to explore the nature of the role of the individual within such relationships. This chapter introduces the research, giving an overview of the topic and the research gap. This is followed by an overview of the research aim and the approach taken to achieve it, and goes on to discuss the rationale and personal motivation for undertaking the study. The chapter concludes with the presentation of the structure of the thesis.

### **1.1 Definitions.**

Within the context of this study the term non-profit organisation (NPO) encompasses non-commercial organisations including non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and charities 'that have as their primary purpose the promotion of social and/or environmental goals' (Murphy and Bendell, 2001:29). The term commercial entity (CE) is used to describe for-profit organisations and is predominantly used to describe large companies and corporations. The terms 'collaboration' and 'partnership' when describing an entity are seen as interchangeable for this thesis, following the view of Nissan and Burlingame (2003) that the terms can be regarded as synonymous. The terms 'attributes' and 'micro-processes' are similarly intended as interchangeable terms when used in the context of describing key elements of partnership processes at the micro-level (Seitanidi and Crane, 2009; Austin and Seitanidi, 2012a and 2012b; Walters and Anagnostopoulos; 2012). This thesis adopts Austin and Seitanidi's (2012a:728) definition of the term 'value' with regards to the outcome of collaborative processes as 'the transitory and enduring benefits relative to the costs that are generated due to the interaction of the collaborators and that accrue to organisations, individuals and society'. Finally, the majority of the respondents interviewed as part of this study operate within the Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) Food sector. Dibb

et al. (2006:298) define FMCG markets as relatively inexpensive, frequently purchased and rapidly consumed items on which buyers exert only minimal purchasing effort. The particular areas in which this study is based are within organizations that are involved in manufacturing from the cocoa-based and coffee-based product groups. From within these areas there have emerged a large number of cross-sector collaborations (Glasbergen et al., 2007) and thus provide an ideal focal point for the study. For example, with regards to cocoa sustainability efforts, Shapiro and Rosenquist (2004: 453) observe: ‘challenges to cocoa supplies [have] brought seemingly disparate – if not competitive – groups together in unique public/private partnerships’ and note ‘how working across sectors has benefited all of those involved’.

## **1.2 Positioning the research study.**

For an increasing number of charities seeking donor support the competition has become fierce (Sargeant, 1999; Shelley and Polonsky, 2002). In view of this development, fundraising has become a dominant concern, and NPOs are competing for consumers’ charity (Louie and Obermiller, 2000). Although many charities cover at least part of their costs through revenues generated, most rely on additional external funding. In many countries, a significant part of these external funds until recently came from public sources (Leat, 1995; NCVO/CAF, 2010). However in a period of global financial austerity NPOs are in trouble: not only are the public sources diminishing, but those entities that operate within the sector are finding it increasingly difficult to raise funds against the backdrop of the recent global financial crisis and a marked reduction in donor funding for charitable institutions (Breeze, 2009). In the United Kingdom (UK), charitable bodies have reported a paucity in funding as the recession has impacted on many of the traditional sources (NCVO/CAF, 2010). As a result charities have begun to seek alternative ways to generate additional revenue, including private sector partnerships, to maintain and expand programmes and services (Bingham and Walters, 2013).

Against this economic background, there has been a growing awareness of the potential for great benefit that business in a capitalist economy can create, both in terms of resources and social impact (Hart and Milstein, 2003; Porter

and Kramer,2011). Whilst corporate social responsibility activity may not be a new concept the global reach and influence of corporate entities is, and the need for them to be aware of their influence has never been greater (Googins and Rochlin, 2000). As Koehn (2008:1) outlines: 'If we think solely about resources—people, innovation, traction, money, and execution—business is the most powerful force for change on the global stage right now. No other set of institutions—not religious organisations, not the nation-state, not individual NGOs—has the resources or the breadth and on-the-ground depth of business to deal with what is in front of us today'.

Some CEs are responding - not only in the traditional manner of philanthropic giving within local communities - but also through the delivery of CSR partnership programmes that are aimed at engendering greater societal impact whilst delivering mutual organizational benefits (Waddock and Graves, 1997; Bendell, 2000; Austin, 2000; Seitanidi and Crane, 2009). More prominently, in recent times, Warren Buffet, Bill Gates and others have sponsored the concept of 'creative capitalism' (Gates, 2008), where academics and practitioners actively pursue the deployment of businesses as a positive force in the creation of social capital (Heslam, 2007), and speak of a 'surge of imagination around the world in the creation of new and successful approaches to using business strategy to alleviate poverty' (Wankel, 2008:1). In the wake of the recent global financial crisis practitioners and academics are looking at new models to unite business and society. Porter and Kramer (2011: 3) have gone so far as to declare that the 'capitalist system is under siege [and] in recent years business increasingly has been viewed as a major cause of social, environmental and economic problems [with] companies widely perceived to be prospering at the expense of the community'. Porter and Kramer (2011:5) go on to suggest that companies need to develop a new way of connecting company success with social progress through the adoption of the principle of 'shared value', that is companies creating opportunities focused on 'expanding the total pool of economic and social value' and stepping away from the traditional, philanthropic, redistribution model in order to enable shared value creation.

What is not clear is how the non-profit sector has responded to match this evolution in thinking within the wider business community, particularly in terms of how, and if, it has revised its traditional fundraising methodologies in response to the evolving funding crisis. Porter and Kramer (2011:6) highlight that if the concept of shared value is to work, the social sector must also begin to think in 'value terms'. However if the non-profit sector has responded it appears to be having little immediate effect: a study of the influential, UK – based, NCVO/CAF 2010 annual report of donor behaviours that UK NPOs received only UK 2 billion of the total £35 billion total funding in 2010 from the commercial sector, that is compared to over UK£13 billion from individuals and UK£12 billion from statutory funding (NCVO/CAF, 2010). Arguably this represents a lost opportunity for the UK charitable sector. If, as Lloyd (1993) suggests, circumstances have conspired to bring charities and companies together and that their futures are explicitly linked, NPOs should be looking at better ways to understand and meet the needs of commercial entities if they are to attract greater support from the commercial sector.

### **1.2.1 Cross-sector collaboration and the research gap.**

One possible engagement model suggested by the literature is that of partnership, which emerged as a framework for delivery of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes; driven by an increased debate on the responsibilities of each sector in addressing environmental and social issues (Waddock, 1998; Seitanidi and Crane, 2009; Austin and Seitanidi, 2012a). Previously adversarial partnering relationships between CEs and NPOs have been replaced increasingly with a collaborative model that is both voluntary in nature and built on dialogue and co-operation (Yaziji and Doh, 2009). These cross-sector collaborations have become a disputed area of academic interest, particularly in support of 'social value creation' (for example: Austin, 2000; Berger et al.,2004; Selsky and Parker,2005; Austin and Seitanidi, 2012a). According to Austin and Seitanidi (2012b:728): 'cross-sector partnering...between NPOs and businesses has increased significantly and is viewed by academics and practitioners as an inescapable and powerful vehicle for implementing corporate social responsibility and for achieving social and



economic missions'. This growth in interest in the area of cross-sector collaboration has resulted in the generation of considerable academic interest (for example: Austin, 2000; Googins and Rochlin, 2000; Selsky and Parker, 2005; Glasbergen et al., 2007; London and Hart, 2011) with much of the work focused on uncovering strategies to overcome the difficulties in bringing together partners held apart by deeply embedded frames (Yaziji and Doh, 2009) that predispose the partnership to failure through misunderstandings, misallocation of costs and benefits, mismatches of power, mismatched partners, misfortunes of time and mistrust (Berger et al., 2004). As highlighted by Austin and Seitanidi (2012a:744) 'value creation through collaboration is recognised as a central goal, but it is equally clear that it has not been analysed by researchers and practitioners to the extent or with the systematic rigor that its importance merits'. The literature review revealed that much of the pre-existing literature was focused on organisational and strategic level factors that could impede or enable the relationship, however there appeared to be limited focus on the role of the individual stakeholder in enabling and sustaining cross-sector partnerships for value creation (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012b:952) and it is on this identified research gap that this study is focused.

### **1.3 Research Aim and Objectives.**

The aim of this research study is:

***To explore sustained NPO-CE relationships at the stakeholder level and identify the perceptions of those attributes that underpin such relationships.***

The research objectives in support of the research aim, as drawn from the literature review, are:

Supporting Objective 1:

To explore stakeholders' understanding of the nature of value creation from NPO-CE collaborations and its contributing attributes.

Supporting Objective 2:

To identify stakeholders' perception of the key attributes of the partnership process for a NPO-CE collaboration.

Supporting Objective 3:

To identify the attributes underpinning the dynamics of a sustained NPO-CE relationship from the stakeholders' perspective.

#### **1.4 Research Approach.**

In order to meet the research aim and to contribute to knowledge by answering Austin and Seitanidi's (2012b: 952) call for greater analysis at the micro level of NPO-CE relationships, the key element of this research was the focus on the individual. The research attempted to explore and understand the individual stakeholder's experience of the phenomenon of cross-sector collaboration. An interpretivist methodology was adopted and the study used a phenomenological approach to attempt to elicit understanding of the experiences of the respondents' involvement with NPO-CE collaborations. The methodology afforded the respondents the opportunity to recount their own experiences in their own terms and with their own emphasis on what was important to them (Creswell, 2007) within the broad structure provided by the three core themes derived from the literature and thus retained the research focus on the individual. It was necessary to identify a commercial sector that had hosted a number of NPO-CE collaborations, both successful and unsuccessful, so that the perspectives of individuals operating within both NPOs and CEs could be obtained. The sector that was selected as the main focus of the research was that of FMCG global food production, which was appropriate for a variety of reasons, not least of all the affording of access through personal contacts, but also because it hosted a number of significant, geographically diverse, cross-sector relationships and would thus broaden the pool of potential senior, experienced and willing respondents for the study.

The fieldwork consisted of the conduct of semi-structured interviews with twelve senior executives drawn from organisations based across four sectors

actively engaged with cross-sector collaborations. Data analysis was conducted manually, and employed an adapted version of Creswell's (2007) six-point data analysis plan - focusing on the emergence of significant statements - with findings collated and reported within each of the three core themes influenced by the literature as a number of different attributes that underpin the NPO-CE relationships explored within this study.

### **1.5 Implications of the study.**

The study has a number of implications for researchers and practitioners. In terms of contribution to research the study meets Austin and Seitanidi's (2012a; 2012b) call to conduct further research into the nature of value creation from cross-sector collaborations. More specifically, through the adoption of the reflective phenomenological approach, the research has increased the understanding of the role and perspective of the individual in enabling and sustaining cross-sector partnerships, meeting Austin and Seitanidi's further call for 'the effects of initiatives on individuals or the roles of individuals in affecting value creation requires further analysis' (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012b: 952). The majority of the findings are supported by the existing literature however the perspective afforded by the research design has emphasised the importance to the individuals involved in the cross-sector phenomenon of the attributes of the building and maintenance of trust. In addition, and in particular from the perspective of the NPO, the findings highlight the need within the current economic climate for strategic agility to maintain a sustained relationship with a CE. The study provides a distinct perspective for practitioners on the key attributes required to establish and maintain a sustained NPO-CE relationship. The findings of this study emerge from the increased understanding of NPO-CE collaborations drawn from the personal experiences of senior executives who have been involved in the management of such collaborations over a number of years. The study emphasises the importance of trust building and maintenance, underpinned by the need for the selection of the "right people" and the establishment of the "right processes" from the start of the partnership, both of which have implications for human resource and operations managers. This study goes

further than the consideration of the establishment phase of the collaboration and offers insight to the maintenance phase and its challenges as experienced by senior managers. In addition, numerous implications emerge for the practicing manager from the study, including perspectives on the demands, risks and rewards at both the individual and organisational level for managers engaged in cross-sector collaborations. Ultimately the study suggests that the traditional linear temporal framework for cross-sector collaboration development should be viewed as more cyclical in nature, and that the concomitant organisational demands of such an approach should be reflected in the decision-making processes ahead of any potential NPO-CE collaboration. Seeking to gain a greater understanding of the challenges experienced by senior managers operating within a sustained NPO-CE relationship was a key personal motivation for undertaking the study, as is discussed in the following section.

#### **1.6 Personal motivation for the conduct of the study.**

My personal experiences of working within a small charity that focused on offering support to small enterprises in sub-Saharan Africa was one of the key incentives for conducting the study. The charity offers a range of business support and mentoring services, ranging from teaching business English to the drafting of business strategies. Many of the projects supported involved some form of partnership building and sustainability, with the charity experiencing an increasing demand for collaboration-building support, particularly at a personal level from senior NPO managers and Directors seeking to understand the risks to themselves and their organisation associated with a NPO-CE collaboration. Allied to a personal development goal, the research affords the opportunity to gain insight into the experiences of those individuals who have managed a sustained NPO-CE collaboration whilst having the process underpinned by academic rigour.

#### **1.7 Thesis structure.**

This Thesis consists of five chapters, together with supporting materials in a series of appendices. This chapter has provided an introduction to the

research topic, aim and objectives and the approach taken to meet them. An overview of the motivation for undertaking the research has also been provided. Chapter Two reviews the literature, first outlining the approach taken to select and refine the business literature relevant to the topic. A series of supporting objectives to the research aim are drawn from the literature review, in order to generate a research focus grounded in the literature and broad guidance to the subsequent fieldwork. Chapter Three opens with the outline philosophical approach and then moves to consider and justify the chosen research methodology, including the approach to the research strategy, sampling method, and data collection and analysis methods. The findings and their analysis are presented in Chapter Four. These findings include a thematic overview with selected quotes from participants and offers key themes and constructs identified within the data. Chapter Five discusses the findings in terms of their relationship to the existing literature and their contribution to both theory and practice and represents a summary of the findings in the form of a conceptual model that is intended at this stage as a communication tool. The chapter ends with some reflections on the limitations of the study and thoughts on areas for further research, including the ongoing development of the conceptual model.

## **Chapter 2. Literature Review.**

In this chapter a review of some of the relevant literature is presented. In order to meet the research aim it was necessary to identify a sector that had hosted a number of NPO-CE collaborations, both successful and unsuccessful, so that the perspectives of individuals operating within both NPOs and CEs could be obtained. The sector that was selected as the main focus of the research was that of FMCG global food production. This sector was selected for a variety of reasons, not least of all access through personal contacts, but also because it hosted a number of significant, geographically diverse, cross-sector relationships and would thus broaden the pool of potential senior, experienced and willing respondents for the study. The chapter begins with an outline of the approach taken to select and refine the business literature relevant to the topic. A series of supporting objectives to the research aim are drawn from the literature review, in order to generate a research focus grounded in the literature and broad guidance to the subsequent fieldwork.

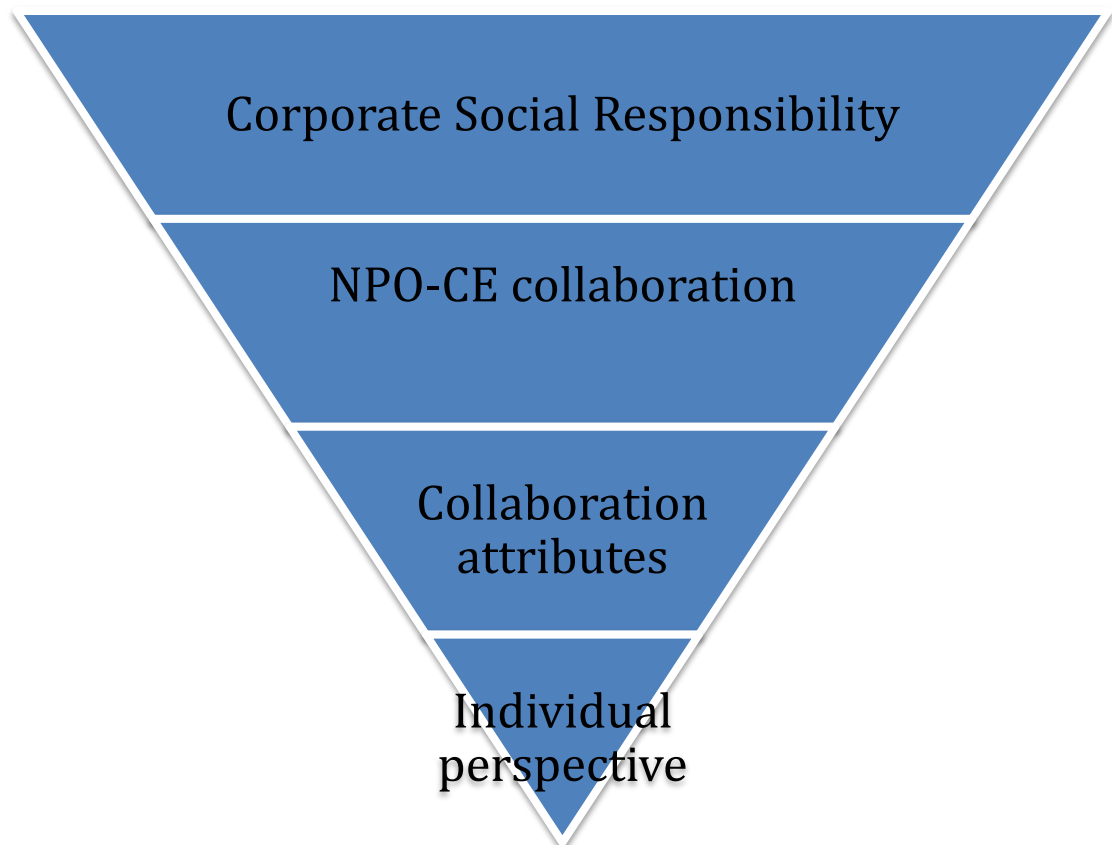
### **2.1 Approach.**

This literature review was developed by drawing together unifying themes, identifying linkages and drawing conclusions on how the research to date informs what attributes might underpin a sustained NPO-CE relationship and the role of the individual stakeholder in the management of such cross-sector collaborations.

#### **2.1.1 Theoretical context.**

The boundaries of the literature search were determined by the area of interest of the study, as outlined within the research aim: *'To explore sustained NPO-CE relationships at the stakeholder level and identify the perceptions of those attributes that underpin such relationships'*. For this study the relationships that were of interest were those initiated within the field of corporate social responsibility (CSR) between nonprofit organisations (NPO) and corporate entities (CE). Thus the literature search was focused on the nature of NPO-

CE collaboration as a vehicle for the delivery of CSR programmes and further refined through the lens of the individual perspectives of the key attributes that underpin such NPO-CE relationships. This approach is represented in the following diagram:



**Figure 1 Schema of investigation of literature.**

[Source: Author]

In order to bound and inform the literature review process a number of pre-identified search terms were generated (as highlighted above in Table 1). Pre-reading of the CSR partnership literature highlighted how business and non-profit organisations were increasingly converging to create value (Selsky and Parker,2005) and the emergence of ‘cross-sector collaboration’ as an increasingly recognised term within CSR literature as means of discussing such NPO-CE partnerships. Austin and Seitanidi (2012a), suggested that the outcomes of cross-sector collaboration should be discussed in terms of benefits or value to either or both of the participants, a view that reflected the

opinions of others who regard value creation as the purpose of cross-sector partnerships (Teegan et al., 2004). However, notwithstanding the growing interest in cross-sector collaborations, 'the ways that business-NPO partnerships can and should be implemented are not well understood' (Seitanidi and Crane, 2009:414). Various stage models exist, highlighting potential attributes that should be in place at each stage, and generally take the form of a linear, temporal framework that moves from selection to design and then the institutionalisation of the collaboration (Selsky and Parker, 2005). Finally, in respect to the individual partner level of focus for the literature review the pre-reading signposted a lack of understanding of the 'micro-process level of detail that is required to deepen our understanding' (Seitanidi and Crane, 2009:414) and 'the limited focus on the role of the individual in enabling and sustaining cross-sector partnerships for value creation' (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012b:952).

Having defined the relevant areas of literature to provide the study with a strong theoretical foundation, and having pre-identified a number of relevant search terms a literature search strategy was devised and employed

### **2.1.2 Literature search strategy.**

In order to add structure and rigour to a comprehensive literature review encompassing relatively large areas of academic and practitioner-based literature, and to attempt to mitigate researcher bias and a lack of critical assessment of the literature (Hart, 1998), the literature search was bounded by the literature themes outlined within the previous section and as informed by the pre-reading. Electronic databases, such as ABI/Inform ProQuest, formed the bulk of the sources for the search, augmented by recommendations from supervisors and practitioners engaged through interviews

### **2.1.3 Identifying the literature.**

An initial set of key words was generated for each subject area, drawn from the pre-reading. Subsequent key words were developed as the review developed, and it was through this process that the importance to the study of



the field of cross-sector collaboration emerged. In addition to the use of key word searches, citation-based searching (Garfield, 1979) was also used to explore the literature further.

<b>Theory Area</b>	<b>Key Words</b>
<b>CSR</b>	Social responsibility; sustainability; social value creation; FMCG AND /food sector AND
<b>NPO-CE Partnerships</b>	Cross-sector collaboration; alliances; partnerships; nonprofits and businesses; value creation;
<b>Relationship Attributes</b>	CSR AND relationship/alliances/partnership attributes/micro-processes; sustained AND (all terms above);
<b>Individual Perspective</b>	Individual perspective AND (all terms above)

**Table 1 Keywords for literature search.**

[Source: Author]

To improve the literature review process and output the inclusion /exclusion criteria outlined at Table 2 (below) were applied. The criteria were drawn from a number of sources (Bryman, 2001; Wellington, 2000) and from discussions with lecturers. The application of the process helped to maintain focus across the multiple-themed literature review.

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Criteria for Inclusion/Exclusion</b>
Credibility and Authenticity	<p><b>Practitioner based literature:</b>  <i>From a recognised professional body/governmental think-tank or QUANGO (quasi-autonomous non-governmental organization).</i></p> <p><b>Academic:</b>  <i>1* journal or above</i></p> <p><b>Authorship:</b>  <i>Determine potential bias/intended audience</i></p> <p><b>Sector Context:</b>  <i>Determine political, social, cultural context.</i></p>

Theory Presented	Aim and concept of paper explained and coherent Relevant literature informing research Work grounded in literature Gap identified (academic and practice)
Methodology	Methods explained and justified Size/nature of sample explained Limitations noted Identification of further research opportunities
Analysis and Findings	Clear link between analysis and findings Data quality explicit Assumptions stated

**Table 2 Criteria for assessment of literature.**

[Source: Author, based on themes drawn from Bryman, 2001; Wellington, 2000]

The review process revealed a broad range of literature, from empirical articles in peer-reviewed journals, theoretical discussion papers through to policy papers from NGOs, governmental organisations and practitioners. In order to distinguish between the nature of the literature considered, a list of empirical-based articles included within the review is offered at Table 3. The table lists the author, article title and journal title, as well as the methodology and significant findings with respect to this study.

**Table 3 Empirical research considered for literature review.**

Empirical studies considered			
Author/Date	Title	Methodology	Key Findings
Argenti P. 2004	'Collaborating with activists: How Starbucks works with NGOs', <i>California Management Review</i> , 47:91-116	Case study : Starbucks and Global Exchange	RD: the requirement for effective communication, both inter- and intra-organisational, particularly to ensure that the collaboration remains mutually beneficial
Austin J. E. 2000	'Strategic collaboration between nonprofits and business', <i>Nonprofit and voluntary sector quarterly</i> , 29 (Suppl 1):69-97.  See also book: Austin J.E. (2000) <i>The Collaborative Challenge: how nonprofits and businesses succeed through strategic alliance</i> , San Francisco: Jossey Bass.	Mixed: Case Studies: 5 NPO-Business alliances/interviews; supported by Surveys of 10 additional partnerships and structured interviews.	VC/RD: Cross-sector collaboration focused. Introduces empirically-based Collaboration Continuum and discusses value creation and other drivers for collaboration. Leadership plays a key role in driving successful collaborations. Role of individual highlighted . Highlights need for further study in the area.
Berger I., Cunningham P. and Drumwright M. (2004)	'Social Alliances: Company/Nonprofit collaboration', <i>California Management Review</i> , 47(1):58-90.	Case studies: elite and long interview techniques	Social alliances growing in importance; offering increase in social capital/civic engagement dependent on type of engagement structure.
Bhattacharya C. B., Sen S., and Korschun D. (2008)	'Using corporate social responsibility to win the war for talent',	Mixed: Two-part study with in-depth interviews with 8 focus groups followed by global-employee survey (10,000+ responses)	The research suggests that successful CSR strategies must be based on a clearly articulated and contingent input-output perspective. They must also satisfy varying employee needs, encourage employee identification and be co-created with employees. In particular, CSR is most effective when employees are the actual enactors, with the company acting as an enabler.
Bingham T. and Walters G. (2013)	'Financial sustainability within UK charities: Community sport trusts and corporate social responsibility partnerships', <i>VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations</i> , 24(3), 606-629	Quant: Documentary analysis: explores sources of revenue through the statistical analysis of financial statements	Highlights risk within collaborations of unpredictability of funding and the effect of a rapid withdrawal or reduction in resources. Introduces issues around key issues include the balance of power, the impact on organisational flexibility, whether there is a need to restructure, and the development of long-term partnerships.
Brammer, S. and Millington, A. (2005).	Corporate reputation and philanthropy: An empirical analysis. <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 61(1), pp.29-44.	Quant: Survey (Senior management and analysts from 10 largest companies in 24 sectors)	Evaluates corporate reputation against 2 factors: how philanthropy is implemented and the destination of philanthropic giving. Surmise: cash donations give greater reputational returns than matched giving/volunteering from employees

			externally, but do not increase employee engagement. Destination of giving, even unpopular causes, does not adversely impact/affect reputation.
Butterfield K.D., Trevin L.K. and Weaver G.R. (2000)	'Moral awareness in business: influences of issue-related and social-context factors', <i>Human Relations</i> , 53 (7):981–1018.	Mixed: hypothesis testing field experiment involving 291 competitive intelligence practitioners, followed by additional qualitative interviews for insight into moral awareness.	Moral awareness is influenced by issue-related factors (magnitude of consequences of the moral issue and issue framing in moral terms) and social context related factors (competitive context and perceived social consensus that the issue is ethically problematic).
Crosby B. C. and Bryson J. M. (2005)	'A leadership framework for cross-sector collaboration', <i>Public Management Review</i> , 7(2):177-201	Case study: the creation and institutionalization of MetroGIS, an award-winning geographic information system (GIS) initiative in the Twin Cities (Minneapolis–Saint Paul) metropolitan area of Minnesota, USA	Further development of authors' framework highlighting leadership challenges at operational interface within a cross-sector collaboration construct;
Draulans J., deMan A. and Volberda H. (2003)	'Building alliance capability: Management techniques for superior alliance performance', <i>Long Range Planning</i> , 36(2):151-166.	Survey: quantitative study on alliances and alliance-management techniques of 46 large companies..	The capability which an organisation has built up in managing alliances makes an important contribution towards enhancing alliance success. Existing research and consulting strategies concentrate unduly on the fit between the partners and the characteristics of the alliance instead of focusing on the capability of the partners to manage the alliance. Various levels of alliance capability may also be distinguished. Each of these levels may call for different management techniques. A strategy to develop alliance capability should therefore be geared to the needs and development stage of the company in question
Fischer R., Wilsker, A. and Young, D. (2011)	'Exploring the revenue mix of nonprofit organizations: Does it relate to publicness?', <i>Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly</i> , 40(4), 662–681	Quantitative analysis of 2003 data from the National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS, 2003) which maintains a database of information from Form 990 filings by NPOs submitted to the Internal Revenue Service with revenues exceeding \$25,000 in a given tax year. Specifically, used data from the NCCS's 2003 Core File which contains records on more than 289,000 nonprofits.	The financing of NPOs is strongly related to the nature of the services and benefits that they provide. Also highlights unpredictability of funding and the effect of a rapid withdrawal or reduction in resources
Guo C. and Acar M. (2005)	'Understanding Collaboration Among Nonprofit Organizations: Combining Resource Dependency, Institutional and Network Perspectives', <i>Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly</i> , 34(3), 340–	Survey: Based on the survey data of 95 urban charitable organizations,	Asserts that an organization is more likely to increase the degree of formality of its collaborative activities when it is older, has a larger budget size, receives government funding but relies on fewer

	361		government funding streams, has more board linkages with other nonprofit organizations, and is not operating in the education and research or social service industry.
Hamann R., Pienaar S., Boulogne F. and Kranz N. (2011)	<i>What Makes Cross-sector Partnerships Successful? A Comparative Case Study Analysis of Diverse Partnership Types in an Emerging Economy Context</i> , Investment Climate and Business Environment Research Fund (ICBE- RF) Research report No 03/11, Dakar: Trust Africa.	Case Study comparison.	RD/PP: Finds that 'informal institutions and relationships between parties are crucial to success'
Hardy et al., 2006	Hardy C., Lawrence T. B. and Phillips N. (2006) 'Swimming with sharks: Creating strategic change through multi-sector collaboration', <i>International Journal of Strategic Change Management</i> , 1(1):96-112.	Case study: multi-sector collaboration formed to address treatment issues in the Canadian HIV/AIDS domain.	RD/PP: Develops a framework for understanding multi-sector collaboration. Highlights tensions in individuals having successfully juggle their dual roles of collaborative partner and organisational representatives.
Heugens P. P. and van Oosterhout H. J. (2002)	'The confines of stakeholder management: Evidence from the Dutch manufacturing sector', <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 40(4):387-403.	Case study: Dutch manufacturing sector	VC/RD/PP: Three boundary conditions for application of stakeholder theory: (1) the parties should be sufficiently <i>autonomous</i> ; (2) their interests need to be <i>alignable</i> ; and (3) they should be <i>capable</i> of living up to their commitments.
Huxham C. and Vangen, S. (2000)	'Leadership in the shaping and implementation of collaboration agendas: How things happen in a (not quite) joined-up world', <i>Academy of Management Journal</i> , 43(6):1159-1175.	Action research interventions within UK organizations	RD/PP: Leadership across a set of collaboration activities is resource intensive and demands a great deal of the individual in terms of skill, dedication and commitment. RD: the need for both sides to be willing to just its aims along with partners expectations; changing of membership from within the original collaboration construct and its likely impact on the collaboration effort PP: membership of a collaboration can be ambiguous and individual member's perceptions of their status and role can vary
Jamali D. and Keshishian T. (2009)	'Uneasy Alliance: Lessons learned from partnerships between businesses and NGOs in the context of CSR', <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 84(2):277-295	Case studies. 5 CE-NPO collaborations within the Lebanon.	RD: The evolution of alliances in the Lebanese context lacked depth and breadth and qualified more as symbolic and instrumental rather than integrative collaborative ventures. Continued to basic standards being met in terms of exchange and relevance, but true

			partnerships had not evolved. Also saw higher levels of commitment from NPO partner with CE looking to outsource CSR commitment. RD: partnership implementation is complex and inadequately understood
Jamali D., Yianni, M. and Abdallah H. (2011)	'Strategic partnerships, social capital and innovation: Accounting for social alliance innovation', <i>Business Ethics: A European Review</i> , 20(4):375-391	Case studies: comparative analysis of six case studies of CE-NPO collaboration in the context of CSR in the UK.	VC/PP: Strategic partnerships are more readily capable of innovation and that social capital as an umbrella concept is very promising in explaining the differential success and performance of social alliances and central to understanding the dynamics of social alliance innovation and value creation. RD: the presence of the attributes of trust, communication and coordination within a cross-sector collaboration enhanced the partnership, increased collaborative behaviour and reduced opportunism
Kuipers L. M. and Meershoek A. M. (2013)	'NGO-Business Collaboration in Kenya: A Case Study and broader Stakeholder Analysis', <i>Journal of Corporate Citizenship</i> , 2013(50):91-105.	Case study. (28 semi-structured interviews in Kenya)	The relevance of previously identified success factors such as trust, communication and power balances is confirmed; additional importance of forming personal relations, continuous self-reflection and flexibility in the context of this partnership was identified. Trust. Ind: that a lack of effective communication at the personal level was a contributing factor to the failure of a NGO-business partnership implementation in Kenya
Liu G. and Ko W. (2010)	'An Analysis of Cause Related Marketing Implementation Strategies through Social Alliance: Partnership Conditions and Strategic Objectives', <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 100:253-281.	Seventy semi-structured 'elite' interviews Across UK NPOs and CEs	RD: the social alliance framework had applicability in understanding NPO-CE relationships. - proposes a fourth condition variable, that of 'institutional legitimacy' which they described as 'the need for organisations to operate within certain boundaries (expectations) imposed by society to continue to enjoy the access to products and resources. When it performs accordingly, an organisation is said to be behaving legitimately'
MacMillan K., Money K., Money A. and Downing S. (2005)	'Relationship Marketing in the not-for-profit sector: an extension and application of the commitment-trust theory', <i>Journal of Business Research</i> , 58 (6):806-818.	Quant Survey (PLS analysis) : of 41 NPO funders.	RD: Adapt and extend the Morgan and Hunt Commitment -Trust Model within CRM. Adds 2 new constructs (material and non-material benefits replace

			relationship benefit construct) RD: trust could be obtained through the development of shared values, non-opportunistic behaviour amongst clients and improved communications
Morgan R.M. and Hunt S.D. (1994)	'The commitment-trust theory of relationship building', <i>The Journal of Marketing</i> , 58:20-38.	Mixed methods: On-site interviews to inform survey (questionnaire) then administered to : National Tire Dealers Association.	RD/PP: CRM based work: authors offer commitment and trust as key mediating variables within CRM relationships.
Sargeant and Lee (2004)	Sargeant A. and Lee S (2004) 'Trust and Relationship Commitment in the United Kingdom Voluntary Sector: Determinants of Donor Behaviour', <i>Psychology and Marketing</i> , 21(8): 613-635.	Quant Survey (n=342), with model development and testing against commercially available data.	Operationalization of trust; developed measurement scales; finds commitment plays a mediating role ; offers implications for fundraising. RD: explores linkages between trust, commitment and donor behaviour and offered guidance to the practitioner on four behaviours: relationship investment, mutual influence, communication acceptance and opportunism. The study was focused on understanding perceptions of trust in a charity only and acknowledges the limitation of this single perspective
Schiller and Almog-Bar, 2013)	'Revisiting Collaborations between Nonprofits and Businesses: An NPO-Centric View and Typology,' <i>Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly</i> 42 (5): 942–962.	Qualitative case study of a three year collaboration between a nonprofit organization (NPO) and a pharmaceutical company	The most crucial element affecting the success or failure of a collaboration is the added value that the business partner brings to the relationship; power relations suggest that weak positioning might benefit the NPO RD: power relations and the degree of control of each of the partner organisations in a collaboration are a central issue of collaboration management
Seitanidi M. and Crane A. (2009)	'Implementing CSR through partnerships: Understanding the selection, design and institutionalization of nonprofit-business partnerships', <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 85.2:413-429.	Partnership case studies (Earthwatch-Rio Tinto and Prince's Trust-Royal Bank of Scotland)	VC/RD/PP: Research suggests the relationships studied move beyond a simple stage model and reveal the deeper level <i>micro-processes</i> in the selection, design and institutionalisation of business-NGO partnerships. Goes on to highlight management issues within partnership implementation and a practical Partnership Test to assist managers in testing both the accountability and level of institutionalisation of the relationship in order to address any possible skill gaps. Ind: Raises the gap of: a lack of understanding of the 'micro-process level of detail that is required to deepen

			our understanding' of the partnership process
Shaw S. and Allen J. (2009)	""To be a business and to keep our humanity"": A critical management studies analysis of the relationship between a funder and nonprofit community organizations', <i>Nonprofit Management and Leadership</i> , 20(1):83–96.	Case Study: NPO-CE	RD: Impact of accountability within a designated funding regime. Non-generalizable but highlights the issues within relationship dynamics of accountability within the collaboration. RD: significant potential for the collaboration to result in a shift in the focus of the NPO.
Sohn,1994	Sohn J. (1994) 'Social knowledge as a control system: A proposition and evidence from the Japanese FDI behaviour' <i>Journal of International Business Studies</i> , 2; 295-324.	Quant Case study – survey (Japanese MNCs operating in 4 other countries)	Use of social knowledge (trust) to enable control and to deal with greater transactional problems in a successful manner. RD: trust enables move beyond transactional
Tomlinson F. (2005)	'Idealistic and Pragmatic Versions of the Discourse of Partnership', <i>Organization Studies</i> , 26(8):1169-1188.	Case study: RTP refugee resettlement UK . Semi-structured interviews 13 partners; documentary analysis; observation of 2 senior management meetings.	Issues of trust, power and conflict are incorporated in the way that various stakeholders co-opt or subvert the idea of partnership; Partnership observations from findings: a. trust within a partnership cannot be assumed but has to be built patiently through communicative activities designed to construct shared meanings and complementary identities. b. highlights the importance of openly recognizing and acknowledging the differences of interest among stakeholders that are found in any partnership. c. suggest that to overuse a highly generalized and idealized version of the meaning of partnership may provoke an overly cynical, instrumental version in reaction. Rather than rely on these versions, the shared meaning of partnership should be negotiated locally, taking account of the constraints and opportunities provided by the specific context in which the partnership. RD: relationships formed around solving social issues tend to be based more on trust than power
Venn R. and Berg N. (2014)	'The Gatekeeping Function of Trust in Cross-sector Social Partnerships', <i>Business and Society Review</i> , 119(3):385-416.	Quantitative hypothesis testing: Survey (n=85) Data analysis SEM (Country bias? - German speaking only)	RD/PP: explores gatekeeping function of trust in cross-sector social partnerships highlight the importance of trust, particularly as the relationship evolves along the collaboration



			continuum, and 'outlines trust as an important governance mechanism'. They also found that an increase in trust plays a major role in facilitating knowledge transfer between partners. Highlights the role of intermediates as a buffer in facilitating trust.
Vock M., van Dolen, W. and Kolk A. (2014)	'Micro-level interactions in business-nonprofit partnerships', <i>Business and Society</i> , 53(4):517-550.	Quant Survey (questionnaire) (n=308)	Ind: those operating at the micro-level of cross-sector partnerships are intrinsic to the success or failure of the collaboration; Ind: the nature of the participation of employees within CSR programmes can affect consumers either favourably or unfavourably.
Waddock S. A. and Graves S. B. (1997)	'The corporate social performance-financial performance link', <i>Strategic Management Journal</i> , 18:303-319.	Quant survey (panel-based) and commercially available data.	RD: CSP found to be positively associated with prior financial performance, supporting the theory that slack resource availability and CSP are positively related. CSP is also found to be positively associated with future financial performance, supporting the theory that good management and CSP are positively related.
Walters G. and Anagnostopoulos C. (2012)	'Implementing corporate social responsibility through social partnerships', <i>Business Ethics: A European Review</i> , 21(4), 417-433.	Qual Case Study – UEFA and 6 partners	Key finding is the lack of process evaluation due to a high degree of interpersonal trust. Offers a conceptual model that adds to the growing body of research on the implementation of social partnerships and CSR.

[Source: Author]

Due to the length of the study process it was necessary to revisit the key word search on a regular basis, in order to attempt to maintain awareness and currency in the subject areas. Of note was the evidence of a significant increase in the volume of academic and practitioner –based writings on the subject of cross-sector collaboration process. For example, utilising the search term ‘cross-sector collaboration’ in ABI/Inform ProQuest generated a return of 14 peer-reviewed journal articles in 2000; 96 in 2010; 111 in 2013 and 113 in 2014. This increase in interest in the subject of the study emphasised the requirement for an iterative process and led to a cyclical literature review methodology.

Having outlined the structured review process for the literature search this chapter moves on to examine the content of those works included in the review. It discusses first the emergence of Corporate Sustainability construct and its implications on the direction of this literature review. The chapter then goes on to consider the corporate social responsibility literature, focused on partnerships and cross-sector collaboration in particular, identifying appropriate areas of CSR literature relevant to gaining a greater understanding of why and how corporate entities (CEs) select, engage and manage relationships with stakeholders and, more specifically, non-profit organisations (NPOs). It goes on to highlight the existing frameworks of analysis of the cross-sector partnership, the micro-processes (or attributes) that underpin such relationships, and the lack of literature concerning the role and perceptions of those individuals operating at the coalface of cross-sector collaborations. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a summary that results in the introduction of the research objectives that support of the research aim.

## **2.2 Corporate Social Responsibility and Corporate Sustainability.**

CSR provides the contextual background for this literature review however, before considering the relevant CSR literature, it is first worth considering the

emergence of the construct of corporate sustainability (CS). As Montiel (2008:245) notes in a focused review of the extant literature on the definitions of CSR and CS, the two constructs have been used within management literature 'to refer to social and environmental management issues, but [with] no clear distinction between the two terms' and Elkington (1999:397) suggests that there are 'more than one hundred definitions of sustainability'. However, as stated by Seto-Pamies and Papaoikonomou (2015:2) many researchers (e.g. Schwartz and Carroll, 2008; Montiel, 2008; Garavan and McGuire, 2010) base their CS-focused work around the definition and concept first outlined in the World Commission on Environment and Development's (WCED) 1987 report 'Our Common Future'. The WCED report suggests that development is only sustainable if companies' present needs can be met 'without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (WCED 1987:43). Montiel (2008:254) observes that since the WCED report was published 'both academics and practitioners have argued that for development to remain sustainable, it must simultaneously satisfy environmental, social, and economic standards' – what Kleine and von Hauff (2009:520) term 'the traditional pillars of sustainable development'. Montiel further observes from the analysis of the extant CSR/CS literature that the definitions and conceptualizations of CS are mostly based around two separate approaches: the first of which 'uses the term "ecological sustainability" to identify CS primarily with the environmental dimension of business (Shrivastava, 1995; Starik & Rands, 1995)', whilst the second follows the 'WCED definition in a broader sense, identifying CS as a tridimensional construct that includes environmental, economic, and social dimensions (Bansal, 2005)'.

Montiel's continues the analysis of the literature with a useful articulation of what are termed 'Points of Difference' and Points of Overlap' between CSR and CS (2008:257). The points of difference noted include: a lack of inclusion of environmental issues within earlier CSR discussions, or an assertion that environmental issues are just a 'subset of social issues'

(Montiel:257); the lack of the consideration of the economic responsibility dimension within CSR that has been an integral element of CS and Corporate Social Performance (CSP) since 'Carroll's (1979) watershed conceptualization of CSP' (Montiel; 257); the view that CS is just one among many ways of conceptualizing the CSR construct, as illustrated by the work of Garriga and Mele (2004); the different ways of pursuing the links between economic dimension and social performance between the two approaches; and CSR's development of a strong integration of stakeholder theory as compared with CS's wider use of alternative theoretical domains. Points of overlap noted by Montiel (2008:260) include: the evidence that CSR and CS research is converging 'despite their paradigmatic differences', particularly around the triple-bottom line concept where similarities exist across both constructs 'in attempts to balance the three dimensions of economic responsibility, social equity, and environmental integrity' (Montiel: 258); commonalities between respective researchers' efforts to operationalize their constructs and the use of similar variables to measure effectiveness in empirical studies; and, perhaps most importantly, an identification of common aims and purposes, irrespective of the construct.

As has been highlighted, academic debate remains ongoing with CS and CSR proponents continuing to champion their respective views. However, this study agrees with the position that 'the term 'corporate social responsibility' is still in popular use, even though competing, complementary and overlapping concepts such as corporate citizenship, business ethics, stakeholder management and sustainability are all vying to become the most accepted and widespread descriptor of the field' (Carroll and Shabana; 2010:86). Primarily, the focus of this study is understanding the perspectives of stakeholders engaged in the delivery of programmes that have been initiated by corporate entities and NPOs in partnership, irrespective of the construct (CSR, CS or CSP) under which these cross-sector partnerships originated. As Carroll and Shabana (2010:86) go on to note 'all these concepts are related, in that they are integrated by key, underlying themes such as value,

balance and accountability (Schwartz and Carroll, 2008), and CSR remains a dominant, if not exclusive, term in the academic literature and in business practice'. This view appears, for now, to be mirrored within the commercial world, certainly in terms of the terminology employed within those organisations approached throughout the conduct of this study, where it was noted - as Montiel (2008) suggests - 'From a practical perspective, companies use both CSR and CS as interexchangeable'. Thus, whilst this study acknowledges 'the contemporary debate on the concepts and definitions of CSR and CS' (van Marrewijk, 2003:95) and draws on significant elements of the CS construct literature on its path to explore the literature surrounding programme delivery methodologies and the inherent role of the individual at the micro-process level, "CSR" is used as the umbrella term to describe the contextual domain within which this literature review is embedded.

### **2.3 Delivering Corporate Social Responsibility.**

Companies have engaged in CSR programmes for a variety of reasons, from using CSR as a strategy to achieve economic objectives, gain competitive advantage, to demonstrate socially responsible behavior or, as some have argued, as an 'invention of PR' (Frankental, 2001) or 'greenwash' (Lyon and Maxwell, 2011). It is recognised that the CSR concept has multiple meanings (Silberhorn and Warren, 2007) and can be interpreted differently by different stakeholders (Smith and Langford, 2009) and has been described as a tortured concept (Godfrey and Hatch, 2007). Friedman famously suggested that the social responsibility of business is to increase its profits and through focusing on maximising shareholder value, the rest would take care of itself (Friedman, 1970). Friedman's view had been adopted as the traditional theory of company responsibility and has been widely accepted by firm managers (Garriga and Mele, 2004). Windsor (2001: 226) discovered that 'a leitmotif of wealth creation progressively dominates [the] managerial conception of responsibility'. However the landscape has changed in recent

years and due to corporate scandals, the financial crisis and environmental threats with CSR having become a mainstream business area with significantly increased attention amongst practitioners and academics (Pearce and Manz, 2011). The expectations of society and the degree of scrutiny by regulators on companies and their behaviours – societal, economical and ethical - have greatly increased (Buchholtz and Carroll, 2008) and ‘it is by now fairly widely accepted that businesses do indeed have responsibilities beyond simply making a profit’ (Crane and Matten, 2010:51). As Malik (2014:419) observes in his review of literature on the value-enhancing capabilities of CSR how the ‘extant literature presents substantial evidence that that CSR activities can play a significant role in enhancing a firm’s value’. His review encompasses empirical studies that detail how firms have realised ‘myriad benefits as a result of superior social and environmental performance’. Malik (2014) highlights the many forms these benefits have taken, including: ‘enhanced operating efficiency (Porter & Kramer, 2002; Saiia et al., 2003; Brammer & Millington, 2005), product market gains (Menon & Kahn, 2003; Bloom et al., 2006), improved employee productivity (Tuzzolino & Armandi, 1981; Trevino & Nelson, 2004; Valentine & Fleischman, 2008), capital market benefits (Godfrey, 2005; Dhaliwal et al., 2011), risk management (Richardson & Welker, 2001; Husted. 2005; Dhaliwal et al., 2011; Cheng et al., 2012;), and earnings quality (Chih et al., 2008; Hong & Andersen, 2011; Kim et al., 2012)’. But no real consensus exists around what CSR should entail and as a result some authors have raised concerns over the credibility of companies’ CSR programmes (Fonseca 2010; Gilberthorpe and Banks 2012). Notwithstanding this study adopts the view reflected by Malik (2014:450) that effective CSR programmes have the potential to generate value for both the firm and its stakeholders by ‘aligning corporate actions with social objectives’ with the benefits outweighing the potential costs and it seeks to understand how these responsibilities are translated into effective CSR strategies through the framework of partnerships, and cross-sector collaborations from the perspective of the individual in particular.

The rise and acceptance of CSR has not been without controversy, particularly in terms of definition and implementation, as reflected in the lack of consensus of an actual definition of 'corporate social responsibility' - a compound label that is itself subject to debate (Horrigan, 2010). Indeed Crane et al. (2008:5), observe that 'few subjects in management arouse as much controversy and contestation as CSR' and go on to conclude that 'field of scholarship that CSR represents is a broad and diverse one, encompassing debates from many perspectives, disciplines, and ideological positions'. In attempting to understand how corporate entities (CEs) implement CSR programmes through partnership with NPOs there is merit using the continuing controversy over the definition of the term 'corporate social responsibility' (CSR) as the start point. It can be seen that a lack of agreed definition of CSR could have a substantive impact on the design, implementation and measurement of the effect of such initiatives.

As previously stated, a number of academics have noted that there is no single definition (Lockett et al., 2006; McWilliams et al., 2006; Blowfield and Murray, 2008; Grafström and Windell 2011; Malik, 2014). Horrigan (2010:37) suggests that CSR is by its very nature 'standpoint-dependent, context-sensitive and multi-textured' in its nature and goes on to reflect that such a lack of clarity in definition affords CSR critics the basis to decry CSR as 'having no substantial meaning.....serving as a meaningless catch-cry'. It is not just in terms of definition of the term CSR that uncertainty exists; in their review of CSR literature that incorporated 588 journal articles and 102 books and book chapters, Aguinias and Glavas (2012:933) note that 'in spite of the reviews published so far, the CSR literature remains highly fragmented'. Malik (2014: 420) agrees that 'the concept and scope of CSR are difficult to define' and goes on to observe that there is a 'lack of consistent theoretical grounds in major CSR benefit-related areas'. Although this does on the surface paint a confused picture, the inherently fragmented nature of the CSR literature does offer opportunities for further research within a vibrant and increasingly important area of study. Malik (2014:420) observes that there is

'ample room for future research to contribute to the extant literature by investigating the real insights behind unanswered questions, by establishing implicit understandings regarding recognised findings, and by developing new theories in this emerging field'. It is not just in the breadth of the CSR field that has impacted on the research. Of relevance to the aims of this particular study Aguinias and Glavas (2012:933) go on to note that 'the CSR literature is fragmented regarding levels of analysis. First, CSR is usually studied from one level of analysis at a time. Second, CSR is primarily studied at the macro level (i.e., institutional or organisational level) compared to the micro level (i.e., individual level)'. It is at this individual level that this study intends to focus its exploration of the CSR-driven cross-sector collaborations.

Apart from affording critics a means of casting doubt on its utility and relevance, the lack of a clear and consistent definition of CSR and its material scope has been noted as a challenge to any process of evaluating and comparing studies (Horrigan, 2010) within a research area that is 'already vast and multidimensional' (Malik, 2014:1). However some suggest that the lack of a universal definition of CSR in itself should not be seen as a negative in a field that is constantly evolving (Lockett et al., 2006) as it affords practitioners flexibility in choice of appropriate strategies to implement CSR programmes. The issue of choice in CSR implementation strategies, particularly with regard to the discretionary nature of partnerships, is discussed later in this chapter as it is seen as key to determining the attributes required for a sustained cross-sector collaboration, as a collaborative framework would logically require a specific set of attributes as opposed to a framework imposed by legislation. It would seem worthwhile in continuing the exploration of the definition of CSR in order to determine from a stated purpose and intent of CSR some idea of the necessary attributes that might underpin a CSR delivery strategy, such as NPO-CE partnerships.

In seeking clarity in the definition of CSR for the purpose of this study there is value in revisiting the early literature. Bowen (1953) described the idea of



CSR as 'as an obligation for companies to take certain factors into consideration during the course of their business activities' (Kechiche and Soparnot, 2012:97). He describes these factors as the obligation to take into account the impact of a company's activities upon its human, social and ecological environment: a responsibility that should stretch beyond its responsibility to its shareholders and should encompass a broad range of stakeholders with significant influence, such as: governments, employees, clients, suppliers, local communities, NPOs (including NGOs, charities, protest and influence groups) and many others. These stakeholders – who all fall under the theoretical definition offered by Freeman (1994:46) as 'any individual or group of individuals who can affect or is affected by the achievement of an organisation's objectives' - have arguably shaped the concept of CSR over the years through their expectation that corporations will act responsibly in the conduct of their operations and their interaction with companies in order to realise their expectations. This study is focused on exploring such a form of interaction - the NPO-CE partnership – and how these expectations have enabled such partnerships and promoted the creation of value for both sets of stakeholders across the sector divide. The stakeholder perspective to be taken within this study is appropriate in that it is represented in a number of definitions of CSR. For example: Campbell (2007:951) defines companies that could be seen as socially responsible as those that 'must not knowingly do anything that could harm to their stakeholders'; Turker (2009:413) goes on to define CSR as 'corporate behaviors that aim to affect stakeholders positively and that go beyond its economic interest'.

It is this concept of doing more than meeting the economic interests of the company which forms the core of any successful CSR programme. On the whole the literature suggests that partners' expectations are based on the need to align the social, environmental and economic responsibilities of business in order to be sustainable – the 'triple-bottom line' (Elkington, 1997; Garriga and Melé, 2004). The 'triple-bottom line' concept suggests that

sustainability is predicated upon the concept that companies do not exist solely for a financial purpose, but that they should be guided by three additional core imperatives - economic, social and environmental - that are equally valid and necessary within business. These core imperatives are included within the definition of CSR offered by Aguinas (2011:85) -which the author notes has also been adopted by others (e.g. Rupp, 2011)- of CSR being ' context-specific organisational actions and policies that take into account stakeholders' expectations and the triple-bottom line of economic, social and environmental performance'. However, one further element should be considered when attempting to define CSR within the context of this study with its focus on the delivery of CSR programmes through cross-sector collaboration, and that is the discretionary nature of most CSR activities.

Kotler and Lee (2005: 3) highlight the societal contribution and recognition of wider stakeholder interest in their definition: 'Corporate Social Responsibility is a commitment to improve community well-being through discretionary business practices and contributions of corporate resources'. A key element of Kotler and Lee's definition (2005:3) is the word 'discretionary', which refers to those business activities that are not required by law 'or that are moral and ethical in nature and perhaps therefore expected'. The European Commission (European Commission, 2001:6) defines CSR as 'a concept where companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis'. Thus CSR activities may be described as the "voluntary commitment" that a company makes in selecting and putting socially responsible actions into practice. The discretionary nature of CSR activity is important in terms of this study in understanding how relationships might be formed and sustained between NPOs and commercial entities, both in terms of how CSR programmes may be delivered and how stakeholders (NPO and CE) might select, or be selected, as potential partners for a collaboration.

Additionally, Gray and Milne (2004) suggest that if a business is to attempt to address, through a CSR strategy, the social and environmental dimensions of business then conditions should apply. They recommend that a CSR strategy can only be conducted within the boundaries of three key conditions: when it is discretionary; when there is no apparent conflict with the financial; and where addressing such social and environmental issues will have a positive financial benefit. This line of thought supports the view that any effort by an NPO to engage with a business would have to acknowledge the wider demands of the organisation's CSR strategy and ensure that their relationship with the business recognizes this wider strategy (Austin, 2000; Seitanidi and Crane, 2009; Le Ber and Branzei, 2010). This requirement is arguably a key attribute that underpins a significant phase in the establishment of NPO-CE partnership and that is partner selection. The issues associated with the reconciliation of the inherently divergent aims of NPO and CEs, and the associated problems that result within any voluntary relationship underpin the majority of the collaboration and alliance literature (Selsky and Parker, 2005; Le Ber and Branzei, 2010) and are explored in greater depth in the cross-sector collaboration section of this chapter. The key point to note at this stage of the consideration of the literature associated with the implementation of CSR programmes is that the principal measure of success appears to be value creation – or at the very minimum: no loss of value, particularly to the company (Aguinas and Glavas, 2012; Austin and Seitanidi, 2012a; Malik, 2014).

Whilst NPOs and CEs are both capable of creating economic and social value on their own the literature suggests that voluntary partnerships in the form of cross-sector collaboration are the preferred framework for NPOs and CEs to create more value together than acting separately (Kanter, 1999; Austin 2000; Selsky and Parker, 2005; Austin and Seitanidi, 2012). At the same time the drive to increase cross-sector collaboration has traditionally been attributed to NPOs seeking stable sources for funding and resources (Berger et al., 2004) and to CEs attempting to implement CSR strategies in a meaningful way

(Rondinelli and London, 2003). Whatever the motive for any CSR programme and its subsequent delivery strategy, it is evident that if NPOs are to engage effectively with commercial entities the NPO should be prepared to demonstrate how that relationship will enhance the reputation, or legitimacy, of the firm (Yaziji, 2004; Selsky and Parker, 2005). Yet, within the increasingly vibrant area of the consideration of cross-sector collaborations (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012a; 2012b;) the focus on NPOs being engaged for reputational enhancement only has arguably moved on, with an increased desire on both sides for the formation of a mutually beneficial relationship that may have wider and more far reaching socioeconomic impact (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012a). A significant theme that has emerged from this consideration of the CSR literature is that of partnerships creating value not only for the partners, but also for wider society – the generation of ‘social value’ (Austin, 2000; Margolis and Walsh, 2003; Seitanidi and Crane, 2009, Seitanidi, 2010; Pelozo and Shang; 2011). Porter and Kramer (2011:4) state a fundamental part of creating social value is the ‘ability to cooperate across the profit/non-profit boundaries’.

Value generation as a concept also sits at the core of Austin’s (2000) analytical framework of cross-sector partnerships. His collaboration framework consists of four elements: the collaboration continuum; the collaboration value construct; alliance drivers; and enablers. The collaboration continuum comprises three stages of relationships between NPOs and CEs: the first is the ‘philanthropic stage’ defined as relationship of donor and recipient; the second stage is defined as ‘transactional’ where resources are exchanged by both stakeholders, usually through event sponsorship or cause-related marketing campaigns; the third is the ‘integrative stage’ typified by greater collective action and merging of the stakeholders’ missions, resources and activity. The collaboration value construct consists of four dimensions: ‘value definition’ that is determined before the alliance begins, followed by ‘value creation’, ‘balance’, and ‘renewal’ during the collaboration. Austin (2000) asserts that ‘value’ relates both to the competencies and strengths that each

stakeholder brings, and to the benefits that are produced from collaboration. The collaboration continuum framework also suggests the potential for the linear development of such collaborations, where the relationship could transition through the stages of the continuum, from philanthropic through transactional to integrative, in order to achieve the creation, balance and renewal of value through cross-sector partnerships. Understanding the perceptions of those individuals involved in the cross-sector partnership phenomenon of importance of value creation forms the focus of the first supporting objective of this research study. Austin builds on this work on the collaboration continuum with respect to cross-sector partnerships through the design of a Collaborative Value Creation (CVC) framework (Austin and Seitanidi 2012a and 2012b), which is discussed later in this chapter.

Having explored the role of value creation as driver for the formation of cross-sector partnerships (Austin, 2010), the next section examines literature in terms of the nature of NPO-CE collaborations; what attributes underpin such relationships; and how these collaborations create value and what is the nature of the involvement of the individual in social value creation. It reviews relevant elements of the literature surrounding cross-sector collaboration and identifies the existing frameworks and attributes of the cross-sector collaboration - including value creation as a driver for partnerships - within the literature in order to meet the research aim. It goes on to explore what the literature offers on the perceptions of these attributes from individuals and partners with experience of operating within cross-sector collaborations at the micro-level.

## **2.4 Cross-sector collaboration.**

As outlined earlier in this chapter the use of the stakeholder framework underpins much of the CSR literature (e.g. Freeman, 1994; Waddock and Graves, 1997; Brammer and Millington, 2005; Peloza and Shang, 2011), arguing that the company must establish and maintain relationships with its

stakeholders if it is to understand its environment and achieve all of its aims. Stakeholder engagements can be defined as 'trust based collaborations between individuals and/or social institutions with different objectives that can only be achieved together' (Andriof and Waddock, 2002:42). The numbers of NPOs has grown over the last century and they are now regarded as significant actors in the commercial world (Doh and Teegan, 2002; Austin and Seitanidi, 2012a). Such growth has also 'increased the competition for a dwindling set of resources and increased the need for a new value proposition' (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012a:733). Greater opportunities for collaboration have been sought as traditionally antagonistic issue-based, subscriber-driven NPOs increasingly consider partnerships with CE in order to further their aims, particularly in addressing environmental and social issues (Bliss, 2002; Yaziji and Doh, 2009, Le Ber and Branzei, 2010).

In addition, the literature reflects how the utility of partnerships in achieving CSR goals, value creation and providing wider solutions for societal problems has become a core element within public and social policy and increasingly organisations are being encouraged to consider the option of cross-sector collaborations (Berger et al., 2004; Harris, 2010; Kendall, 2011). However, as stated by Seitanidi and Crane (2009:434) 'despite the great attraction for the various sectors involved, the ways that [NPO-CE] partnerships can and should be implemented are not well understood' and thus merit further exploration.

Cross-sector collaborations are defined as relationships involving two or more sectors who work cooperatively to address societal issues (Bryson et al., 2006; Seitanidi and Crane, 2009) and are key frameworks to enable the delivery of CSR programmes (Husted, 2003). Four different subsets of cross sector partnerships (or social partnerships) have been identified within the literature: partnerships between business (CE) and public sectors; NPO and public sectors; tripartiteid partnerships; and - the focus of this study - the fourth variant, the NPO-CE collaboration (Waddock, 1989; Googins and

Rochlin, 2000; Seitanidi and Crane; 2009; Austin and Seitanidi, 2012a). Bryson et al. (2006) suggests that identifying the stages and processes involved in implementing a NPO-CE collaboration assists in understanding what is a highly complex initiative that varies in nature dependent on the collaboration typology that is in place and hence the degree of integration between the stakeholders (Austin, 2000). In general though, the literature describes cross-sector collaborations through a process perspective that is generally linear in nature, reflecting the development of the cross-sector relationship through a series of 'critical steps' (Googins and Rochlin, 2000:133). The number and type of these critical steps vary from author to author, for example Googins and Rochlin (2000) go on to suggest that the process consists of six discrete stages: the definition of clear goals; gaining senior level commitment; the engagement in frequent communication; the assignment of a senior level professional to lead the process; the sharing of resource commitment; and ongoing evaluation of progress and results. Seitanidi and Crane (2009:415) note that 'a number of prescriptive or descriptive partnership steps exist within the literature' and that 'their common characteristic appears to be the chronological sequence of evolution (Selsky and Parker, 2005)'. Walters and Anagnostopoulos (2012:421) observe that 'as the literature around the process of social partnership implementation has developed, there has been a move towards understanding the key attributes, or micro-level processes involved within each stage of the partnership process' and this study is focused on building on this approach. An overview of the stages and micro-level processes (attributes) is at Table 3 and is discussed further in the Relationship Dynamics section later in this chapter.

Austin and Seitanidi (2012a; 2012b) in their work proposing a conceptual framework to deliver collaborative value creation (CVC) suggest a key component to the framework is that of Partnership Processes. These processes are outlined as Partnership Formation – which discusses the reasons for engaging in a partnership and the need to anticipate and consider the long term implications; Partnership Selection – which overlaps with the

previous phase in that it ‘extends and builds on the partner fit potential’ (Austin and Seitanidi,2012b:934); Partnership Implementation; Partnership Design and Operations; and Partnership Institutionalisation – where the authors suggest that ‘interaction value can also progress to synergistic value (Austin and Seitanidi,2012b:940). Vurro et al. (2010:41) suggests that such process-based views ‘extend the debate in the variety of managerial challenges and conditions affecting collaborations as they progress through stages’, a view that supports Seitanidi and Crane’s (2009:415) judgement that ‘this is not to say that such process models can necessarily be used to plan a foolproof strategy for collaboration, but they can offer considerable insight into how partnerships implementation emerges over time and the types of threats and barriers that might need to be overcome in the process’.

The literature reviewed around cross-sector collaborations and the dominance of the process-based view has influenced this study and its focus on the individual’s perspective on the attributes underpinning the phenomenon of a sustained cross-sector collaboration. It follows Seitanidi and Crane’s (2009:415) overview of the cross-sector collaboration implementation process as ‘taking place through selection, design and institutionalisation’. It enables the generation of three key themes that mirror the process-based view: why did the stakeholders engage in collaboration? Whom did they select as a partner?; and how were the relationship dynamics managed? As discussed earlier in this chapter the literature suggests that the *raison d’être* of cross-sector collaborations is value creation, which is discussed in the next section, and is followed by an overview of the literature’s views on partnership processes and relationship dynamics, which identifies the key attributes that underpin these processes.

#### **2.4.1 Social value creation in cross-sector collaboration.**

The review of literature within this field has revealed a potential shift in the thinking around the motivation for cross-sector alliances from the historical



norms, that is either a resource dependency-based approach, expressed in terms of mutual exchange (Googins and Rochlin, 2000; Jamali and Keshishian, 2009); or what a NPO can offer a CE (Austin, 2000; Yaziji, 2004); or in terms of a training and knowledge transfer (Arya and Salk, 2006). A resurgence of new literature on cross-sector collaboration, possibly motivated in part by reputation restoring post-recession business navel gazing (Porter and Kramer, 2011), demonstrates the rise of discussion around the benefits of creating mutually beneficial relationships, in particular with the emergence of 'new value creation modalities such as social entrepreneurship' (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012a:733). Some have high hopes for cross-sector collaborations, seeing them as a potential answer to help solve 'the growing magnitude and complexity of socio-economic problems facing societies throughout the world [that] transcend the capacities of individual organizations and sectors to deal with them adequately' (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012a:727) or as 'a tool to drive societal change' (Glasbergen, 2010). Not all agree that partnerships offer the benefits that many seek, even at the resource-dependency level, and criticism towards cross-sector collaborations often suggest that they have the potential to divert attention and resources from core business in both NPOs and CEs (Selsky and Parker, 2005; Biermann, et al, 2007; Reed and Reed, 2009; Seitanidi, 2010). Proponents of cross-sector collaboration acknowledge these criticisms but suggest that they support 'the call for a paradigm change' (Austin and Seitanidi, 2010a:944). Arguably the socioeconomic background has changed recently, with new ways of thinking about the creation of value through partnerships and cross-sector collaborations emerging. Concepts such as social impact investing (O'Donohoe et al., 2010) which integrates social and environmental value with financial value, collective impact (Kania and Kramer, 2011) and social value measurement (Mulgan, 2010) suggest that partnerships are the pathway to achieving socioeconomic change and stability through the co-creation of value.

In determining the attributes that underpin the value creation it is worth considering those offered by Austin and Seitanidi (2012a: 729) in their discussion of a value creation spectrum. In it they describe four sources of value creation: 'resource complementarity, resource nature, resource directionality and use, and linked interests'. Resource complementarity is based on the need to gain access to resources that are different to those currently held by the organisation, a process that the authors suggest is enabled by the attribute of 'organisational fit': organisational compatibility is seen as an important factor 'that helps overcome barriers and capitalise on the differences'. Resource nature is divided into generic resources - such as money or reputational capital – and 'organisation specific resources, such as knowledge, capabilities, infrastructure, and relationships key to the organisation's success' (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012a:730). Resource complementarity and use is defined by the deployment of resources brought to the collaboration and the willingness to integrate these resources effectively. The final source of value defined is linked interests, that is, the nature of the motivation to engage with the collaboration. Austin and Seitanidi (2012a: 730) offer that, as 'cross-sector alliances may have distinct objective functions and no common currency to assess value....it is essential, first, to understand clearly how partners view value; second, to reconcile any divergent value creation frames; and, third, to perceive the value exchange as fair'. Thus, what can be seen from Austin and Seitanidi's (2012a and 2012b) work on social value creation is that a fundamental requirement for achieving success from a cross-sector collaboration, however that is defined in terms of output, is the need to manage the partnership selection and implementation process with care. The next section discusses the literature surrounding partnership processes involved in the formation stages of the partnership and is followed by a review of relationship dynamics within a cross-sector collaboration.

## **2.4.2 Partnership processes in cross-sector collaboration.**

As discussed earlier the literature tends to view the topic of cross-sector collaboration from a process perspective, with the analysis based on the time dimension of the development of the partnership (Vurron et al, 2010). This time-based linear approach leads to the discussion of the collaboration process around distinct, static phases (Bryson et al., 2006), usually able to be grouped into the categories of formation, implementation and outcomes of the collaboration (Walters and Anagnostopoulos, 2012). Austin and Seitanidi (2012b) divided the process further in their CVC framework with phases consisting of partnership formation; partner selection; partnership implementation; partnership design and operations; and partnership institutionalisation. In a subsequent illustrative case study the authors in their discussion combined the phases of formation and selection and design, operations and institutionalisation, in effect reflecting the formation and implementation groupings suggested above, but nevertheless with their framework offering greater analytical rigour to their case study (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012b:942. Other authors blur the boundary between formation and implementation, with formation included within the partnership selection process (Gray 1989; Waddock, 1989;). More recently, some offer that there is a requirement to clearly articulate a pre-conditions phase ahead of the formation and implementation of the collaboration (Heugens and van Oosterhout, 2002; Seitanidi and Crane, 2009). This latter approach is supported by the view that pre-formation is an essential phase to determine if the issue to be solved is clearly articulated and highly relevant to both partners. An overview of a number of conceptual process models that authors have designed in order to overcome implementation issues is at Table Three, adapted from Walters and Anagnostopoulos (2012:420). It highlights the differences in the naming of different stages and the number of associated micro-processes or attributes, that underpin them, although most can be aligned within the three broad categories highlighted above of formation,

implementation and outcomes (Selsky and Parker, 2005; Seitanidi and Crane,2009).

**Table 4 Stages and micro-processes of social partnership development.**

Research Article	Partnership Stages and micro-level processes		
Waddell & Brown (1997)	Article Partnership stages and micro-level processes, Identifying preconditions for cooperation, Convening partners, Setting shared directions, Implementing action strategies, Institutionalising and/or expanding successful ISPs		
Googins & Rochlin (2000)	Defining clear goals, Obtaining senior level commitment, Engaging in frequent communication, Assigning professionals to lead the work, Sharing the commitment of resources, Evaluating progress/results		
Austin (2000)	Philanthropic stage	Level of engagement, importance to mission, magnitude of resources, scope of activities interaction level, managerial complexity, strategic value	
	Transactional stage	Level of engagement, importance to mission, magnitude of resources, scope of activities, interaction level, managerial complexity, strategic value	
	Integrative stage	Level of engagement, importance to mission, magnitude of resources, scope of activities, interaction level, managerial complexity, strategic value	
Bryson et al. (2006)	Initial conditions	General environment – turbulence, competitive and institutional elements	
	Sector failure	Direct antecedents – conveners, general agreement on the problem, existing relationships or networks	
	Process	Formal and informal – forging agreements, building leadership, building legitimacy, building trust, managing conflict, planning	
	Structure and governance	Formal and informal – membership, structural configuration, governance structure	
	Contingencies and constraints	Type of collaboration, power imbalances, competing institutional logics	
	Outcomes and accountabilities	Outcomes – public value; first-, second- and third-order effects; resilience and reassessment, Accountabilities – inputs, processes and outputs; results management system; relationships with political and professional constituencies	
Seitanidi & Crane (2009)	Partnership selection	Deciding associational form, assessing the different options, informal risk assessment process (internal vs. external)	
	Partnership design	Experimentation, adaptation, operationalisation	
	Partnership institutionalization	Relationship mastering, personal familiarisation	
	Exit strategy		
Jamali & Keshishian (2009)	Partnership initiation	Preparation, negotiation, criteria for partner choice, motives, goals of partnership, centrality alignment with mission, importance, specificity	
	Partnership execution	Scope of activities, magnitude of resources, trends of investment, level of engagement leadership involvement, communication, complexity of processes, efficiency, equity	
	Partnership evaluation	Evaluation, future expectations, learning	
Austin and Seitanidi (2012a and 2012b)	Value Creation Spectrum	Resource complementarity; Resource nature; Resource directionality and use; Linked Interests.	
	Collaboration Stages	Collaboration continuum	
	Partnership Processes	Partnership Formation	
		Partner Selection	
		Partnership Implementation	
		Partnership Design and Operations	
		Partnership Institutionalization	
Collaboration Outcomes	Internal Value Creation	Meso, Macro and Micro levels: Associational, Transferred, Interaction and Synergistic value	
	External Value Creation	Macro Level	

[Source: Adapted from Walters and Anagnostopoulos (2012:420)].

The literature suggests that most authors in this field agree that partnerships are more likely to develop if the partners' interests and objectives in tackling the issues are compatible (Berger et al., 2004) as, for example, through Austin and Seitanidi's (2012a) focus on value creation through the determination of 'linked interests'. Inter-organisational factors also play a role in the pre-formation phase with the highlighting of the need for senior management commitment to the project (Hood et al., 1993; Andreasen, 1996; Waddock, 1998; Berger et al., 2004; Bhattacharya et al., 2008) and the importance of recognising the goals and morals of individual actors in the collaboration (Butterfield et al., 2000).

Arya and Salk (2006) state that the key element of the formation phase is the need for clearly defined collaboration objectives. Partner compatibility is seen as important, and likely to be enhanced, if the partners have a history of working together (Berger et al., 2004; Hardy et al., 2006), as are mutually agreed working practices (Rondinelli and London, 2003). London et al. (2005) highlight the positive effect that an alignment of organisational cultures can have on the success of the partnership, as do Hood et al. (1993) and Selsky and Parker (2005) who go on to suggest that there is a need to build some form of cultural compatibility at the collaboration interface as the partnership evolves. Austin and Seitanidi (2012b:934) offer that partner selection, 'despite being a common reason for partnership failure' has received scant attention in the partnership literature. The authors go on to offer that 'selecting the most appropriate partner is a decision that, to a large extent, determines the value creation potential of the partnership'. Of particular relevance to NPOs or CEs seeking collaborations for the first time is the opinion of Harbison and Pekar (1998) that an inability to assess potential partners effectively is a demonstration of organisational inexperience. The literature suggests that the existence of 'collaborative know-how' (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012b:934) including knowledge, skills and competences is an important factor in partner selection (Goffman, 1983; Draulans et al., 2003). In addition, personal connections and formed relationships can help enable a successful collaboration (Hartman and Stafford, 1997). Rondinelli and London (2003) highlight the positive impact of identifying pre-partnership champions who are

vested long-term in the collaboration and who will play the lead role in developing and managing cross-functional teams. However Huxham and Vangen (2000) caution that membership of a collaboration can be ambiguous and individual member's perceptions of their status and role can vary.

Having reviewed the literature on the emergence recognition of value creation as the primary desired outcome of a cross-sector collaboration and discussed the formation process and highlighted the scant availability of literature with regards to partnership selection within the formation process, the next step is to consider the implementation phase with particular respect to the attributes required to sustain the collaboration. This will be followed by the final area for review, that of the role and perceptions of individual actors operating at the micro-level of the collaborative process.

### **2.4.3 Relationship dynamics in cross-sector collaborations.**

Whilst acknowledging that partnership implementation is complex and inadequately understood (Googins and Rochlin, 2000; Bryson et al., 2006; Jamali and Keshishian, 2009) and the research opportunities this view affords, the literature reviewed to date offers increasingly detailed studies on the nature of the cross-sector collaboration implementation process (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012a and 2012b; Walters and Anagnostopoulos, 2012). In process terms, the literature reflects the importance of organisational flexibility in maintaining and sustaining a cross-sector collaboration (Waddock, 1988) with the need for both sides to be willing to justify its aims along with partners expectations (Huxham and Vangen, 2000). As the collaboration develops operational issues grow in importance and there is a need for both sides to feel that there is an equitable division of workload and resources (Googins and Rochlin, 2000; Selsky and Parker, 2005). It is not only in the division of workload and allocation of resources that tensions can build: power relations and the degree of control of each of the partner organisations in a collaboration are a central issue of collaboration management (Mandell and Steelman, 2003; Schiller and Almog-Bar, 2013). Cross-sector collaborations that have clearly defined organisational mechanisms that support mutual control and mutual influence

tend to be more successful, even when the partners are different in size, resource scope and expertise (Ashman, 2001; Selsky and Parker, 2005). A loss of control over decision-making is a major concern among NPOs that collaborate with businesses (Selsky and Parker, 2005). In a resource dependent framework the business partner is perceived as having greater power (Seitanidi and Ryan, 2007) and is therefore viewed as the more dominant partner in terms of decision-making, although this situation may not always be intentional, but may be a product of the perceptions embedded by the traditional donor-recipient paradigm and the potentially less-inclusive working practices of a commercial entity (Ashman, 2001). There are a variety of additional risks detailed in the literature, particularly with regard to the NPO, including: potential for the collaboration to result in a shift in the focus of the NPO (Shaw and Allen, 2009); unpredictability of funding and the effect of a rapid withdrawal or reduction in resources (Fischer et al., 2011; Bingham and Walters, 2013); and whether it is appropriate for some commercial organisations to achieve their CSR objectives through NPOs (Harris, 2010).

One of the key features in establishing a sustained NPO-CE relationship has been identified as trust (Morgan and Hunt, 1994); increased trust enables the relationship to move beyond the transactional, limiting costs through the reduced need for control activities such as monitoring and bargaining (Sohn, 1994). Tomlinson (2005) suggests that relationships formed around solving social issues tend to be based more on trust than power and Jamali et al. (2011) concluded, in their comparative analysis of six case studies of CE–NPO collaboration in the context of CSR in the UK, that the presence of the attributes of trust, communication and coordination within a cross-sector collaboration enhanced the partnership, increased collaborative behaviour and reduced opportunism. Trust has also been found to form an important relational issue within social alliances. According to Das and Teng's (2002) study on social alliances the formation of the alliance depends on three variables: collective strength, inter-partner conflicts and interdependencies. Their study highlighted the importance of trust and commitment on the effectiveness of a social alliance and went on to propose an alliance conditions framework model based on the three variables. Das and Teng's (2002)



empirical study was focused on intra-sector alliances not cross-sector alliances, however Liu and Ko (2010) proposed an extension of the alliance conditions framework for application within NPO-CE relationships. Liu and Ko (2010) argued that as the original model was grounded in resource-dependence theory, which had already been used for previous analysis in cross sector collaborations (Guo and Acar, 2005; Selsky and Parker, 2005;), the social alliance framework had applicability in understanding NPO-CE relationships. Their study also proposed a fourth condition variable, that of 'institutional legitimacy' which they described as 'the need for organisations to operate within certain boundaries (expectations) imposed by society to continue to enjoy the access to products and resources. When it performs accordingly, an organisation is said to be behaving legitimately' (Liu and Ko, 2010:258). The literature thus reflects a clear recognition of the importance of trust in underpinning social alliances such as NPO-CE relationships, with a lack of trust described as a major concern for cross-sector partnerships (Rivera-Santos and Rufin, 2000), but there appears little research available to inform the practitioner on how to establish the trust necessary for a sustained NPO-CE relationship. There are a few exceptions, however, Sargeant and Lee's (2004) empirical study explored the linkages between trust, commitment and donor behaviour and offered guidance to the practitioner on four behaviours: relationship investment, mutual influence, communication acceptance and opportunism. The study was focused on understanding perceptions of trust in a charity only and acknowledges the limitation of this single perspective. However, the conclusions offered support the wider perspective of the sector, and of the underpinnings of the cross-sector collaboration phenomenon, in that they suggest the attributes required for a successful relationship should include a focus on improved communications with donors, increased transparency and disclosure with stakeholders, and the management of external perceptions of the legitimacy of the NPO.

These conclusions were supported by the empirical research based on the Amended Commitment-Trust Model of NPO-funder relationships carried out by MacMillan et al. (2005). This study suggested that trust could be obtained through the development of shared values, non-opportunistic behaviour

amongst clients and improved communications. Venn and Berg (2014:402) in their empirical study of the gatekeeping function of trust in cross-sector social partnerships highlight the importance of trust, particularly as the relationship evolves along the collaboration continuum, and 'outlines trust as an important governance mechanism'. They also found that an increase in trust plays a major role in facilitating knowledge transfer between partners.

Other factors identified among the operational issues of sustaining a cross-sector collaboration include effective communication and leadership. Austin (2000) states that continued management is a necessity to sustain the partnership, together with leadership at all levels and particularly at the operational interface by organisational actors aware of the specific demands of leading within a cross-sector collaboration construct (Crosby and Bryson, 2005). A particular leadership challenge to be faced is the changing of membership from within the original collaboration construct and its likely impact on the collaboration effort (Huxham and Vangen, 2000). Underpinning the leadership component is the requirement for effective communication, both inter- and intra-organisational, particularly to ensure that the collaboration remains mutually beneficial (Argenti, 2004; Googins and Rochlin, 2000). However, cross-sector social interaction has been found to be a difficult and lengthy process (Bäckstrand, 2006) which requires patience and long-term commitment from both sides (Kennedy and Novogratz, 2011; Ansari et al., 2012).

This section has reviewed the literature on the implementation phase of the cross-sector collaboration process with particular respect to the attributes required to sustain the collaboration. It has highlighted the importance of the attributes of intra-organisational flexibility and power-sharing; effective leadership and communication at all levels; and the importance of trust-building as the relationship evolves along the value creation continuum. Most of the literature reviewed, with few exceptions, has been focused at the organisational level - an issue that is discussed in the next section with its focus on the role and perceptions of individual actors operating at the micro-level of the collaborative process. This will be followed by an articulation of

the research aim and the articulation of the supporting objectives to the research aim derived from this literature review.

## **2.5 Cross-sector collaboration at the level of the individual.**

The literature suggests that the actions of those operating at the micro-level of cross-sector partnerships are intrinsic to the success or failure of the collaboration (Austin, 2000; McAlister and Ferrell, 2002; Vock et al., 2014), however the perceptions of such individuals of the phenomenon of cross-sector collaboration have yet to be explored fully. Waddock (2010) labels those actors at the individual level of analysis of cross-sector collaborations as the 'difference makers', comprising the core element for the development of organisational pressures. Kuipers and Meershoek (2013) found that a lack of effective communication at the personal level was a contributing factor to the failure of a NGO-business partnership implementation in Kenya, whilst Hamann et al. (2011) concluded from research on NGO-business partnerships in South Africa that 'informal institutions and relationships between parties are crucial to success'. Vock et al. (2011) suggest that the nature of the participation of employees within CSR programmes can affect consumers either favourably or unfavourably. Austin and Seitanidi (2012b:948) state that 'collaborations can produce benefits within the partnering organisations for individuals' and offer examples, both instrumental and psychological, from improved managerial skills, leadership opportunities, technical and sector knowledge to emotional benefits that 'encompass the individual's psychic satisfaction from contributing to social betterment'. Notwithstanding the acknowledged significance of the role of the individual in the cross-sector collaboration process, it has achieved relatively limited attention within a field of study that has been focused predominantly at the organisational, or macro, level (Selsky and Parker, 2005; Huybrechts and Nicholls, 2013; Vock et al., 2014). In particular there is a lack of understanding of the 'micro-process level of detail that is required to deepen our understanding' of the partnership process (Seitanidi and Crane, 2009:414). Austin and Seitanidi (2012a; 2012b) summarise their comprehensive cross-sector collaboration literature review as part of their CVC continuum design with two points of relevance to this study;

the first is that 'value creation through collaboration is recognised as a central goal, but it is equally clear that it has not been analysed by researchers and practitioners to the extent or with the systematic rigour that its importance merits' and that 'there is a need for greater research – quantitative and qualitative' (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012a:744). The second is how the authors go on to highlight the lack of research in particular surrounding the limited focus on the role of the individual in enabling and sustaining cross-sector partnerships for value creation (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012b:952).

The literature review conducted in support of this research study supports the findings of Austin and Seitanidi (2012a and 2012b) with regards to the limited degree of focus at the individual level of cross-sector collaboration analysis. As discussed earlier in this chapter some studies have been identified, but none have investigated the perceptions of those individual actors involved at the micro-level across all phases of the phenomenon of cross-sector partnerships. Some research has highlighted the impact of individual actors at the micro-level of the cross-sector collaboration process. Rondinelli and London (2003) highlight the positive impact of identifying pre-partnership champions who are vested long-term in the collaboration and who will play the lead role in developing and managing cross-functional teams. Butterfield et al. (2000) stressed in their empirical mixed-methods study investigating the individual's awareness of moral issues the importance of recognising the goals of individual actors in the collaboration. However Huxham and Vangen (2000), based on their findings from their empirical study, caution that membership of a collaboration can be ambiguous and individual member's perceptions of their status and role can vary. Whilst there has been an increased focus on the micro-level processes as called for by Seitanidi and Crane (2009:414) – as can be seen by the evolving nature of partnership models at Table Three with Jamali and Keshisian (2009) an example with the identification of twenty-one dimensions within three broad stages – limited work has been conducted on understanding the individual's perspective of the process. This highlights a research gap in the knowledge surrounding cross-sector collaboration that this study addresses through the adoption of a qualitative, phenomenological study

that explores the experiences and perspectives of the individuals involved in the phenomenon of sustained NPO-CE partnerships.

## **2.6 Literature Review: Overview and conclusions.**

The literature review focused on exploring the cross-sector collaboration phenomenon within the context of its use as a CSR implementation strategy. Ultimately it sought to explore the perspective of the individual stakeholder of the attributes, or micro-processes, that underpin a sustained NPO-CE collaboration. Whilst CSR provides the contextual background for this literature review it also acknowledged the debate within the field of the research of the emergence of the construct of corporate sustainability (CS). As Montiel (2008:245) notes in his focused review of the extant literature on the definitions of CSR and CS, the two constructs have been used within management literature 'to refer to social and environmental management issues, but [with] no clear distinction between the two terms' and Elkington (1999:397) suggests that there are 'more than one hundred definitions of sustainability'. Academic debate remains ongoing with CS and CSR proponents continuing to champion their respective views. However, this study agrees with the position that 'the term 'corporate social responsibility' is still in popular use, even though competing, complementary and overlapping concepts such as corporate citizenship, business ethics, stakeholder management and sustainability are all vying to become the most accepted and widespread descriptor of the field' (Carroll and Shabana; 2010:86). Primarily, the focus of this study is understanding the perspectives of stakeholders engaged in the delivery of programmes that have been initiated by corporate entities and NPOs in partnership, irrespective of the construct (CSR, CS or CSP) under which these cross-sector partnerships originated. As Carroll and Shabana (2010:86) go on to note 'all these concepts are related, in that they are integrated by key, underlying themes such as value, balance and accountability (Schwartz and Carroll, 2008), and CSR remains a dominant, if not exclusive, term in the academic literature and in business practice'.

The literature reveals that there is limited consensus on what CSR implementation should entail and as a result some authors have raised concerns over the credibility of companies' CSR programmes (Fonseca 2010; Gilberthorpe and Banks 2012). However Malik (2014:450), in his comprehensive literature review of value-creation from CSR strategies, concludes that effective CSR programmes have the potential to generate value for both the firm and its stakeholders by 'aligning corporate actions with social objectives' with the benefits outweighing the potential costs and it seeks to understand how these responsibilities are translated into effective CSR strategies through the framework of partnerships, and cross-sector collaborations in particular.

Overall, the literature tends to view the topic of cross-sector collaboration from a process perspective, with the analysis based on the time dimension of the development of the partnership (Vurro et al, 2010). This time-based linear approach leads to the discussion of the collaboration process around distinct, static phases (Bryson et al., 2006), usually able to be grouped into the categories of formation, implementation and outcomes of the collaboration, although different authors offer a differing number of stages and micro-processes, or attributes, under these broad categories. The understanding of how the value created by a cross-sector collaboration is defined is evolving. Earlier literature focused in the main on investigating and overcoming the differences in cultures and aims between a NPO and a CE as they form partnerships to either address a social issue or, drawing on resource dependency theory, or instrumental reasons (Googins and Rochlin, 2000; Berger et al.,2004; Selsky and Parker,2005; Arya and Salk,2006). However more recent work indicates a shift in the thinking with regard to the concept of cross-sector collaboration that has a significant impact on the design of this study. The potential for a much wider impact from NPO-CE collaborations is now being discussed in both academic and practitioner literature with the emergence of the concept of shared value (O'Donohoe et al., 2010; Mulgan, 2010, Kania and Kramer, 2011; Porter and Kramer, 2011). Austin and Setanidi's (2012a and 2012b) comprehensive review of cross-sector

collaboration literature they introduce a 'Collaborative Value Creation (CVC)' framework that outlines the collaboration stages, partnering processes and outcomes. The authors also suggest a framework that outlines where value might be created within a collaboration, a 'loci of value creation' (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012b:944). More specifically for this study, in their discussion on value creation at the micro-level the authors highlight that the whilst the majority of studies on cross-sector partnerships focus on organisational level challenges, few have offered insights on the experiences of those individuals tasked with making the partnership work. In particular there is a lack of understanding of the 'micro-process level of detail that is required to deepen our understanding of '(Seitanidi and Crane, 2009:414) and the limited focus on the role of the individual in enabling and sustaining cross-sector partnerships for value creation (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012b:952). This study aligns with the process-based analytical approach and seeks to explore the experiences of those individuals involved in the micro-processes of the formation stage and its associated partnership processes, and the relationship dynamics of the implementation stage. The outcome phase is explored through the lens of social value creation, the core output of cross-sector collaboration (Austin, 2000; Austin and Seitanidi; 2012a and 2012b).

### **2.6.1 Research Aim and Objectives.**

The aim of this research study is:

***To explore sustained NPO-CE relationships at the stakeholder level and identify the perceptions of those attributes that underpin such relationships***

The research objectives in support of the research aim, as drawn from the literature review, are:

Supporting Objective 1:

To explore stakeholders' understanding of the nature of value creation from NPO-CE collaborations and its contributing attributes.

Supporting Objective 2:

To identify stakeholders' perception of the key attributes of the partnership process for a NPO-CE collaboration.

Supporting Objective 3:

To identify the attributes underpinning the dynamics of a sustained NPO-CE relationship from the stakeholders' perspective.

These three supporting objectives form the basis for the structure of the data gathering and analysis phases of the study, which is discussed in later chapters. Taking into account the research aim and supporting objectives identified from the literature, the next chapter considers the design of the research methodology.



## **Chapter 3. Research Methodology**

This chapter outlines the strategy adopted for the conduct of the research in terms of the philosophical perspective, methods, the associated ethical issues, and provides the rationale for the selection of the research strategy. The first section considers the research methodology and its implications, followed by a discussion of the ethical issues associated with the study. Observations on the role of the pilot study, and the significant impact on the data analysis process finally selected for the main study are considered next, after which the chapter concludes with the outlining of the main study data analysis plan and the associated bracketing process.

### **3.1 Philosophical Perspective.**

Burrell and Morgan (1979) suggest that in developing a philosophical perspective it is necessary for the researcher to make several assumptions with regard to the nature of society and the nature of science. Their view on the nature of scientific research suggests that there are two principal philosophical approaches to research: subjective or objective. Within each of these two major scientific research philosophies there exists a number of accepted paradigms. Benton and Craib (2011: 236) outline how Thomas Kuhn described a paradigm as a 'framework of shared scientific theory and shared common sense beliefs about scientific practice that is necessary for a science to come into existence' Ponterotto (2005) identified four paradigms for scientific research: positivism; post-positivism; constructivism-interpretivism; and critical-ideological. A summary of Ponterotto's (2005) definitions of the four paradigms is provided in Table 5:

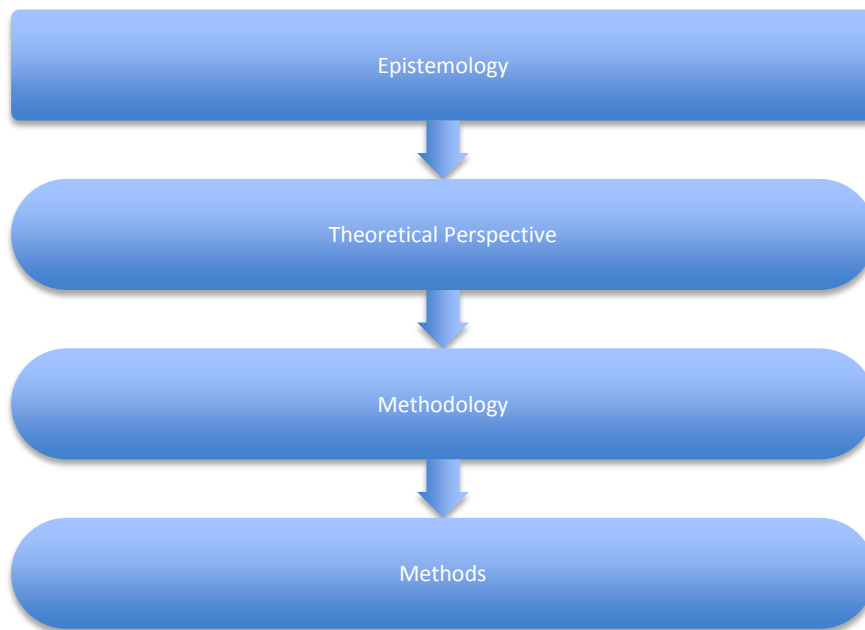
<b>Paradigm</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Positivism</b>	<p>Founded on principles of objectivity</p> <p>Use of hypothetico-deductive method</p> <p>Focus on discovering laws to enable prediction and explanation</p> <p>Use of large samples to identify rules within populations as opposed to individual variances</p>
<b>Post-positivism</b>	<p>No assumption of an ultimate truth that can be measured</p> <p>Often focuses on falsifying theory rather than verification</p> <p>Retains ultimate goals of prediction and explanation</p>
<b>Constructivism- Interpretivism</b>	<p>No true objective reality – only the reality that is created by an individual's response to their environment</p> <p>Meaning generated through deep reflection often involving dialogue between a researcher and participant, in which both co-create the data from the dialogue</p> <p>Values subjective experience and construction of meaning</p> <p>Focuses on in-depth descriptions and understandings as opposed to the discovery of laws</p> <p>Often utilises inductive as opposed to deductive reasoning</p>
<b>Critical- Ideological</b>	<p>Goal is to disrupt status quo</p> <p>Researcher's values used to guide process of change</p> <p>Recognises values are socially-constructed: some parties have more privileges than others and thus important goal is to emancipate those with fewer privileges</p>

**Table 5 Four paradigms of scientific research.**

[Source: Ponterotto, 2005]

Irrespective of the paradigm adopted, it is argued a researcher should stipulate the assumptions on the nature of reality, if their understanding of that reality is to be tested (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994:4). Denzin and Lincoln (2005:21) outline how the qualitative research process follows 'three interconnected generic activities: theory, method and analysis; or ontology, epistemology and methodology'. Ontology is concerned with 'how you choose to define what is

real' while epistemology is concerned with 'how you form knowledge and establish criteria for evaluating it'. In Crotty's (2009) view, such assumptions must be aligned as each principal epistemology informs a theoretical perspective which in turn aligns with methodologies and methods reflecting that theoretical perspective. (Crotty, 2009: 5).



**Figure 2 Four elements of the research process.**

[Source: Crotty, 2009: 4]

The above schema is similar to the Denzin and Lincoln (2005:21) model in that it demonstrates interdependence of the main elements. Crotty asserts that 'ontological issues and epistemological issues tend to emerge together' (Crotty, 2009: 10) and thus ontological issues can be dealt with as they emerge, without adding to the four elements model. Notwithstanding this perspective, Crotty stresses the value to the research that a clearly identified and coherent selection of the elements has in helping to 'ensure the soundness of our research and [to] make the outcomes more convincing' (Crotty, 2009: 6).

Ponterotto (2005) goes further and identifies five philosophical constructs that act as frames of reference for understanding the paradigms: ontology; epistemology; axiology; rhetorical structure; and methodology. He defines these constructs as follows:

- a. Ontology: the study of the nature of reality;
- b. Epistemology: the study of the relationship between participant and the researcher;
- c. Axiology: the influence of the values of the researcher on the study;
- d. Rhetorical structure: how the methods and results are presented;
- e. Methodology: the design and process with which the research is completed.

Following Ponterotto's framework the principal elements of this study are now described. The research is set within the interpretivist paradigm, attempting to explore knowledge created and understood from the point of view of the actors who experienced the phenomenon under investigation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). This approach allows the research to focus on the experiences of those individuals tasked with the management of cross-sector relationships, from both the NPO and the CE perspective, and to generate 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973). In terms of this study the thick description refers to the exploration of the individual subjective conception of a sustained NPO-CE collaboration.

### **3.1.1 Ontology.**

Burrell and Morgan (1979) suggest that in developing a philosophical perspective it is necessary for the researcher to make several assumptions with regard to the nature of society and the nature of science. Their view on the nature of scientific research suggests that there are two principal philosophical approaches to research: subjective or objective. The objectivist approach regards reality as existing both externally (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008) and context-free (Burrell and Morgan; 1979), and that social phenomena and their meanings present as external facts that can be objectively studied (Bryman, 2001). However, as described by Saunders et al. (2009:108) the

subjectivist researcher takes the view that 'social phenomena are created from the perceptions and consequent actions of social actors' whilst Denzin and Lincoln (2005:18) offer that those who adopt the subjectivist stance 'are oriented to the search for socially-constructed meanings and meaning-making, sense-making activities, rituals, and enactments as well as the production of reconstructed understandings of the social world'. For this research project the subjectivist perspective has been taken, which reflects the view that 'something exists only when you experience it and give it meaning' (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2006:12). The research aim is to seek the individual perspective of those managers who have extensive experience of the phenomenon of cross-sector collaboration and as such the subjective ontology is deemed appropriate for this research study.

### **3.1.2 Epistemology, Axiology and Rhetorical Structure.**

Denzin and Lincoln (2005:21) suggest that epistemology is concerned with 'how you form knowledge and establish criteria for evaluating it' whilst Benton and Craib (2011) describe it as the theory of knowledge as it is known. Overall, epistemology is regarded as the 'theory of knowledge concerned with understanding how knowledge is defined, valued, and prioritised' (Walter, 2009:12). A key element within epistemology is assumptions regarding facts. Easterby-Smith et al. (2008:62) suggested thinking in terms of how one sees facts. They posited that, while positivism assumes that facts 'are concrete, but cannot be accessed directly', the subjectivist sees facts as 'all human creations'. As with ontology, this research assumes a subjective epistemological perspective and reflects the assumption that norms are socially constructed and 'influence the production of knowledge and valid knowers' (Walter, 2009:12).

Creswell (2007:17) describes axiology as concerning the question of 'What is the role of values?' whilst Bryman (2001:12) suggests that 'values reflect either the personal beliefs or the feelings of a researcher'. Walter (2009:13) goes further to assert that axiology is the 'theory of values that inform how we see the world and the value judgments we make within our research'. Whilst

positivists assume that 'only phenomena that you can observe will lead to the production of credible data' and that research should be 'value-free' (Saunders et al., 2009:103) and independent, those assuming the subjectivist or interpretivist perspective assume that research is not value-free or independent, and the researcher plays a key role in the research. This study therefore reflects the assumption that reality is socially constructed and that multiple realities exist, to which the researcher is exposed. Therefore it is necessary for the researcher to be very clear during the research process about interpretations made by the researcher based on their personal values. As stated the epistemological underpinning is focused on subjective relations (Ponterotto, 2005) and it is recognised, with regard to axiology, that a bracketing process is required in order to mitigate personal values that cannot be divorced from the research process. Bracketing is discussed further towards the end of this chapter. As regards rhetorical structure the assumed philosophical perspective suggests that the rhetorical structure is personalised in nature and acknowledges challenges to trustworthiness.

The design used for this study is aimed at reflecting the experiences of the participants within a phenomenological perspective, which is an approach based on the idea of 'a pure and unmediated experience of phenomena' (Chia, 2002: 1). Ultimately the research aim and objectives are addressed by the construction of meaning through deep reflection on the dialogue between a participant and an interviewer (Ponterotto, 2005). The following section outlines the selected phenomenological approach and includes discussion on background and definition and the selected variant of the approach: empirical, or psychological phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994). It is followed by a justification of the adopted methodology.

### **3.2 Methodology**

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### **3.2.1 Phenomenology.**

As described by Creswell (2007), the purpose of phenomenology is to take people's experience of a shared phenomenon and discover the universal essence of that experience. A key aim of phenomenology is to describe the point of view of the participants of the phenomena being studied thereby 'viewing these experiences as conscious (Van Manen, 1990) and arriving at a description of the essence of these experiences, not explanations and analyses (Moustakas, 1994; Creswell et al, 2007:253). As a result some well-known research activities such as testing hypotheses, the generalisation of results and theory creation, are absent (Wertz, 2005).

More than one variant of phenomenology exists (Giorgi and Giorgi, 2008). One of the principal approaches is hermeneutic phenomenology (Van Manen, 1990), and another is empirical, transcendental, or psychological phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994). Van Manen (1990) describes the hermeneutic approach as an interpretation of the 'texts of life' and suggests that phenomenological research is 'not only a description but also an interpretive process in which the researcher makes an interpretation of the meaning of the lived experience' (Creswell et al., 2007:253). Moustakas (1994) suggests an alternative approach that is less focused on interpretation by the researcher than the hermeneutic approach and that favours the process

of bracketing the researchers's experiences in order to take a 'fresh perspective of the phenomenon under examination' (Creswell et al., 2007:253). In addition to bracketing the transcendental approach offers a research approach built on the data analysis procedures offered by van Kaam (1966) and Colaizzi (1978) as drawn together and highlighted by Moustakas (1994). The process consists of: the identification of a phenomenon; the bracketing of the researcher's previous experience; collection of data from respondents who have experienced the phenomenon; data analysis by reduction to a number of significant statements; and the combination of these statements into themes. The researcher writes a textual description of the experiences, then a structural description of the experiences (outlining conditions, situations, or context within which the phenomenon was experienced), followed by a combined statement of textual and structural descriptions to convey the essence of the experience (Creswell et al., 2007). This approach and its coherent data analysis framework has been adopted for this research study as the researcher wishes to understand the phenomenon of NPO-CE collaborations through a transcendental approach – that is 'as if everything is perceived freshly, as if for the first time' (Moustakas, 1994:34). Whilst Moustakas (1994) admits that perfectly achieving this viewpoint is rarely possible, Creswell et al. (2007) suggest the approach enables the researcher to bracket out their views through the process of describing their own experiences before engaging with the respondents.

### **3.3 Justification of the research approach and design.**

#### **3.3.1 Qualitative Research**

In examining the issues associated with methodological fit in management field research, Edmondson and McManus (2007) stressed the importance of selecting an appropriate methodology for enabling quality field research. In highlighting the linkages between the use of appropriate research methods and the state of the development of the associated theory, they suggest that 'the less that is known about a phenomenon in the organisational literature, the more likely exploratory qualitative research will be fruitful' (Edmondson and



McManus, 2007: 1177). The literature review has revealed that little is known on the specific issues associated with the experiences of the individuals involved in the establishment and maintenance of NPO-CE relationships and thus it is suggested that the methodology of exploratory qualitative research is appropriate.

Following Travers (2001), the research aim and objectives and subsequent data collection techniques have been influenced by an interpretive philosophy, in that the study is seeking to address how members of society understand their own actions. Whilst interpretivism does not disregard the development and testing of theory, it argues that statistical patterns and correlations are not understandable on their own, and thus it is necessary to understand and explore the meanings individuals give to the actions that result in such statistical patterns (Blaikie, 2000). Further, as interpretivism-based social research seeks to explore the 'insider' view, as the social world is the world as interpreted by its members from the 'inside', and not to impose an 'outsider' view on it (Blaikie, 2000) it fits in well with the current research aim. The study is focused on attempting to gain meaning and understanding from the experiences of key personnel involved in established NPO-CE relationships. Such relationships, once established, often take the form of partnerships and previous study has demonstrated the effectiveness of an interpretivist approach when researching partnerships (Valor Martinez, 2003).

### **3.3.2 Phenomenology.**

The phenomenological research design that had been adopted for this study was suitable in two ways: firstly, the research methods associated with phenomenology fit within the interpretivist paradigm chosen for the project (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Ponterotto, 2005) and secondly, as Creswell (2007) offered, phenomenological approaches are useful when the research focuses on the description of participant's experiences of a common phenomenon.

In addition, as can be seen from Table 6 (below) in Creswell's (2007:241) comparison of the characteristics of five qualitative research designs,

phenomenology best meets the aim and supporting objectives of this study. The use of a case study approach could be argued as an alternative design however, as discussed in Chapter Five, the nature of the NPO-CE relationships and how they were perceived by the individuals who had experienced them, suggested that the framing of a cross-sector case would possibly inhibit those engaged from speaking as freely as was hoped for this study.

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Narrative Research</b>	<b>Case Study</b>	<b>Grounded Theory</b>	<b>Participatory Action Research</b>	<b>Phenomenology</b>
<b>Type of problem best suited</b>	Detailed stories help understand the problem	Have a case bounded by time or place that can inform a problem	Where no theory exists or existing theories are inadequate	To address a community issue so that change can occur	<b>Seeking to understand the lived experiences of persons about a phenomenon</b>
<b>Unit of Analysis</b>	One or more individuals	An event, programme, activity or more than one individual	A process, action or interaction involving many individuals	An entire community	<b>Several individuals who have shared the experience</b>
<b>Data Collection Forms</b>	Interviews, documents	Multiple forms: interviews, observations, documents, artifacts	Primarily interviews	Depends on community needs: can be both quantitative and qualitative	<b>Primarily interviews, although documents, observations and even art may be included</b>
<b>Data Analysis Strategies</b>	Chronology, elements of a story, restorying	Description of the case and themes of the case as well as cross-case themes	Open coding, axial coding, selective coding	Involve the community in decisions as how to analyze the research	<b>Bracketing, statements, meaning units or themes, textual description, structural description, essence of the phenomenon</b>
<b>Degree of Structure in Methods</b>	Little set structure	Some structure	High level of structure dependent on "camp"	Little set structure	<b>Structured approach in data analysis</b>

**Table 6 Contrasting characteristics of five qualitative designs.**

[Source: Adapted from Creswell et al., 2007:241]

Thus a phenomenological design was adopted as it had the potential to 'provide insight into human nature in a way that few other [approaches] can match' (Langdrige, 2007: 168). It is the exploration of this depth of understanding and insight of the nature of the NPO-CE relationship, as seen and experienced from both sides of the relationship, that formed the core of the research project. Finally, an inductive analysis was chosen which allowed the development of generalisations through the identification of regularities using inductive logic in interpretative research (Bryman, 2001). Such regularities were used to 'locate a particular pattern of thoughts within a known and more general pattern or network of relationships' (Kaplan, 1964:298). Before moving on to the outline of the research methods this chapter will now address the ethical issues associated with the study.

### **3.4 Ethical considerations for the conduct of the study.**

Throughout the research project adherence to the University's Research Ethics and Governance procedures and guidance was mandatory. In considering the application of the guidance during the conduct of the research the following areas required careful consideration in terms of maintaining an ethical approach:

- a) The adoption of qualitative methodology and phenomenological approach, utilising semi-structured interview techniques, may expose even senior personnel to risk as 'vulnerable' participants. Large charitable organisations are invariably heavily dependent on donors and as such the research should avoid unwittingly exposing issues and concerns that may risk such relationships. Not least that such an incident would inherently undermine the intent of the research itself in ultimately enabling effective NPO-CE relationships.
- b) Ensuring confidentiality was anticipated to be a key issue in gaining access to respondents. It was decided that anonymity should be offered to participants and their respective organisations as the literature suggests that the concept of protecting participants by anonymising their identity remains popular (Kelly, 2009). However it

may be likely that the nature of their organisation and the work it is conducting in certain geographical areas may inadvertently enable others to deduce the identity of the participant and the organization and thus was seen as the right approach to take in order to protect the individual.

- c) Ensuring a clear articulation of the objectives of the study and the associated processes informed an important part of establishing informed consent with those who agreed to be interviewed for the research. A thematic overview (Appendix 1) was used as a topic guide provided at the start of each interview to aid this process (Rubin and Rubin; 1995).
- d) Particularly within phenomenological studies the interviewer should be aware of the possibility of the emergence of the 'Hawthorne, or reactivity effect' (Sarantakos, 1994:246), where the behaviour of participants may be caused or changed by the fact they know they are being studied. This effect could be exacerbated further based on the subject of the research, where there is also the potential for the emergence of a social desirability bias (Fisher, 1993) where participants seek to present themselves in their perceived best possible way. Such alterations to the participant's intentions expressed through their responses can seriously undermine the trustworthiness of any social study (Geiger and O'Connell, 2000; Bernardi, 2006). As far as possible the research method was designed in an attempt to minimise any potential social desirability bias through the following: use of purposive sampling (Patton, 1990); strict adherence to confidentiality protocols at all stages; and the avoidance of close-ended questions to avoid leading the interviewee (Myers and Newman, 2007). This issue, and its potential impact on the interview protocol, overlaps with the later discussions in this chapter on researcher bias and research trustworthiness.

Finally in this section discussing the ethical considerations associated with the study the over-riding concern for the conduct of the project was to strive to maintain the stance of 'do-no-harm'. The Third Sector, and those CEs intent on providing support, are full of passionate, dedicated and hard-working people

who have demonstrated a willingness to share their knowledge, experiences and opinions: it was important that all involved were given every opportunity to understand the potential implications of their involvement. Significant attention was paid within the research protocol design, including offering confidentiality, ensuring informed consent (initially through the use of an Edinburgh Napier University generated pro-forma, and then further discussions with the respondent) and ethical use of all data (May, 2001).

Having outlined the chosen research methodology, the impact of the phenomenological approach and offered a discussion on the ethical concerns for the conduct of the study, the next section reports on the process of conducting the study

### **3.5 Process of conducting the study.**

This section covers the research methods chosen for this study. It starts with an overview of the data collection method, outlining the rationale for the choice of primary data collection method, and moves on to explain the sampling procedure and subsequent data collection, highlighting where necessary the strengths and weaknesses of the chosen method. A discussion on the role of the pilot study is included, as it offers insight into the validity of the research protocol and the significant changes to the data analysis plan that resulted from the conduct of the small-scale study, based on the researcher's experiences during the process.

#### **3.5.1 Data collection.**

The key issue with the choice of method for the conduct of this research was to ensure that the data collection technique could explore, uncover, and analyse the drivers and thought processes of those involved in managing the dynamics within a cross-sector alliance. The research aim indicated a need to generate rich data that provided a 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973; Agar, 1996) of stakeholder's individual perceptions and insights, which were unlikely to be achieved through methods such as a questionnaire (Bartholomew, Henderson and Marcia, 2000). As a result, the method chosen was interviews,

and face-to-face semi-structured interviews in particular, as they afforded the researcher a 'certain degree of standardisation of interview questions and a certain degree of openness of response by the interviewer' (Wengraf, 2000). This method allowed the agenda to be set for the interview and also afforded an opportunity to probe more deeply if required and ask supplementary questions dependent on the responses of the interviewee (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

In addition, as the interviews were to focus on gathering information from the key decision makers within the selected NPO-CEs (Berry, 2002; Blumberg et al., 2005; Goldstein, 2002), it seemed logical that respondents should be chosen from within the work place demographic of 'elite' (McDowell, 1998; Harvey, 2010). Some discussion exists within the literature over the definition of what constitutes an 'elite'. McDowell (1998:2135) defined elite as 'highly skilled, professionally competent and class-specific' in her study on British investment banking, whilst Harvey (2010) suggests that job titles alone do not give a clear indication of the elite status of an individual within an organisation and that others may have a greater claim to the status of 'elite' by exerting greater influence through social networks, social capital and strategic positioning. For the purposes of this study, 'elites' are defined as those who occupy Director-level management positions within NPOs and CEs with direct responsibility in the CSR and fundraising disciplines and who have had experience of the cross-sector collaboration phenomenon. Reflecting the learning from the pilot study all interviews for the main study were conducted face-to-face, which had the advantage of allowing the researcher to observe the respondent (May, 2001) and include observations on the structural: 'the conditions, situations and context in which they experienced the phenomenon' (Creswell et al, 2007:254). However, there are a number of potential limitations in using semi-structured interviews, including the amount of time involved in the transcription, coding and analysis of the data and the potential cost in enabling face-to-face interviews (Salkind, 2010). Another issue is that of the potential for the emergence social desirability bias, which Johnson and Fendrich (2002) describe as the tendency of respondents to present a favourable image of themselves during the interview process. This can

manifest in a number of ways including self-deception (in which the participant believes the information they report) or the tendency to ‘fake-good’ to conform to socially acceptable values, avoid criticism, or gain social approval (King and Bruner, 2000:81). Mitigation strategies employed during this study included the assurance of anonymity and the opportunity for the respondent to review the transcript of the interview independently some time after the interview had been conducted. In addition, the nature of the study also went some way to assuring the respondent that there was no ‘right answer’; as the study sought to explore their personal experience of the phenomenon of cross-sector collaboration, and not the “party line” (Collins et al., 2005).

Rejected methods included case studies, focus groups and observations. The case study method (Yin, 1998) and focus groups were rejected for similar reasons, which included the geographical constraints inherent in arranging appropriate fora from the Europe-wide spread of extremely busy senior executives identified as potential participants. However the most compelling reason for discarding both the case study and focus group approach was the determination that it would not be appropriate to place the stakeholders in the difficult position of divulging important and sensitive information about their perceptions of an ongoing cross-sector collaboration (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Similarly, observation was discarded due to the potential to negatively affect the collaboration process itself, and the inherent exclusion of historical perceptions that could be explored within the semi-structured interview method (Creswell, 2007). In addition, as Denscomb (1998) suggests, observations are not about trying to identify what someone thinks or feels, but what they actually do and how they react to other people and would thus not be appropriate for this study.

Having decided on the data collection technique of semi-structured interviews, the next step was consideration of the research protocol for the interview process. As a phenomenological study it was not seen as appropriate to generate a series of detailed questions for the interview. Hatch and Cunliffe (2006) offer that the challenge in phenomenological investigation is to both assist the research participant in producing a coherent account of their experiences, and then to translate the individual’s own words into relevant

outputs through selection and analysis. In order to assist, but hopefully not constrain, the research participant and to provide some structure to the initial interview protocol, the main categories of temporal activity drawn from the literature review and the supporting objectives were utilised as a starting point for the interview design. These are laid out at Table 7 below and were represented within the interview discussion guide at Appendix 1:

<b>Research Objective</b>	<b>Key Elements</b>
<b>Value Creation</b>	Attributes of motivation to initiate and sustain collaboration, including benefits/risks of the partnership and how they are sustained/mitigated? [Supporting Objective 1]
<b>Partnership Process</b>	Attributes within partnership process, including partner selection and initial engagement. [Supporting Objective 2]
<b>Relationship Dynamics</b>	Attributes enabling and supporting the management of a (sustained) relationship [Supporting Objective 3]

**Table 7 Research Objectives.**

[Source:Author ]

The interview discussion guide represented the research objectives in diagrammatic format (Appendix 1), with the intent of using it at the start of the interview to introduce the research objectives and to attempt begin to build a rapport with the respondent by talking informally about the research overview.

Having decided on the research method and interview procedures it was then necessary to implement the sampling process in order to select research participants for the study, considering firstly the type organisation from which they should be drawn, followed by the type of individual that should be approached to achieve the research aim and objectives.



### 3.5.2 Sampling procedure.

A combination of purposive and snowball sampling was adopted for the selection of both organizations and individual participants for this study (Patton, 1990; Silverman, 2010). As discussed within the previous sections the selection of the type of organisation that was to be approached was conducted with the participation of the social enterprise that had initially outlined the requirement for a framework to approach a commercial entity for a potential collaboration. As previously mentioned recognising that structures and management positions of NPOs and CEs can vary greatly, not only across sectors but also within each sector, it was decided to concentrate on Director-level individuals, or 'elites' with CSR, sustainability or fundraising responsibilities within each selected organisation as the unit of analysis (Yin, 1994). These individuals were chosen on a non-random basis governed by the method of purposive sampling (Patton, 1990; Silverman, 2010). The use of purposive sampling led to the generation of a broad spectrum of participant profiles, in terms of experience, cultural backgrounds and areas of responsibility. The sampling method enabled the emergence of 3 broad business areas operating within the area of NPO-CE relationships: commercial entities; non-profit organisations; and governmental organisations engaged in policy making.

After the conduct of the initial pilot study and the first round of interviews another less well-defined (but nevertheless influential) group emerged: that of professional fundraisers marketing their skills within the non-profit sector. Organisations such as the Institute of Fundraisers work to develop and advance fundraising methodologies and have the ability to lobby policy-makers and influence practitioners within the fundraising sector. Often working with the professional fundraisers, another 'grey' group of respondents emerged from the purposive sampling process: niche consultants that offered insights and assistance to CEs engaging with NPOs, and *vice versa*. The consultancies approached through this study appeared mainly to offer advice on managing risk whilst dealing with advocacy-focused charities and lobbying groups, however some also offered expertise on the management of cross-

sector partnerships. Respondents from within these two ‘grey’ industry groups were approached on the basis that they might offer insights into the nature of NPO-CE relationships from a perspective that was one-step removed from those currently engaged in managing such relationships, thus offering a broader context and potentially adding a different perspective to the study.

### 3.5.3 Consideration of the respondents.

A number of respondents who were thought most likely to have had experienced the phenomenon of cross-sector collaborations, initially within the FCMG food sector, were selected from within the four participant groups outlined in Table 8. Those operating within the areas of consultancy and professional fundraising were approached on the basis of their organisations’ stated interests in the FMCG food sector. Personal contacts operating within the various disciplines and business areas outlined in the table were approached to provide initial introductions to the selected respondents.

Number	Group	Code
1	NPO	ND
2	CE	CD
3	Consultancy	CO
4	Fundraising Professional	FP

**Table 8 Participant Groups.**

[Source: Author]

Initial interviews were conducted with a global food manufacturer engaged in multiple relationships across the world with NPO and consultancy organisations. From this initial and privileged access, snowball sampling led to

the generation of contacts from within NPO and consultancy entities associated with their cross-sector programmes. At each interview the respondent was asked if there was anyone they might suggest that the study should approach and on every occasion a set of further contacts was generated. Through this method the additional groups of consultancies and professional fundraisers were introduced and explored. This willingness to engage beyond the interview and to offer personal introductions to help further the study was a common trait exhibited by the majority of the respondents. Thus further contacts were generated from these interviews and pursued in order to provide a broad spread of individuals with a deep experience of the phenomenon, as represented in the following table:

<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Current Sector</b>	<b>Position Within Organisation</b>	<b>Experience Within Field (yrs)</b>
ND1	Sustainability	Director	20
ND2	Child Protection	COO	18
ND3	Health	Director	14
CD1	Food	Vice President (Sustainability)	7
CD2	Food	Director (Sustainability)	12
CD3	Water Provision	CEO	15
CD4	Food	Director (Compliance)	14
CD5	Food	Director (Communications)	22
CO1	Professional Development	Partner	20
CO2	Management Consultancy	Owner	15
FP1	Animal Care	Director	15

FP2	Medical Support	Director	18
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### **Table 9 Respondents**

[Source: Author]

Profiles of the respondents may be found at Appendix 7. However it is worth noting at this stage that many participants had chosen to transition into the area of CSR delivery involving cross-sector collaborations within their own organisations and saw it as an area offering many significant and worthwhile challenges. It seems that those engaged in building or maintaining cross-sector relationships believe that what they were doing added value to their organisation and gave them a sense of purpose and satisfaction in their efforts. Whilst this attitude could reasonably be expected from those participants engaged in the not-for-profit sector it was revealing to see that a similar desire to seek a broader purpose to their work-life appeared evident amongst those respondents working within commercial entities. Arguably this could merely be a manifestation of a suggested recent societal shift in the developed world towards seeking greater fulfillment at work (Austin and Seitanidi,2012a; Macneil,1980) however it is worth noting that this desire for a 'broader purpose' was evident across a the range of ages and nationalities in the respondent group. This finding is discussed in greater depth in Chapter Four, which provides a description of the findings from the study within the three central themes of value creation, partnership processes and relationship dynamics.

Having outlined the chosen research method, interview process and, through application of the sampling procedure, identified potential respondents for the conduct of the study, the next step was the conduct of the fieldwork to collect data. The following section outlines this process and leads into the discussion of the data analysis plan, including the impact of the preliminary small-scale pilot study.

### **3.5.4 Data collection.**

Data collection for the study was managed in four phases:

1. Initial Contact: once the suitable respondents were identified initial contact was made via telephone. The ensuing conversation outlined the aims and objectives of the study, provided background on the research issue and raised the possibility of the respondent participating in the study.
2. Confirmatory e-mail: the respondents who were willing to participate were sent a confirmatory e-mail, proposing dates and venues for the interview and expressing my preference for a face-to-face meeting if at all possible. The e-mail also outlined in brief the ethical considerations of the research and introduced the concept of informed consent to the respondent. A short overview outlining the project's focus and aims and objectives was attached as background reading ahead of the interview (see example at Appendix 3).
3. Interview: a one hour interview with the participants then took place. All interviews were recorded, and subsequently transcribed. The majority of the interviews were conducted in the respondents' workplaces, with the exception of the larger NPOs, who chose to meet outside of their workplace, often in a neutral venue, such as a coffee shop or management space (e.g. the Institute of Directors in London) as offered by the interviewer.
4. Feedback: at the end of each interview feedback was sought from the participants and was recorded in a reflexive journal which was later considered as part of the structural description (Step 5) of the data analysis plan (Creswell, 2007).

In addition, once the transcripts of the interviews had been produced they were sent to the respondents for checking and approval. This provided an opportunity to ask for any further feedback allowing for a period of reflection on behalf of the respondent. This process of 'member checking' (Padgett, 1998) was conducted via e-mail once the interview had been transcribed and, on the whole, responses were generally supportive with many offering additional thoughts and themes that they felt the original interview had not covered.

These additional inputs were also incorporated within the data analysis plan at the writing of the structural stage, as with the immediate feedback as detailed above (Creswell, 2007). It is worthy of note that the majority sought additional assurances that their anonymity would be preserved, and one respondent from a CE asked for a particular discussion to be removed due to potential commercial sensitivities. Once the respondents had approved the transcripts they were returned, along with any further feedback on the process and the interview, and the study was able to move to the next stage: data analysis, which will be discussed in the next section after a consideration of the implications of the pilot study. .

### **3.5.5 Role of the Pilot Study.**

In order to maximise the benefits inherent in conducting a small-scale study ahead of the main study (Sampson, 2004), it was decided to attempt to analyse the findings of the study from two perspectives: the effectiveness of the research strategy and interview protocol, and the outcomes in terms of research findings. This section will cover a critical analysis of both areas, starting with the research protocol testing, followed by an assessment of the research findings.

#### **3.5.5.1 Assessments of methods.**

The results of the pilot study in terms of the research protocol: data collection through semi-structured interviews and subsequent data analysis its key variables were summarised as follows:

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
Research Protocol	Both respondents were enthusiastic about the process, and were fully engaged. Both agreed that more detail might be needed ahead of the interview, in order that the most suitable person within the organisation was approached. Sampling may need refinement at Individual level.
Interview	Face-to-face 'worked better' for both respondent and researcher.
Timings	Assumed lead in times and interview timings worked well; however analysis and write up timings were grossly inaccurate and need revision .
Generation of Information	Thematic approach, with limited set questions allowing the respondent to expand on key points and express himself or herself. Rich and thick data were generated, however there was some repetition across theme areas with the initial introductory exchanges. Only one potential new theme emerged from the 2 interviews. Introduction of bias a potential issue for researcher.
Analysis	With limited data from only 2 interviews no major revisions emerged from the initial template and coding structure. Likely that this will not be the case for broader, less familiar interviewees. Transcription attempted initially by researcher, but reverted to secretarial support due to time constraints. Issue emerged with technology support and suitability of NVIVO and/or TAMS.

**Table 10 Pilot Study - Research process assessment.**

[Source: Author]

During interviews the thematic boundaries allowed the respondent to focus on their experiences and what they felt was important, with little prompting from the researcher. The key issue arising from the process was that a face-to-face interview seemed to allow both respondent and researcher to engage more effectively, as was agreed by both at the feedback session at the end of the interviews. As a result during the main study face-to-face interviews only were conducted. Whilst the overall protocol seemed to meet the needs of the study at this stage, the area that garnered the most learning, in terms of process rigour and coherence with the phenomenological approach, was within the data preparation and analysis stages.

### **3.5.5.2 Pilot study: Data preparation and analysis.**

In order to understand the issues arising from the data analysis for the pilot study it is necessary to outline the procedure adopted. The interviews conducted were recorded, with the participant's consent. Flick (2009) offers that the use of recording devices ensures the documentation of data independent of perspectives: both of the researcher and of the interviewee and as such it seemed appropriate to apply this approach to ensure the most complete record possible. The first step on analysis of the data was the transcription of the interviews conducted. Whilst there is no adopted academic standard of transcription and little guidance on the process (Poland, 1995; Wellard and McKenna, 2001), as with all qualitative research it is suggested that it is vital where possible to strive for reliability (Silverman, 2010). In order to attempt to ensure this a second check of the transcript was conducted, both to ensure accuracy and to enable the anonymisation of the data and compliance with any confidentiality guarantee where required. Both respondents appreciated the opportunity to revisit their thoughts, and although there were few changes, some specific operational details were deleted at the request of one of the respondents.

The interview transcripts for the pilot study were then subjected to coding, initially attempted through the use of NVivo software (Welsh, 2002). As noted in the review of the research protocol on this particular occasion, for a variety of technical compatibility reasons encountered whilst travelling during the analysis stage, NVivo could not effectively be employed. After consulting with supervisors and taking advice from the wider group an alternative was found in the TAMS Analyser programme, which proved suitable for the purposes of the small-scale study. Although drawn from a limited sample, it was felt that some insight was gained from the findings, however throughout the process a sense of detachment from the data began to grow. Limitations in the process seemed to emerge, particularly in trying to capture and articulate a sense of the essence of the phenomena being observed. The data deconstruction method offered by the TAMS Analyser system was effective: key themes emerged; data manipulation - in terms of deconstruction, handling and the

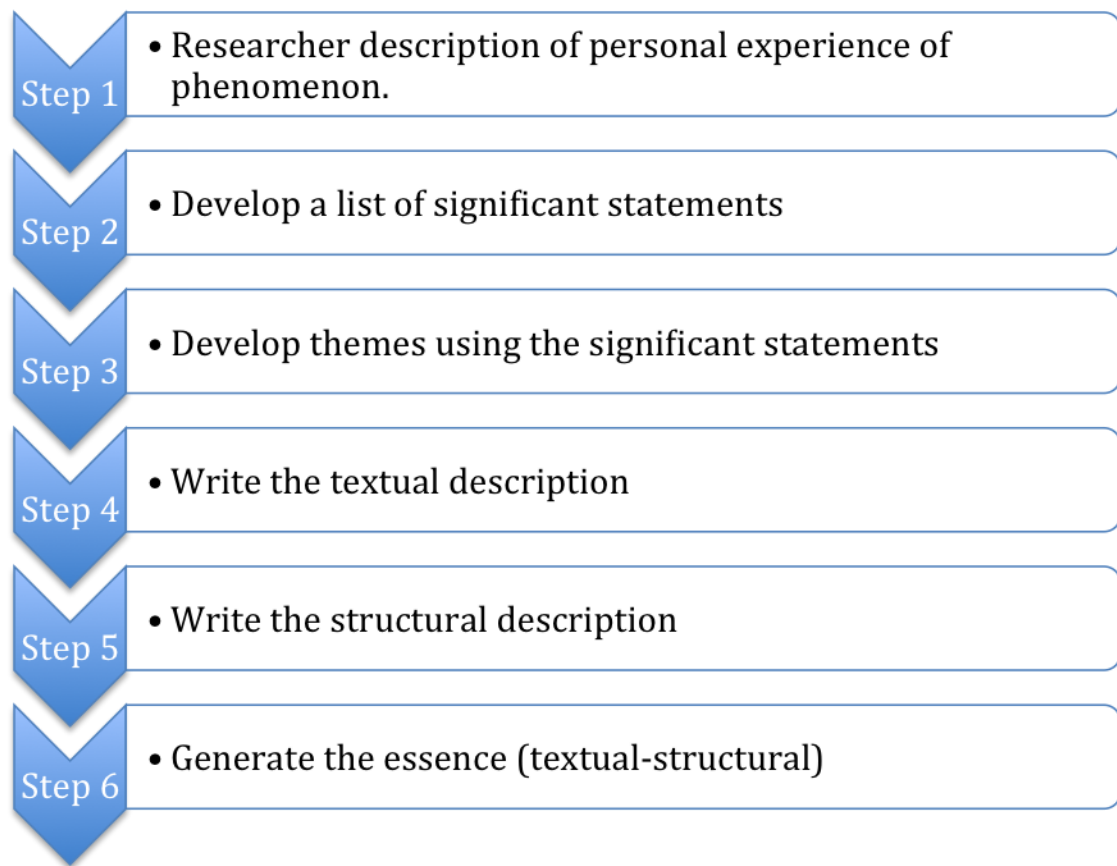


generation of further nodes - was effective. However, the use of the electronic analysis programme encouraged a personal sense of detachment, not only from the data, but from the ability to be able to be able to represent the essence of the findings.

Thus an alternative data analysis plan was sought and the six-step approach offered by Creswell (2007) was selected. The plan was built on the work of Moustakas (1994) and the data analysis procedures as outlined by van Kaam (1966) and Colaizzi (1978). The plan is adapted, in that it was originally offered as a vehicle for multiple-researcher analysis, however in this study there is a single researcher. Notwithstanding, the approach remained appropriate for this study in that it was deeply rooted in phenomenological methodology (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). The next section will outline how this more coherent process was used in the main study.

### **3.5.6 Main Study: Data Analysis.**

As the literature review had influenced the development of the three supporting objectives for the agenda for the interviews, it followed that this framework was maintained throughout the analysis process and the application of Creswell's (2007) data analysis plan, which suggests that the data analysis plan should consist of six steps, as outlined below in Figure Three:



**Figure 3 Six-step data analysis plan (Creswell, 2007).**

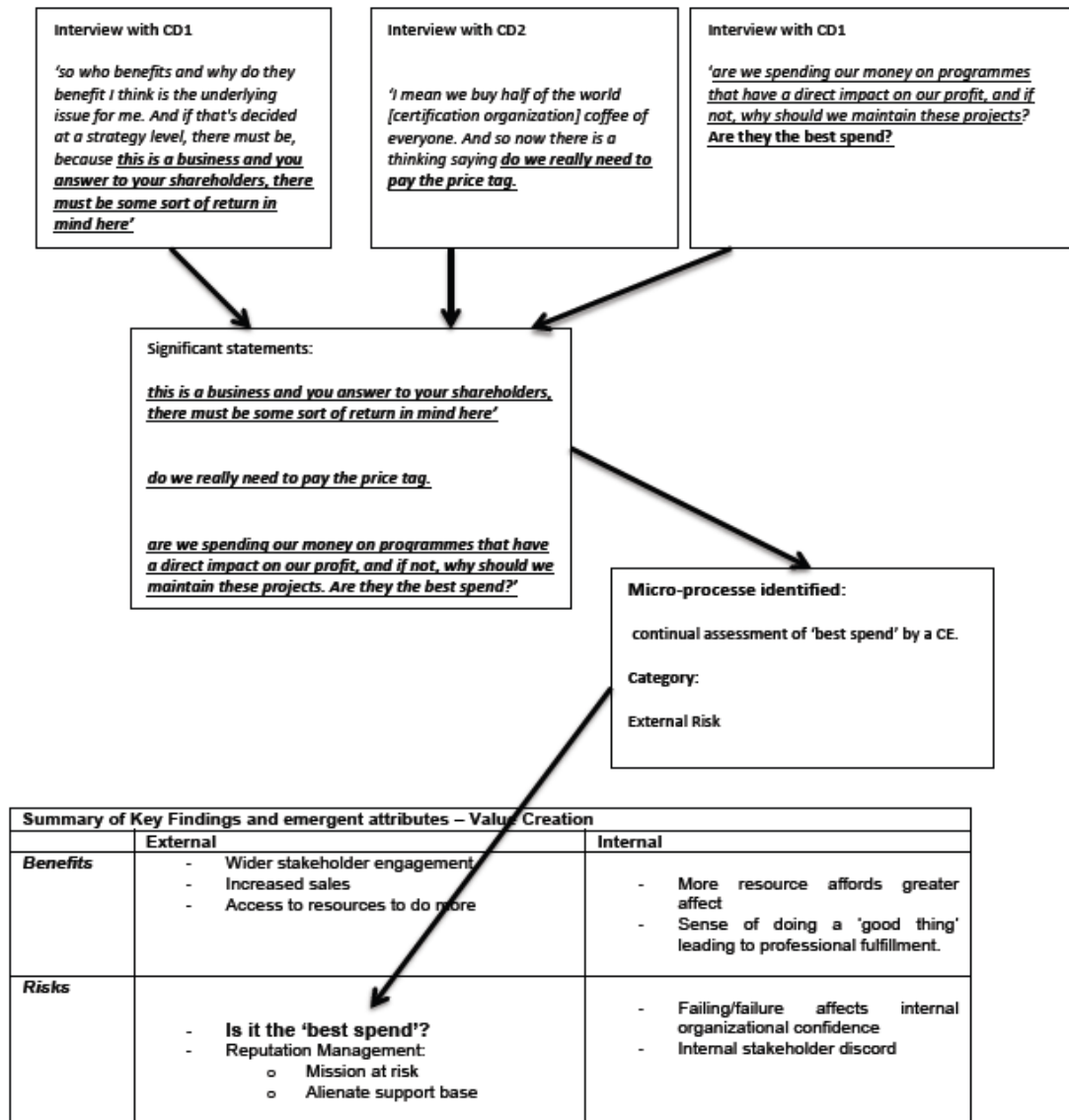
[Source: Creswell, 2007]

Step 1 of the process was the bracketing of personal experience. This is seen as a significant component of the phenomenological approach (Creswell, 2007) and was intended to allow me to explicitly state the assumptions and experiences in order to focus on the experiences of the respondents. This bracketing process is outlined in section 3.6.1. of this chapter and the initial bracketing statement may be found in Appendix 5. The bracketing process has been revisited throughout the conduct of the study in order to attempt to refresh and continually refocus the work on the participants' experiences. The ability to focus on the respondents' experiences was an essential element in the conduct of Step 2, which is the development of a list of significant statements. This process involved a number of sub-steps. The interview was first transcribed and then read through a number of times and then whilst listening to the interview recording simultaneously to gain a sense of context of the respondent's replies. Then the hard copy was read through with the intent

of identifying significant statements within the analysis categories. Significant statements were defined as statements that were relevant to the aims of the study and that could be interpreted as 'units of meaning' as outlined by Wertz (2005). He suggests that the analysis of individual descriptions of a phenomenon requires the identification and examination of distinct units of meaning that constitute the larger lived experience of the respondent (Wertz, 2005). Significant statements were identified through the study of both the transcripts of the interviews and then through the reading of the notes taken before, during and after the interview (including any feedback from the respondent from member checking) in order to attempt to analyse not only the content of the interviews, but also to attempt to reflect the understanding of the context within which they were presented. This enabled the inclusion of contextual information within the valid data analysis plan and was the significant change that was sought from the methodology attempted in the pilot study. Practically, this involved the addition of notes, where relevant, alongside the identified significant statement. Significant statements could consist of a word, a phrase or even a paragraph that constituted a discrete unit of meaning. This process also required the exclusion of statements that were not relevant to the study, and those were defined as statements that did not reflect any aspect of the respondents' impressions of the significant attributes required to underpin a successful NPO-CE relationship. A list of irrelevant statements was compiled and then compared with the selected significant statements for the study: if they continued to bear no relevance to the study aims they were removed from the data analysis process. Having identified and isolated relevant individual units of meaning in the form of significant statements a horizontalising process was conducted as suggested by Creswell (2007:159) in order to generate 'non-repetitive and non-overlapping statements'. To facilitate horizontalising the statements (and contextual comments where appropriate) were unitised through the process of identification and separation as text by themselves, as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994). The unitised significant statements were initially grouped within the three central *a priori* categories derived from the literature review.

The key issue for me was the process of identifying the significant statements from the respondents whilst maintaining trustworthiness. In order to assist with the assessment of significant statements, a further step was added to the analysis process, initially utilising a filter of groupings suggested by Austin and Seitanidi's (2012a; 2012b) discussions on the literature surrounding the exploration of collaborative value creation. Their literature summary groups the findings into four categories: internal and external benefits and risks. The findings of the study support these suggested groupings, as the majority of the significant statements that emerged from the analysis fell within the suggested grouping areas.

The attribute, or micro-process, was written down once they had been identified within the data and the relevant significant statements were grouped under each attribute heading. This is illustrated below in Figure Four, which outlines the emergence of the attribute of 'achieving a best spend' from the significant statements, and its classification as an external risk to the success of the cross-sector collaboration within the value creation category.



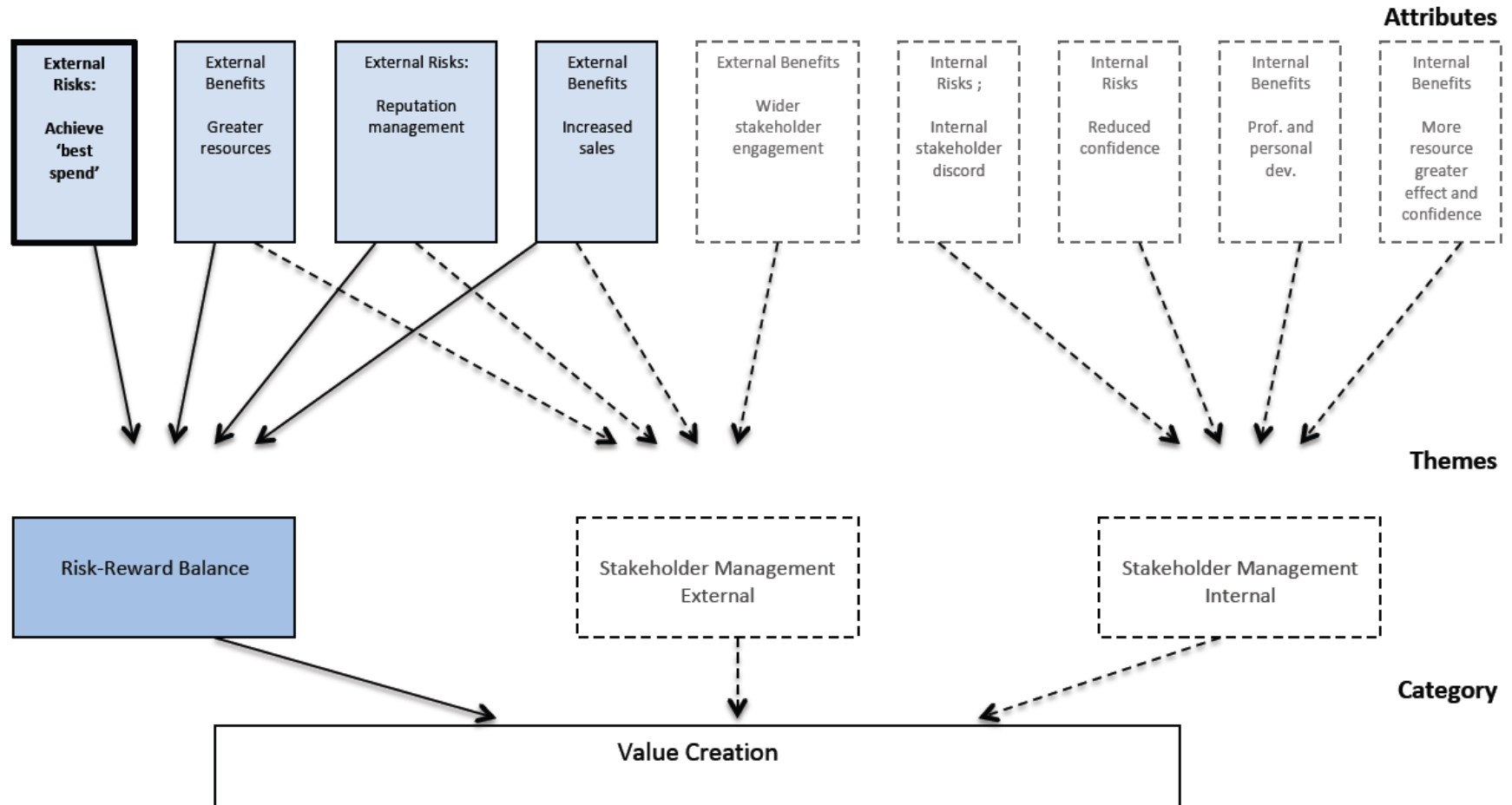
**Figure 4 Illustrative data analysis process utilising classification grid (Steps 2 to 3 – Creswell, 2007).**

[Source: Author, based on Creswell, 2007]

Once the attribute had been identified from the data and categorised within the risk/benefit framework for the category the next step was to develop themes that underpinned the relevant category (Step 3). This was achieved through the reading and re-reading of the significant statements and any coupled contextual information. The attributes identified, and thus the supporting significant statements, could be part of a number of themes within each

category. Multiple themes were identified by category and the process was deemed complete when all of the significant statements and contextual information drawn from the data had been accounted for by a theme and its underpinning attributes. This proved the most challenging element of the data analysis process, with constant referral to the guiding aim and supporting objectives to group the data, whilst employing reflexivity techniques and peer auditing to attempt to ensure I remained as far outside the research process as possible. Figure 3 demonstrates the process utilising the emergence of the theme 'Risk-Reward balance' from the clusters of significant statements and attributes that emerged from the Value Creation categorisation framework.

Figure 5 Data analysis process: development of attributes and themes from key findings for the value creation category.



[Source: Author, following Creswell, 2007]

These summary groups formed the basis of the attributes that emerged from within each category which were analysed further by the writing of a textual description (Step 4) intended to reflect what the participants experienced with the phenomenon. In this study the textual descriptions were organised within the categories framework: value creation; partnership processes; and relationship dynamics. This step was followed by the writing of a summary of the individual structural descriptions (Step 5) as recorded in the reflexive journal, which outlined how the respondents experienced the phenomenon, thus providing contextual information (Creswell, 2007). An example of a textual and structural description may be found at Appendix 7.

Finally, the data analysis plan required the writing of an essence description of the phenomenon (Step 6) . This took the form of a synthesis of the structural and textual descriptions within the categories and is an attempt to articulate the core of what and how the respondents experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). The ‘essence’ is described by Creswell (2007:159) as ‘a composite description of the phenomenon incorporating both the textural and structural descriptions .....typically a long paragraph that tells the reader “what” the participants experienced with the phenomenon and “how” they experienced it (i.e., the context)’. Transcript from the interviews is used within this description in order to elucidate what had been experienced by the respondents (Creswell, 2007). An example of the essence generation process described within Step 6 of the data analysis plan of this thesis is at Table Eleven:



**Table 11 Example of Data Analysis Step 6 (Essence).**

Category	Theme	Micro-process	Textural-Structural		Composite (essence)
Value Creation	Risk-Reward Balance	Achieve best spend	CE	Respondent CD1, a senior executive within the food industry, spoke of the concept of his company constantly searching for <i>'the best spend'</i> CD1. That is, the company asks itself on a regular basis <i>'are we spending our money on programmes that have a direct impact on our profit, and if not, why should we maintain these projects? the overall cost is more or less justified.'</i> CD1	It appears that the commercial entities need to be able to express the value created principally as a return on investment – a 'best spend' as well as maintaining their reputation, whilst NPOs needed to principally demonstrate to their stakeholders that the collaboration did not compromise their stated mission and thus adversely affect their membership support and reputation.
			NPO	ND2, currently running a charity concerned with child protection in conflict zones highlighted the importance of maintaining reputational credibility, and not only with their donor base: <i>'we have privileged access, earned over many hard years, and we are respected for our neutrality. Just a whiff of a different agenda, say getting access for companies seeking profit or political influence would kill us stone dead in some areas. Literally!'</i> Often the decision to engage, or remain engaged, seemed balanced against the potential negative impact of being involved with a commercial entity.	

[Source: Author]

A summary of the data analysis activity is reflected at Table Twelve below:

<b>Data Analysis Process</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<b>Data Collection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Semi-structured interviews based around lit derived categories.</li> </ul>
<b>Reduction and Elimination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transcription</li> <li>• Member checking (Padgett, 1998) (reflect/amend to comments)</li> <li>• Multiple read through of transcripts</li> <li>• Identify significant statements within three central themes (meaning units: Wertz, 2005)</li> </ul>
<b>Horizontalizing Data (generation of non-overlapping/non-repetitive significant statements)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extraction of significant statements: unitizing (Miles and Hubermann, 1994)</li> <li>• Significant statements grouped into framework (Strengths /weaknesses Internal/external)</li> <li>• Discard remainder (statements with no reflection of respondent's understanding and perception of NPO-CE collaboration)</li> <li>• Emergence of attribute/micro-process.</li> <li>• Clustering attributes within category to allow themes to emerge.</li> </ul>
<b>Textual Descriptions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report <i>what</i> the respondents experienced</li> </ul>
<b>Structural Descriptions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report <i>how</i> the respondents experienced the phenomenon. .</li> </ul>
<b>Textual – Structural Descriptions: Essence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Synthesis (composite)</li> <li>• Description of core attributes within theme</li> <li>• Generate 'essence of phenomenon'.</li> </ul>

**Table 12 Summary of data analysis activity.**

[Source: Author, following Creswell, 2007]

A copy of this table was given to the peer auditor to assist with the peer audit process, as part of the system to check the data analysis framework and its trustworthiness (Creswell, 2007). Comments from the peer auditor were included within the reflexive journal and influenced, where appropriate, the subsequent analysis processes. A discussion of the selected methodology, including trustworthiness, follows in the next section.

### **3.6 Discussion of the methodological approach.**

#### **3.6.1 Bracketing.**

A frequent criticism of the interpretivist approach is that 'objectivity' cannot be achieved (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). However, at the core of the interpretivist methodology and the adopted phenomenological approach is the intent to describe the experiences of the participants in depth and draws on experiences that both researchers and participants share, out of which data emerges (Ponterotto, 2005; Creswell, 2007). By adopting this approach the researcher is required to work both as a learner and as an interpreter for the respondent, becoming much more than just an impartial observer (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). As highlighted earlier in this chapter, it was discovered that during the pilot study that researcher subjectivity, reflected in the comments of the respondents, was a potential issue. A mitigation strategy was thus devised for the main study, seeking to recognise and clarify researcher subjectivity and experience regarding the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2007). Strategies considered ranged from a refinement of the research protocol to ensure research transparency and the use of tools such as a checklist for qualitative researchers (Hair et al., 2007) to a more formal exposition to clarify the researcher's subjectivity to the readers on the main study (Gummesson, 2000; Creswell, 2007), an approach that was adopted for this study. Inherent within the phenomenological approach is the understanding that efforts should be made to ensure that the readers and the researcher are aware of the researcher's values, beliefs and responses to the data, where possible, are recognised and recorded (Moustakas, 1994; Creswell, 2007). According to Creswell (2007: 202). 'In this clarification, comments on past experiences, biases, prejudices, and orientations that have likely shaped the interpretation and approach to the study' were considered. Starks and Trinidad (2007:1376) suggest that a researcher 'must be honest and vigilant about her own perspective, pre-existing thoughts and beliefs, and developing hypotheses . . . engage in the self-reflective process of "bracketing", whereby they recognise and set aside (but do not abandon) their a priori knowledge and assumptions, with the analytic goal of attending to the participants' accounts with an open

mind'. Gearing (2004: 1430) describes bracketing as a 'scientific process in which a researcher suspends or holds in abeyance his or her presuppositions, biases, assumptions, theories, or previous experiences to see and describe the phenomenon'. Trufford and Newman (2012:86) offer that as multiple techniques exist for the bracketing process the 'qualitative researcher need to consider what type of bracketing is an appropriate method for themselves and for the research area they wish to investigate furthermore, the methods of bracketing are not mutually exclusive and may complement one another'. The authors go on to outline three recognised bracketing methods from the literature: writing memos through the data collection and analysis phase as a means of reflecting upon the researcher's engagement with the data (Cutcliffe, 2003); engaging in interviews with an outside source to uncover and bring into awareness the researcher's preconceptions and biases (Rolls and Relf, 2006); and the use of a reflexive journal in which preconceptions are then identified throughout the research process (Ahern, 1999). Trufford and Newman (2012: 87) go on to suggest a series of potential aspects to explore during the reflexive writing process, including: 'the researchers' reasons for undertaking the research; assumptions regarding gender, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status; the researcher's place in the power hierarchy of the research; the researcher's personal value system (Hanson, 1994); potential role conflicts with research participants; feelings such as blame or disengagement that may indicate presuppositions (Paterson and Groening, 1996); and whether the researcher chooses to write in the first or third person (Porter, 1993)'.

It was this process that had been adopted for this study, selected on the basis that although an interest in the subject area had been established, the phenomenon of cross-sector collaboration in the FMCG food sector was a new research topic to me and as such 'with no personal history of the topic, an appropriate primary approach to bracketing may be more akin to Ahern's (1999) method of starting a reflexive journal prior to undertaking the research. Maintaining a reflexive journal may raise the researcher's awareness of the topic in daily life and bring it to a level of consciousness prior to undertaking the research endeavour' (Trufford and Newman, 2012:87). A copy of the

opening statement of the reflexive journal may be found at Appendix 5. The acknowledgement of the potential for researcher subjectivity also plays a part in the mitigation of the methodological limitations of this study associated with trustworthiness reliability, which are discussed in the following section.

### **3.6.2 Trustworthiness.**

Although Creswell (2007) highlights that there are no set definitions or standards in place to achieve trustworthiness within the qualitative study his findings on the subject support Guba and Lincoln (1981) in their assertion that the use of multiple strategies may help develop and demonstrate trustworthiness for a qualitative study. A framework for ensuring trustworthiness within an interpretive study is offered by Yardley (2000) who suggests that researchers include the implications of the study's context, credibility and justification, transparency and coherence of outputs. Within this framework credibility and justification depend on the identification of a clear gap in existing knowledge and rigour and transparency of research methods. Patton (1990) and Sapsford and Jupp (1996) support this view and conclude that multiple strategies, taken together and under adequate supervisory control, could be sufficient to protect against a lack of subjectivity, demonstrate trustworthiness and provide an adequate accuracy. The strategies used for this study included:

- Explicit clarification of researcher's position (bracketing) (Creswell, 2007);
- Submission of reports to participants and incorporation of any critique (member checking) (Padgett, 1998).
- Adoption of chain of evidence techniques to trace the progress of data collection and analysis.

In terms of the application of these strategies to demonstrate trustworthiness within this phenomenological research project the following activities were conducted in this study:

- Use of reflexive journal throughout and bracketing statements at the start of the research process to clarify researcher's position
- The submission of reports to participants, or 'member checking' (Padgett, 1998) took place and the reflections from the respondents were incorporated within the data analysis process from the very start (Creswell, 2007).
- The adoption of chain of evidence techniques has been utilised through the maintenance of a log of research developments that, in keeping with the phenomenological approach, included the use of a reflexive diary (Creswell, 2007).
- Use of supervisory oversight: with the separate analysis of two individual transcripts and a comparison of significant statements.

In addition the data analysis plan was subjected to a peer review and debriefing process (Creswell, 2007), in which an audit of the data analysis approach was conducted, utilising the framework outlined at Table Twelve. As offered by Churchill, et al. (1998) the aim of the peer audit was not the checking of results but the determination of the coherence of the approach. Feedback was provided and incorporated, not least in the generation of the data analysis activity, as represented in Table Ten. Finally, as suggested by Yardley's (2000) framework for enabling trustworthiness the use of multiple data collection methods was considered. Within this study it has been limited to the use of contextual inputs as represented in the structural observations made, where relevant, within the findings as considered in Chapter Four. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the insistence on face to face interviews, and the subsequent revision of the original data analysis protocol to the six-step analysis plan, have enabled the researcher to have contextual input to the analysis process at the stage of textual-structural considerations (Creswell, 2007).

### **3.7 Summary.**

This chapter outlined the strategy adopted for the conduct of the research in terms of both the philosophical perspective adopted and the associated ethical

issues, providing the rationale for the selection of the research strategy. The first section considered the research methodology and its implications, followed by a discussion of the ethical issues associated with the study. Observations on the role of the pilot study, and the significant impact on the data analysis process finally selected for the main study were considered next, after which the chapter concludes with the outlining of the main study data analysis plan and a discussion on bracketing and trustworthiness. The next chapter discusses the research findings ahead of the final chapter, which discusses the findings in relation to the pre-existing literature, in order to draw out the implications of the study findings.

## **Chapter 4. Description of Findings**

This chapter reports the findings from the respondent interviews conducted in support of the research aim of exploring the attributes that underpin a sustained NPO-CE collaboration from the perspective of stakeholders and their experiences of the phenomenon. The chapter begins with the textual-structural descriptions of the study findings, as outlined within step 5 of the Six-step data analysis plan (Creswell, 2007), which are presented using the three central objectives for the exploration of a cross-sector relationships that emerged from the literature review and developed throughout the data collection and analysis process: value creation; partner selection; and relationship dynamics. Quotations from the respondents are shown in order to highlight significant areas within the emergent themes from the analysis process. Where applicable, structural observations that have been included in order to add contextual information to the experiences related by the respondent. The contextual information also includes observations and reflections from the researcher's reflexive journal and research diary. The textual-structural descriptions are followed by the outlining of the essence of the phenomenon derived from the study process. The essence reflects the composite description of the experiences of the individuals studied, and their common experiences of the phenomenon (Creswell et al., 2007:252). Chapter Five compares the study findings with the pre-existing literature, in order to consider the implications of the research and its contribution to knowledge and practice,

### **4.1 Textual - Structural Description of the Findings**

Textual-structural descriptions of the key findings are outlined in the following sections, presented by research category, starting with value creation, followed by partnership processes and relationship dynamics.



### 4.1.1 Value Creation

The exploration of the perceptions of those individuals who had experience of operating within an NPO-CE partnership framework was guided during discussions around the first theme of value creation by the following supporting objective:

- To explore stakeholders' understanding of the nature of value creation from NPO-CE collaborations and its contributing attributes.

Most respondents described how and why they understood that the concept of value creation was the most important part of the NPO-CE relationship and the underlying sense that emerged was the concept that: *'...if nobody benefits then why do it?'* CE4. The concept of value creation was familiar to all of the respondents, in that the term was recognised: however the perceptions of what value creation actually meant to each partner differed, typically along sectoral lines. As ND1, the Director of a sustainability-focused foundation related *'we engaged on the ground with [the CE] because we desperately needed funding to support our volunteer programmes....but it was clear that the relationship was a contract of sorts...we got the funding to keep [our programmes] going and they got access through us and our contacts to implement their community-based programmes with the growers'*. This pattern of an agreed and identifiable return for resources by a CE from a NPO within a sustained collaboration emerged as a significant theme throughout the interview process.

The findings suggest that if a relationship was to be maintained and to go beyond a philanthropic model, with its associated vulnerability to market and fiscal pressure, then both sides of the relationship should be able to gain from the collaboration, and that value is being created by the partnership. The nature of the value to be created was described in different ways: from the perspective of those individuals within the commercial entities (CE) the sense emerged that notwithstanding what other form of benefits, tangible or non-tangible, might accrue from the relationship, the over-riding factor was the need to be able to define, and thus declare, a return on the company's investment:

*'So who benefits and why do they benefit I think is the underlying issue for me. And if that's decided at a strategy level, there must be, because this is a business and you answer to your shareholders, there must be some sort of return in mind here'. CD1*

Invariably from the commercial entity representatives the initial response when asked about what benefits might come from a NPO-CE relationship was to speak of the reputational benefits to the organisation. *'I think the return would be...I mean clearly that's where it's the reputation, the corporate reputational piece.'* CO2 .

CD2 discussed why the company had engaged with a major certification organisation and highlighted how the positive impact on the company's credibility in the marketplace was an important factor at the time in the decision to engage:

*'they said, 'look, we have all the credibility and our charter and code has buy-in from everyone, we want to apply in agricultural commodities,' they had the credibility I think on the forestry side of things, and they said, 'we are translating that into the agricultural side of things, and so we'll give you the credibility if you adopt our standards, we think it will really work.'* CD2

The respondents saw that a viable partnership had the potential to increase the company's credibility and image within their own sector and the wider customer base, which could be linked to increased stakeholder engagement and public support.

An increase in stakeholder engagement, both internally and externally, emerged as a significant benefit of a sustained NPO-CE relationship. Many spoke passionately about how their own lives, both professionally and personally, had been enriched by the experience of working within a cross-sector framework. CD5, a communications director with a global food brand, was enthusiastic about her time working on a cross-sector collaboration in West Africa *'...[it]...was a career highlight for me, really challenging and really moving at times...to be able to see the difference that you can make working with others – many who don't think like you...and sometimes view you as the*

*'enemy'... and yet somehow want the same thing – it was exciting stuff'. ND1, who had worked as a programme director on the ground with an international charity suggested that working with a CE ' ... was not all plain sailing....it could be tricky...we just wanted the funding and to be left alone to do what we wanted to do...but working with [CE] reps [representatives] made us think about the 'how' of what we were doing differently....it was a good learning experience for me'. CD3 explained that he had worked in different companies within the same sector and had moved perhaps more than others because he had always felt unfulfilled until his present role: 'I don't want to sound all 'holier than thou' but I really feel that [CE] is doing something good here and that makes me want to come in to work' CD3.*

Interestingly, this sense of seeking a purpose that is greater than just making money was a recurring theme within the respondents interviewed as part of this study. Arguably this is an understandable, and expected, emotion amongst those who had opted to work in the non-profit environment but it was also strongly prevalent within those interviewed within the commercial entities. This sense of increased stakeholder engagement – a 'feel good' factor – within the work place could be offered as a significant benefit of a NPO-CE relationship, albeit one that may be more difficult to quantify in terms of financial return to the organisation. CO1, a life-coach currently working within a learning and development consultancy to a CE, highlighted the increasing importance to CEs of being perceived to be a 'great place to work': *'..this generation of employees seem to need more than just a job that pays the bills...the great companies strive to meet their needs as people and citizens of a global society....the fact that [CE] does great work in sustainability and that the employees can get involved, is important to their sense of social contract [with the CE]'.CO1.*

However, such sustainability programmes come at a price and as CD1 stated *'..We have to justify what we are spending...is it good for [CE]?...is it good for the board.. and the shareholders? ' .* The need for both NPOs and CEs to justify any proposed or sustained collaboration in financial terms was a persistent thread throughout the exploration of the value creation phenomena. The study revealed that for most reputational benefits and increased

stakeholder engagement alone were not enough to build a sustained relationship: if an attributable increase in sales or broadening of the customer base did not result from the relationship then its existence rapidly became susceptible to scrutiny and challenge. Respondent CD1, a senior executive within the food industry, spoke of how his company constantly searching for *'the best spend'* CD1. That is, the company asks itself on a regular basis *'are we spending our money on programmes that have a direct impact on our profit, and if not, why should we maintain these projects?'* CD1 implied that a significant part of his role was 'reporting up' on what the cost-benefit analysis was for any NPO collaboration that was proposed or was currently operating. If it could be demonstrated to have value in terms that were understood, the collaboration would be sustained: *'.....really [the collaboration] was the enabler because that became the true element of the differentiation for the brand. So that still is the best appeal to our CFO; the idea that it could work that way. In most cases, again, knowing it's pretty expensive too, it's brand equity which includes the reputation piece. So you feel that the overall cost is more or less justified.'* CD1

Within the NPO sector a similar view on the need to assess the value created by a NPO-CE relationship emerged from the interviews conducted within the study. Both NPO executives and professional fundraisers highlighted that a return was required that was demonstrable to the NPO's stakeholders, however reputational impact seemed of greater concern to the NPOs. ND2, currently running a charity concerned with child protection in conflict zones highlighted the importance of maintaining reputational credibility, and not only with their donor base: *'we have privileged access, earned over many hard years, and we are respected for our neutrality. Just a whiff of a different agenda, say getting access for companies seeking profit or political influence would kill us stone dead in some areas. Literally!'* Often the decision to engage, or remain engaged, seemed balanced against the potential negative impact of being involved with a commercial entity. ND1 highlighted how an NPO he had worked with in the past had to withdraw from a collaboration, despite the two organisations operating within the same sector:

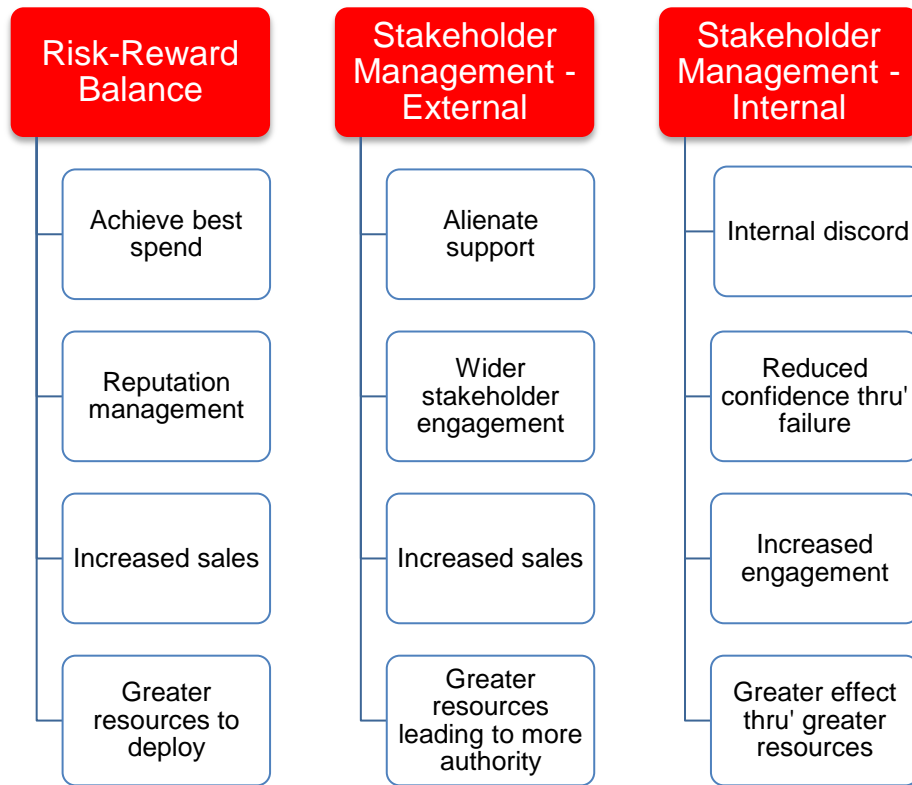
*'...[attempted partnership]..totally failed at that time..... at that time the big corporate [global food brand] together with [NPO], didn't work out. [NPO] were appealing to the more activist type of consumers that wouldn't buy [global food brand] anyway'. ND1.*

This need to be loyal to their stakeholders that have subscribed to the NPO's mission could be seen as the NPO equivalent of the CE's 'best spend' directive – is the collaboration worth the resource expenditure, in money, effort and time, to achieve value without risking a negative impact on reputation and compromise of the NPO's mission. CO2, the owner of a management consultancy that helps NPOs and CEs form alliances suggested that the potential reputational impact of a failed collaboration could be worse for NPOs: *'a lot of these charities only have their core supporters to keep them going...if they get a partner that affects their 'brand' ..or 'image' they will quickly lose donors who no longer believe they are doing the thing that they said they would...that they signed up to support '*. The significant risk for the NPO was any negative impact on the NPO's traditional constituency – their most significant stakeholder - if the collaboration was not seen as coherent to the NPO's core mission. As FP1 offered: *'...doesn't matter how much they gave us, we couldn't accept it as it would cause outrage from all of our subscribers and we would lose most of our core supporters' .* CO2 also introduced the notion of the requirement to revisit the potential reputational affect as the relationship progressed *' we've found that things move quickly in business, mergers and acquisitions, re-structuring and rationalisations often mean that companies can change owners and a charity can suddenly find itself aligned with someone they would never consider being with...it's risky'*. The concept of an evolving relationship and the need for both sides to be aware of each other's organisational change and development is discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

In terms of organisational change and its impact of value creation it became clear that from the perspective of the individual and their experience of the phenomena that there was a real risk of CEs being prepared to break long-standing arrangements with relatively little notice if the joint programme was deemed to be no longer viable. An example of how quickly a company could

switch from a programme, based on the question ‘*are we achieving the best spend?*’” emerged from CD2’s experience of his company’s disassociation from a major certification programme. Undertaken initially as a brand enhancement measure, certification initially proved a success for the company, in terms of return on investment: ‘*With certification the product they offer clearly translates into product communication, that’s the big thing. So the tool they offer translates into a credible product claim. So whether you do it for defensive reasons or you do it for aggressive reasons, it needs to translate to return on investment*’. CD2.

CD2 outlined how as the success of the certification programme grew and the NPO widened its partnership base, the subscription costs to the members increased significantly and a reassessment was called for: ‘*I mean we buy half of the world [certification organisation] coffee of everyone. And so now there is a thinking saying do we really need to pay the price tag*. CD2. An internal assessment was made on the cost benefits of continued engagement ‘*we looked at it...marketing reported that the initial impact of certification was no longer there...in terms of customer engagement...and we needed to do something in a different way*’ CD2. Based on this assessment the company took the decision, within a single financial year, to step out of the programme as it was felt that the cost was no longer justifiable to the shareholders, in terms of a demonstrable return on investment, and as a result the NPO lost a major corporate partner within a relatively short space of time. A summary of the emergent themes from the research within the category of value creation, which formed the first step in the creation of a conceptual model to represent the findings of the study, is at Figure Six. The figure shows the themes across the top with the underpinning attributes, or micro-processes, which emerged from the data listed underneath each theme heading:



**Figure 6 Value Creation: Summary of emergent themes and underpinning key findings.**

[Source: Author]

#### 4.1.2 Partnership Process

The following section outlines the findings relating to the key attributes, or micro-processes, identified in support of the study's second research objective, which is:

- To identify stakeholders' perceptions of the key attributes of a partnership process for a NPO-CE relationship.

The study revealed that the principal motivation for establishing a NPO-CE collaboration appeared to be linked interests. If the NPO and the CE were operating in similar fields, then undoubtedly they would be aware of each other and their respective activities and this was often the initial motivation for partnership selection, as CD4, a Director of compliance and security at a global food brand CE outlined: '*[CE] couldn't work with just anyone, there is always a risk in choosing the right partner to deliver our mission, but the first steps, especially around [raw material suppliers] were driven by our guys on the ground saying...[NPO] are here...doing some good stuff with our growers...can we talk to them?*'. ND1, a Director of a sustainability charity, highlighted the existence of common goals and familiarity on the ground in bringing potential partners together: '*we were at the same development meetings all the time and we would chat about what we were trying to do.....a lot [objectives] looked the same but we were coming at it from different angle, so we didn't connect the dots at the start*'. CD3, who runs a clean water technology enterprise, spoke passionately about his interests and matching other charities aims '*the big charities [NPO] had the manpower but not always the capability to get it done....some of the villages in [region in Northern Kenya] were in a terrible state...women walking miles, at risk, to get dirty water in old diesel drums... getting attacked or raped, horrible stuff, [it] got us all together at that time.....they were looking for solutions and we had the tech that could make this thing work so it seemed like a great fit, but we had to find a way to get together and make it work*'. The identification of a co-located presence often brought about the initial



first-step in partner selection, but also the realisation that strategic goals were in alignment brought about the motivation to collaborate, particularly in terms of community-based projects, which were described by CD5, a Director of Corporate Communications, as *'complex beasts, with multi-stakeholder issues and challenges..but became our focus from 2010 onwards in West Africa'*. CD2 spoke of the identification of a *'complementary strategy'* as the driver for partnership: *'So the common ground was this concept of community and... So it was a complementary strategy that I suppose [CE] looked at it and said actually, what we need to do is we need the workforce to stay there, we need to do more than just support the farmer, perhaps we need to do more community based work, and that complemented the work that these guys were doing that you knew about. And so that was the reason for the interactions.'*

Often the initial approach seemed to be taken by the CE, which would be looking for opportunities for growth, ways to secure future supply of raw materials, or simply intelligence on the ground on potential future risks to infrastructure or people. CD1 spoke of such an opportunity when his organisation became aware of the activities of an NGO operating on the ground in Africa on a community support programme, and highlighted some of the attributes that identified the NPO as a future partner in his eyes:

*'.....[we decided]... let's start working with them. Because it seems it's a better fit for what we want to do, they seem to be more pragmatic, they seem to offer a tool which can literally help us scale [up] and appeal to a broader market'* CD1.

It is believed that CD1's statement is significant in terms of a commercial entities view of a potential NPO partner. He mentions three key attributes that were important to him and his organisation in identifying a suitable partner:

- the CE might be able to work across the sectoral divide as the NPO team were viewed as 'pragmatic';

- the NPO offered a capability that would help the CE create value or 'scale up'; and, finally,
- The NPO were seen to be a better 'fit' for a partnership than others they had met. This single significant statement encapsulated the three most recurrent attributes to underpin the partnership selection process from within this study.

The perspective from the NPO sector mirrored the prevalence of these attributes in the partner selection process. The respondents offered that the key issues to be considered when selecting and engaging with a potential partner were: do we have mutually inclusive, or supportive, goals? ; Could we see ourselves working with them as people?; is there a risk to our NPO's reputation if we are seen to be in association with them? . ND3, who had worked with a CE on the ground in Africa, offered:

'it seemed like a perfect storm, we wanted what they wanted.....we just wanted it for different reasons.....[but] it worked because we had the manpower[and] connections and they had the money .....

ND3.

The point made by NP3 that the NPO had resources that the CE did not is believed to be worth highlighting, in that it straddles both the value creation and partnership selection themes and offers an insight into one of the key attributes that underpin the partnership selection process. As discussed in the previous section on value creation the prevalent viewpoint offered during the conduct of the research study was that NPOs who embarked on the partnership process identified a need for the resources of a CE partner in order to achieve their mission: *'It was clear in the [country] that once we had proved we could work with [CE] that they were willing to use their resources to deliver...and they are a big name....if we could access that... then we could really make a difference and build on our existing projects'* ND1 Indeed, this viewpoint is part of the motivation for the conduct of this study. However, as ND3 highlights *'it worked because we had the manpower [and] connections and they had the money .....*', which reinforces the concept of a partnership or collaboration that is focused on value creation for both

partners : the NPOs provided a wide selection of resources that the CE could not access without considerable organic growth and subsequent costs. As CD3 stated: *'Very often we don't have people at the origin, so that's what they supply.'*

Examples of what resources the NPO could offer that emerged from the study ranged from the aforementioned *'people at the origin'* CD3, to the provision of region specific intelligence on local conditions: *'which they do good work I would say, especially if you're stepping into it quite new and you want to know who you're talking to, it's useful stuff'* CD1; to access to established local networks: *'it worked because we had the..... connections'* ND3. The observation that a partnership has the potential to provide mutual benefits in part reinforces the suggestion that a key attribute for partnership processes, and partner selection in particular, is the identification of linked interests. However for both parties to be committed to undertaking a collaboration then it would seem that both the NPO and the CE should be able to believe that the partner would support each other's efforts, and not to the detriment of the other party's independent goals. It is suggested that such an approach required a degree of compromise on both sides: *'It's probably not the way we would've done it ourselves if we were on our own, it's probably not the way the NGOs would do it themselves if they were on their own, but there's a bit of compromise there'*. CD2

As CD2 suggest, compromise was seen as an essential enabler to the achievement of success and that it was underpinned by mutual trust introduces another key attribute underpinning partner selection: the presence of trust, or perhaps more specifically, the building and maintaining of trust, as CD2 goes on to discuss: *'And that [compromise] comes with trust and trusting those people. I think that's been a real driver if you like of the relationships with the [NGO] for example, is getting that trust. Yeah, we don't get on all the time, that's fine. But we have that trust where we can say something and it's not taken the wrong way, hopefully anyway'*. Those who discussed the attribute of trust from the perspective of their own individual experience acknowledged that the establishment of trust could not

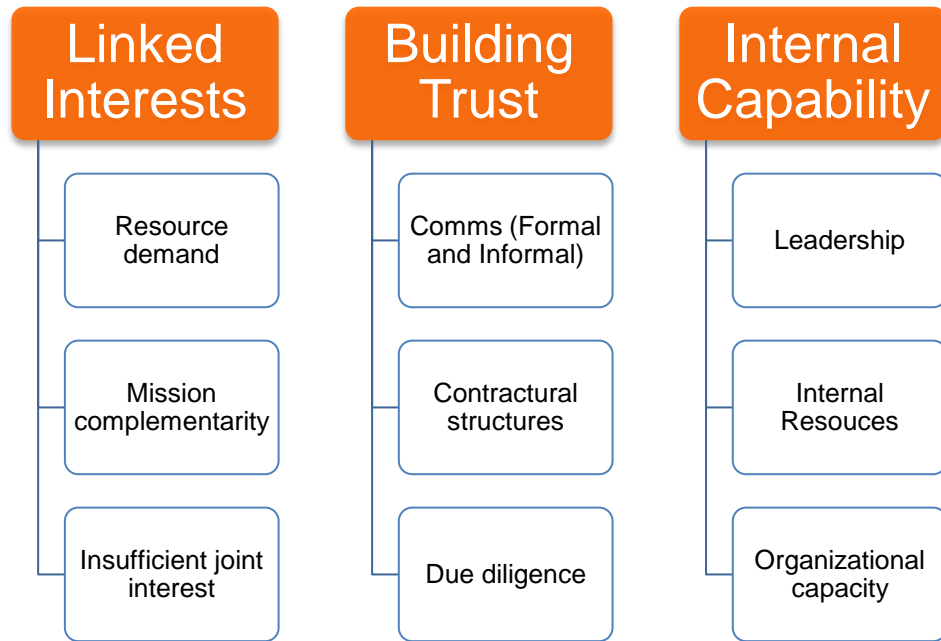
instantaneous or, indeed, guaranteed, but still formed an essential component of a sustained NPO-CE relationship. CD2 spoke of the challenges inherent in building trust in the early days of partnership working in West Africa: *'I remember meetings where we sat across the table from each other, not saying anything, looking for ways to move forward and get things done...its like we were 'big business'...come to exploit everyone...it took a long time...and a lot of beers..to get us talking openly about what we wanted...it's a bit more structured now but back then we were just relying on personalities to make it work'*. The term 'trust' was also used frequently by respondents during the exploration of Relationship Dynamics - which is discussed as the third and final category later in this Chapter - but emerged as a core aspirational attribute during the partner selection process. A number of the respondents offered different conditions for the establishment and building of trust between potential partners. From the CE perspective, once initial contact had been established, conditions were set at first through the use of established commercial practices: *'I suppose the form of trust then in this sort of relationship; it falls back on a much more commercial definition of trust as it were, in that there is a contractual obligation in place. So there are PIs and you would monitor in a normal way'*. CD3. Often the CE respondents would talk in terms of the relationship in contractual and transactional terms: *'In the case of projects where an NGO was an implementer, they're normally ..... selling the tools. I mean this is almost a commercial...even contractually this becomes a contract. I mean with [NGO] it's a contract. So [NGO] would get premiums and fees and at least in the past they were getting origin development, basically money every year to develop strategic supply in certain places.'*CD4. This standard approach to contractual commercial engagement appeared reassuring to the CEs involved: the contract, or Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), process took a significant element of risk out of the purview of the partnership team through the application of standard commercial due diligence and compliance procedures as CD4, a Director of Compliance and Security, highlighted: *'partnerships, whoever they were with, need contracts and the contractual process has to be applied...its how we deal with all of our*

*suppliers.....services ...consultants and the like..[it] is a de-risking measure for [CE] that we all understand'. However for the NPOs this study revealed that such arrangements came with a significant and at times unfamiliar burden; often the NPO was not equipped to deal with the demands of a contractual process in an efficient manner or to initiate a due diligence process of their own. '....[we] didn't understand just how complicated the arrangement would be for us...in the end we had to ask for outside help just to deal with [the CE]' ND3. This issue of the burden of partnership was also highlighted by CO2, the Director of a management consultancy focused on providing partnership advice to NPOs: 'sometimes the company has to step in and provide help with the contractual process, it can be difficult for the smaller charities and NGOs, who just want to get on the ground and deliver and hate to see funding being used to support internal processes....although that has changed over the recent years with the larger, global charities ..[who]... often have a more commercial capability....particularly in terms of fundraising effort...but not all can do that'.*

Both NPO and CE respondents cited examples of their experiences of attempting to build trust during the partnering process. As outlined already, a common element in the observations was the use of standard contract from the CEs, which proved challenging for smaller NPOs who were unable to access the expertise required to manage the contract process; due diligence procedures; and the use of initial team working meetings in which linked interests were explored and potential joint working frameworks were designed and in a collegiate environment. CO1 outlines that it was not only the CEs that had due diligence procedures, but also some of the larger NPOs: *'I mean sometimes some of these NGOs they have a pretty good reputation and they test the companies they work with, especially when it's big corporation. There's a lot of going through the plans and the programmes which basically leads to a decision of whether to fund or not, and that's how the trust and due diligence is done'* CO1. A powerful example of the benefit of early interaction to establish the viability of a collaboration to

achieve linked interest as part of the partnership selection process involved the corporation that CD2 worked for, where a number of NPOs were screened to gauge early interest and then invited to provide their input to the formation of a sustainability coalition: *'basically there was a first screening which may have been done by [CE] about the big players in a certain space, that's what we cared about. And then I remember there was a day when these NGOs.....they all came in with their plans and then there was a concerted decision within a group of people led by our community involvement department to say these seem to be the people we'll work with, and then you make it out of a plan'*. CD2.

Outside of the need to build trust another attribute was revealed in terms of the required leadership and drive to achieve an effective partnership: the identification and empowerment of a 'champion' to enable the formation of a NPO-CE collaboration: *'you needed the right people to make this thing [collaboration] work....our team leader was great ..he had credibility with [the NPO] as he had been in country before and they knew him...and he was mates with their Director.....and he was senior.. and experienced enough to be able to take all these great ideas back to the [regional leadership team] and sell them the story.'* CO2 also reinforced the importance of strong individual leadership in enabling the partnership process: *'It's what we always tell our clients: recruit or select the right person to lead the partnership, especially for the early stages, or you will be planning to fail'*. In part the observation of the need for this attribute is inferred, as it became evident during the study that most of the elite-level respondents who had experience of the partnership process phenomenon were in fact the ones who led their teams and dealt with these challenges, hence their insight, although none of them spoke of themselves in such terms. The emergent themes from the research for the category of partnership process, which form the second component of the conceptual model, are summarised at Figure Seven:



**Figure 7 Partnership processes: Summary of emergent themes and underpinning key findings.**

[Source:Author]

### 4.1.3 Relationship Dynamics

The third category arising from the literature review in support of the aim of the study is that of relationship dynamics, which reflects the exploration of the NPO-CE collaborations experienced by the respondents and was expressed as the third supporting objective:

- To identify the attributes underpinning the dynamics of a sustained NPO-CE relationship from the perspective of the stakeholder.

During the interviews with the respondents this third category was explained as an attempt to understand the challenges of maintaining a sustained NPO-CE relationship. Within the spread of the respondents there were a number from both a NPO and a CE who had experienced successful and unsuccessful NPO-CE collaborations. Two central attributes emerged from the exploration: the need for the 'right people' and the need for the 'right processes', both of which will now be explored further, followed by a summary and a discussion on the essence of the findings (Creswell, 2007)

The concept of the importance of having the 'right' people involved in the management of the NPO-CE collaboration was in part introduced in the identification in the previous theme discussion of the need for a motivated and empowered individual to provide leadership at the partnership selection phase. It was suggested that this leadership was required not only for the NPO-CE interface but also for internal leadership. Further exploration of this attribute during discussions on the theme of relationship management added that not only did the leadership need to be empowered and motivated but that most members of any NPO-CE collaboration team should also be empowered in the same way: *'....in my experience where it works best is when all of the team have bought-in to the plan...and also these things [collaboration structures] are complicated...with lots of processes on lots of differing levels...so its important that guys can feel they can step-up and take decisions to make sure that things keep moving...we tell our clients all the time'* CO2. This attribute was reinforced by the observations of those



recounting their personal experiences of managing a NPO-CE relationship. For example, as outlined in CD2's comments on the subject: *'..... I mean partnership is a key component of some of our programmes. And they need, and it's not only because I'm defending my job, I mean to choose the right people they need people who actually are able to make a judgement call. So relationships are happening at all levels, even directly with the business...'* CD2. However, both the NPO and CE respondents indicated that there was a risk in attempting to design and implement unfamiliar management systems to accommodate the cross-sector partnership: *'.....people found it difficult....different ways of working...different language almost...and who can make the decisions...it was tough for some of them'* CD3. Those who spoke from the perspective of the NPO also mentioned that there were ethical and moral challenges for some of their team, who had chosen to work in the non-profit sector based on personal beliefs and found it uncomfortable to work with a large corporate entity: *'I have had people in my team that come to me and say..."look..I think it's great [what we are doing] but it's not for me....it's not what I signed-up for"....so we have had to sort things out somehow'* ND1. It seems that there exists a risk that the partnership would break down if the attitude of those involved were not conducive to collaborative working and able to realign their thinking to the new and varied challenges that presented during the process. CO1 worked with a failing collaboration, providing advice and mentoring to the NPO staff: *'.....in the end we just had to move people...[and] ask for volunteers [because] it just wasn't working'* CO1. The theme of having experienced some resistance to partnership working was a persistent observation by those who had experienced the NPO-CE collaboration phenomenon CD2 recounts his experience and learning from an early partnership programme that he was involved in: *'And I think at the beginning when I was jumping on and helping drive some of this partnership there was resistance about being treated like a consultant or an advisor. So I think we moved a little bit beyond that into wording our contracts in a way that's more acceptable for them [NPO]'*. However there were positive examples of where, through good communication, leadership and flexibility in ways of working, the

collaboration grew into a partnership. CD1 recounted his experience of a large community-based project in Africa: *'We had better relationships with some than others, and maybe that's down to different philosophies or ways of working, or personality, different visions I guess. But we definitely found that some were more cooperative...not cooperative, it's the wrong word, but more collaborative than others. And it felt a little bit more like a partnership rather than then give me the money, I'll do it.'* CD1

Other significant examples emerged within the study of different strategies employed to attempt to build effective working relationships that seemed to result in a more positive outcome. CD2 spoke of a more personal approach and how that helped to build the partnership: *'And I think what happens is that you become more of a partnership, we always said partnership and become more of a partnership where you listen each other. You don't just dictate. And you try and understand the different reasons why they do that or you do that, and it is down to a personal level as well. Suddenly you know someone, you know their face, you know a name, you can go out for a meal with them, you can talk to them, relax. So I think that breaks down a hell of a lot of the barriers'* CD2. The advocacy of the adoption of a more personal approach to help break down barriers and build trust through face-to-face communication chimed with the experiences of ND2: *'.....looking them in the eye.....and knowing them personally made bumps in the road a little easier to deal with'* ND2. However, effective communication was not only an internal requirement; it also appeared to be important externally, as is discussed in the next section.

During the exploration of the NPO-CE collaborations with respect to the theme of relationship dynamics, and in particular when exploring why particular collaborations had succeeded the attribute of 'mutual trust' emerged as a factor. As suggested in the previous section, if effective channels of communication at a personal level did not exist across the NPO-CE collaboration then difficulties arose in the management of the project. CD3 highlighted some of the issues from the perspective of the CE partner: *'...I don't necessarily have the people out there [working on the project]*

*...that is what I asked [NPO] to do...why we got together..so I have to rely on their input on project progress and what the problems are on the ground....I really have to trust that they are telling me all we need to know!'. CO2, in his role as a partnership consultant, suggested that the NPOs can find it difficult too: '...not only having to report to their own management chain but also preparing reports in a way that works for both sides of the collaboration was demanding..especially if there was other [Governmental funders] in there too..you find yourself spending all your time looking up rather than looking down and delivering the project...it can put a real strain on the team and I find myself discussing with teams now a lot about exactly what information is needed when... and why....'. CD1 went further and offered the opinion that mutual trust could be built, or destroyed, not only through the nature of internal communication, but also through poorly planned external communication: 'I think the area where trust is mostly discussed in this space is about actual endorsement. Because obviously these all translate, even the community studies all translate into some form of corporate communications. And it's always a fine line between what you can say, you cannot say, what NGOs are comfortable to say, what the company want to say. CD1.*

The issue of external communications emerged as a key factor for the NPOs in particular, but also for the larger CEs with brand reputations they needed to sustain. CD5, a Director of communications for a global corporate food brand grouping, offered that *'.....from my experience most of our effort is focused on agreeing messages with the other side...both internally and externally...all announcements need to be agreed by both sides and trust me, a lot of time is spent on the wording of these releases....if we get it wrong the [management team of the CE] are exposed , it breaks down trust with our shareholders and with our partners...so its important stuff....'*. thus highlighting how any external messages on the nature of the collaboration and of the impact it was hoping to achieve appeared to be extremely important. Exploration of this area revealed that the concern was based around a potential negative impact on the NPOs stakeholders; that is the NPO wanted to be clear that its core mission was not being undermined by

the collaboration and thus avoid any negative reaction from its constituency. FP1 spoke of the potential risk to the donor base of his current charity from poorly delivered communications: *'...[NPO] is a national institution...if we somehow give the impression that we aren't doing what we said we would do...working with companies that have potential conflicts, that don't seem right to our donors, we would be in trouble. We rely on a core of regular donors and they are a powerful group, so we have to be careful about how we raise additional funds'*. These observations on external and internal communications supports the earlier selection of the attribute of reputational risk revealed and discussed within the value creation theme.

As outlined earlier in this section the selection and empowerment of the 'right people' to lead and manage any collaboration was perceived as an essential attribute. What also became clear was that if a partnership was to endure, effective collaboration framework procedures and processes had to be in place in order to allow the staffs to function. These procedures varied, dependent on the nature of the collaboration, often with the NPO having to enable the delivery structure: *'...in the case of projects where an NGO was an implementer, they're normally monitoring systems, regular meetings where we actually look at what they expect to deliver, and we would participate. But again, we wouldn't get too much into the details of their expertise, which is basically what we want them to do. Very often we don't have people at the origin, so that's what they supply'* CD3. It appeared that a major attribute that underpins a successful relationship dynamic within a NPO-CE collaboration was the ability and willingness on both sides to engage in new ways of working: *'we'd never done this before...no one had worked so closely with a business...so there was a lot of learning on the job. The key was flexibility, being able to balance the demands of working with [CE] with the demands of getting our mission done'* ND1. Flexibility and a willingness to implement new working practices seemed an essential trait as some of the collaborations that the respondents had participated in were quite complex in nature, for example: *'So we participate to a project through the [Charitable] Foundation, there's a pot of money which includes [CE] money, other players' money and [NPOs] money, and they basically are the*

*implementer on the ground. But then again, the project would probably have some commercial links, and somehow again, I would say in our case mostly indirectly, but there are many cases of directly, they'll get our money to actually implement the project'*. CD3. He goes on to add that the most important details of the working relationship were agreed within the partnering process and the establishment of the collaboration agreement, typically in the form of a contract: *'I mean this is almost a commercial...even contractually this becomes a contract. I mean with [NPO] it's a contract'* CD3. Whilst the drafting and implementation of a contract for partnership working was relatively comfortable for the CE respondents, this was not the case for all NPO partners: *'we were used to MoU and other informal agreements but the contract process was difficult...we needed a lot of help to make sure that we got our side right and that we understood exactly what we were signing up for...all commercial and legal stuff that was really important but I certainly wasn't ready to lead on it [contract agreement]....and quite a lot of the delivery stuff for the programme had to be written by us....we had to tell them what we could do and how we could do it'* ND1.

Prevalent among the recounted experiences of those senior executives operating within a CE was the implication that the activities of the NPO had to be monitored and guided to ensure the fulfillment of their linked interests, but also that they did not need or want to get too involved in the details of the process and procedures of the NPO with whom they were collaborating. For example: *'we established monitoring systems, regular meetings where we actually look at what they expect to deliver, and we would participate. But again, we wouldn't get too much into the details of their expertise, which is basically what we want them to do.'* CD3. Observations such as this reinforce the understanding, discussed in the value creation and partnership selection themes, that the CEs- within this limited study – appeared, in the view of those that experienced the phenomenon to treat the NPOs as contractors from whom they were 'purchasing' a service. As CD3 offered: *'you're the expert, we pay you, now deliver the goods. That will actually make...puts them under a lot of pressure as well. So that's what has driven progress'* CD3. And CD1 suggested in quite stark terms: *'[an*

NGO]...probably yes, that's what most of the world will call them. The reality, they are selling a service.' CD1 Others, however, did not reflect this view based on their own experiences and saw that the collaboration could become more than transactional and had aspirations to build a partnership : ' Which is what we didn't want to do; we wanted a partnership. We didn't want to just give the money to an NGO and let them do it.' CD2. However the reality of a shifting commercial background often undermined such efforts 'once [CE] was acquired it [sustainability programme] changed...[CE – new owner] loved the brand enhancement but priorities shifted. Efficiencies were to be made and all existing relationships were reviewed .....and quickly run-down if they weren't adopted by [CE-new owner]' CD5.

Conflicting observations on the nature of the relationship that the respondents had experienced raised the issue of the relevant status of each party within an established NPO-CE relationship. Were they equal partners in a collaboration, or was the relationship purely transactional? CO1, who had some experience of working with a failed collaboration offered that: 'the partnership was never really equal...[NGO] had to make all the changes wanted by [the CE].....at the end they spent all their time looking after [the CE] and not making it happen....'CO1. It would appear that the nature of an established NPO-CE relationship would change as the collaboration progressed and the entities faced different external and internal challenges, often with one entity having a greater sway over the other. '....sometimes, after the first year, on the [development project] we really had the feeling that we were on our own and that we could lose our funding at any time...[CE ] were going through some major changes...big M+A activity [mergers and acquisitions] so..even the company we signed with had just been taken over .... people were moving...we were worried as we had invested a lot of time and money and it could all go' ND2.

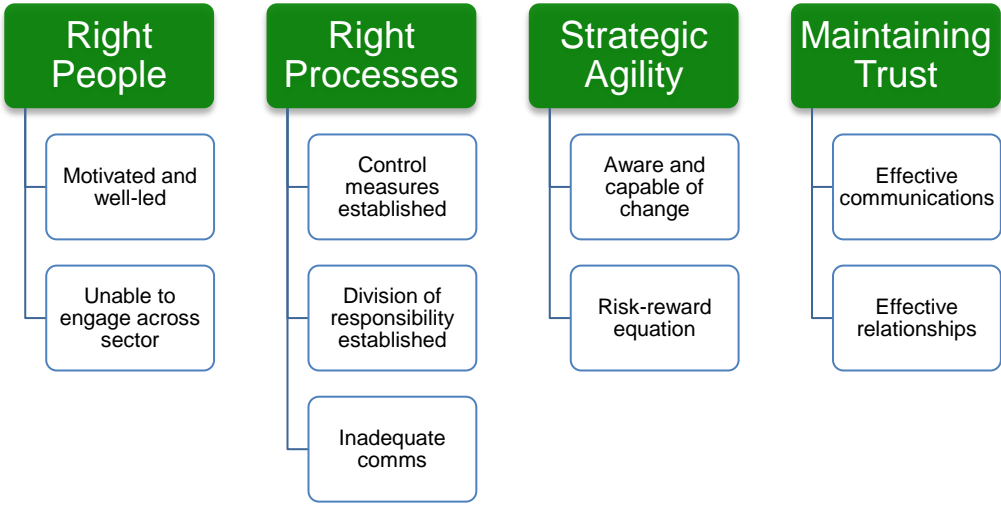
This theme finding leads to the final, and arguably most important, attribute to emerge from the exploration of NPO-CE relationship dynamics, which is described within this study as the capacity for strategic agility. The use of the term 'strategic agility' in this study is intended to convey the ability to be

aware of, and respond quickly as an organisation, to changing circumstances in order to adjust the organisation's strategy as required to maintain a sustained collaboration. The term was used by CO1 as he spoke about the potential risks to NPOs engaged in a cross-sector collaboration: *'I try to get my clients to understand that they have to build capacity...to be 'strategically agile' and not put all of their eggs in one basket...the point I try and make is that companies, even...or perhaps...especially...big corporations have been under some pressure since the recession...under pressure to sort out their cost-base... so every penny of spend has to be justified over and over'* CO1. In the exploration of value creation outlined earlier in this chapter the example of how a negative assessment of the risk-reward equation by one of the partners could result in a collaboration collapsing very quickly was outlined. Further exploration of this phenomenon offered a number of points that may be worthy of consideration. As far as the respondent was aware, their partner had little idea how seriously internal organisational changes within the CE would affect the nature of their collaboration. *'that partnership came as a package with the [CE] acquisition. And initially it worked well for [CE – post acquisition], but when we began the spin-off talks everything was up for grabs...and we couldn't talk to them about it'*. He goes on to suggest that: *'.....even if they knew what we were thinking, or what the pressures were, I'm not sure that they would have been able to change what they were doing....'*CD1.

The risk appears not only to be limited to the collapse of the collaboration but also the potential for one of the partners to reduce their involvement but still retain their ability to control the output of the coalition: *'the programme still existed but because of the downturn the funding came under real pressure and we had to cut what we were doing.....it meant not a lot was being done and we couldn't go and look for other funding'* ND3.

The study revealed only two instances where this had occurred, and perhaps because of this limited sample the two examples only involved a CE acting in this manner. It is offered that for the purposes of this study the examples have value in that they reinforce the finding that both sides of the

partnership should have the ability to be strategically agile: to retain the capability to monitor potential change and react in a timely manner to influence or mitigate the impact on the collaboration. The emergent themes from the research for the category of relationship dynamics, which formed the third component of the conceptual model, are summarised at Figure Eight:



**Figure 8 Relationship Dynamics: Summary of emergent themes and underpinning key findings.**

[Source: Author]

The next section presents the essence of the phenomenon derived from the study process. The essence reflects the description of the experiences if the individuals studied and their common experiences of the phenomenon (Creswell et al., 2007).



## **4.2 Essence of the respondents' experiences of cross-sector collaboration.**

### **4.2.1 Essence of value creation:**

Within the findings of this study two different perspectives emerged during the exploration of value creation. Both NPO and CE respondents agreed that value creation should be the aim of any sustained collaboration, however the study revealed that those who had experienced a NPO-CE collaboration tended to define the potential value in terms of a risk-reward equation and it was revealed that even robust alliances could be dissolved if this risk-reward balance was not maintained. There was a significant shift in emphasis dependent on which sector the respondent was operating within at the time of their experience of the phenomenon. Respondents from the commercial sector tended to emphasise the perceived benefits to their organisation, whilst those operating within the non-profit sector tended to emphasise the potential risks to their organisation when undertaking a collaboration. It appears that the commercial entities need to be able to express the value created principally as a return on investment – a 'best spend' as well as maintaining their reputation, whilst NPOs needed to principally demonstrate to their stakeholders that the collaboration does not compromise their stated mission and thus adversely affect their membership support and reputation. Included in their list of stakeholders is the CE with which they have formed a collaboration, and as such the NPO had to be aware that they had a role to play in the CE's 'best spend' assessment. However it is not only the NPO that should be concerned with managing their stakeholders; the impact on reputation, both internal and external, could have a negative effect on value creation and the maintenance of a sustained relationship for the CE as well. The study findings also suggest that the effective management of

stakeholders, both internal and external, is key to value creation and the maintenance of a sustained relationship.

#### **4.2.2 Essence of the Partnership Process**

The exploration of the experiences of those involved in the partnership process has revealed a number of attributes that were required in these specific instances to enable success. The identification of linked interests and the related processes of partnership screening and early intervention appears to be the first key step in the partnership process, followed by a number of interaction issues including: the internal resources required to establish and maintain a partnership - and the attendant risk inherent with the potential burden of the partnership process; adequate leadership to 'champion' the efforts on both sides; and the need to build and establish trust. These form the identified attributes that underpin the partnership process theme.

In terms of a potential contribution to practice the study has also revealed an issue that may have relevance. The exploration of the experiences of the respondents suggest that NPOs are often viewed initially within the partnership process as a provider of resources. Thus it might follow that a NPO wishing to seek collaboration with a CE should look for an organisation that has a requirement for its own resources. The study suggests that such resources have not been limited to personnel on the ground, but also include access to local intelligence and credibility that could afford access to and influence within local communities and governmental organisations. Arguably, in terms of the contribution to practice of this study, this finding provides a useful initial driver for collaboration within the framework for partner selection.

The exploration has also revealed a degree of overlap with the emergent attributes from the exploration of the value creation phenomenon, in particular the identification of the pursuit of linked interests that could be

achieved through the partnership as a driver for collaboration. Perhaps this could be explained by the view that if a partnership were to be established on the basis that interests are linked, then the presence of attributes that enable value creation would be a primary concern of the partnership selection process.

#### **4.2.3 Essence of Relationship Dynamics**

The overriding sense that emerged from the exploration of the experiences of those involved in sustained NPO-CE relationships was that the most likely risk to any collaboration would be the result of external factors. Internal factors, as highlighted within the findings, such as: the selection of the right people with the right skills; the right processes within an effective collaborative framework; and the management of internal and external communication were significant risk factors that could be managed by those working within the partnership. However, it appeared that even long term, highly successful collaborations could be placed in jeopardy, no matter how well they were being managed, due to shift in strategy driven by external forces such as market pressure or organisational changes, particularly within the CE. That is not to undermine the importance of acknowledging the attributes within the people and process categories explored within this theme as well as the need to build and maintain trust across the collaboration – all are understood to have been important enablers to any sustained relationship explored within the study. Indeed, if the relationship was to be sustained then the findings these attributes were required to be firmly in place. However the NPOs involved in this study, by their very nature mission focused and constituency driven, seemed at times to be out of step from the corporate entities that were involved, for whom a state of rapid and major structural change over the period of the study was seen as the norm. The study findings suggest that if a collaboration was to be sustained then the NPO partner would have to be able to anticipate and react to the changing interests of the CE partner, who was constantly seeking the ‘best spend’ in

terms of value creation. This attribute to anticipate and react to the relatively fast-changing corporate environment experienced during the timeframe of this study has been described as 'strategic agility' – a capacity to be able to anticipate and react to a changing relationship in a rapid manner.

### **4.3 Summary.**

This chapter has reported the findings from the respondent interviews conducted to achieve the research aim of exploring the attributes that underpin a sustained non-profit organisation (NPO) – commercial entity (CE) relationship. Following the framework that emerged from the literature the findings were presented by category, reported in terms of the processes of value creation; partnership processes; and relationship dynamics. Each category's report of findings was presented as a combination of textual-structural, which were summarised by an assessment of the essence of the theme, as outlined in the data analysis plan (Creswell, 2007), and guided by the research aim and supporting objectives. The analysis revealed a number of key attributes of a sustained NPO-CE relationship within each of the three categories, some of which overlapped the individual thematic areas. The implications of the findings are discussed in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 5. Discussion**

This chapter aims to build on the report of findings of the study and the identification of a number of key themes and their attributes that underpin a NPO-CE collaboration. Firstly the chapter outlines the purpose of the research and then goes on to consider the findings of the study in relation to the existing literature in order to seek to gain a better understanding of the implications of the findings for both researchers and practitioners. The discussion of findings is followed by an assessment of the study's achievement of the research aim, and a discussion of the study's contribution to theory and practice. The chapter concludes with some additional suggestions for further work, followed by some final thoughts on the author's personal learning.

### **5.1 Purpose of the research**

This research was situated in a landscape of diminishing and uncertain sources of funding for NPOs, which has resulted in the need for NPOs to seek new ways of achieving sustained funding (Booth, 2008). Within the same landscape there has been much discussion over a potential shift in the nature of CSR activity from CEs, in part driven by societal pressure for companies to 'do more' (Porter and Kramer, 2011), with an emphasis on social value creation (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012a) delivered through partnerships. NPO-CE partnering appears to offer an opportunity through which both sides can achieve their aims, and the work by both practitioners and academics surrounding cross-sector collaborations has emerged as a potential source of a model for NPO-CE partnering. Recent literature on the nature of cross-sector collaborations, such as the non-profit – commercial entity relationships explored as part of this study, has indicated an increased interest in the phenomenon and the potential for value creation from cross-sector collaborations (Berger et al., 2004; Selsky and Parker, 2005; Austin and Seitanidi, 2012a; London and Hart, 2011). A review of the literature

supporting the development of a framework for the study of cross-sector collaborations and value creation by Austin and Seitanidi (2012a; 2012b) revealed that much of the pre-existing literature was focused on organisational and strategic level factors that could impede or enable the relationship, however there appeared to be limited focus on the role of the individual stakeholder in enabling and sustaining cross-sector partnerships for value creation (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012b:952). This study, through the adoption of an interpretivist, phenomenological methodology aimed to explore the experiences of individuals who have been involved in cross-sector collaborations.

## **5.2 Discussion of the findings and their relation to existing literature.**

The findings of the research with regard to value creation and their relation to existing literature are now discussed, followed by the findings of the two remaining themes: partner selection and relationship dynamics.

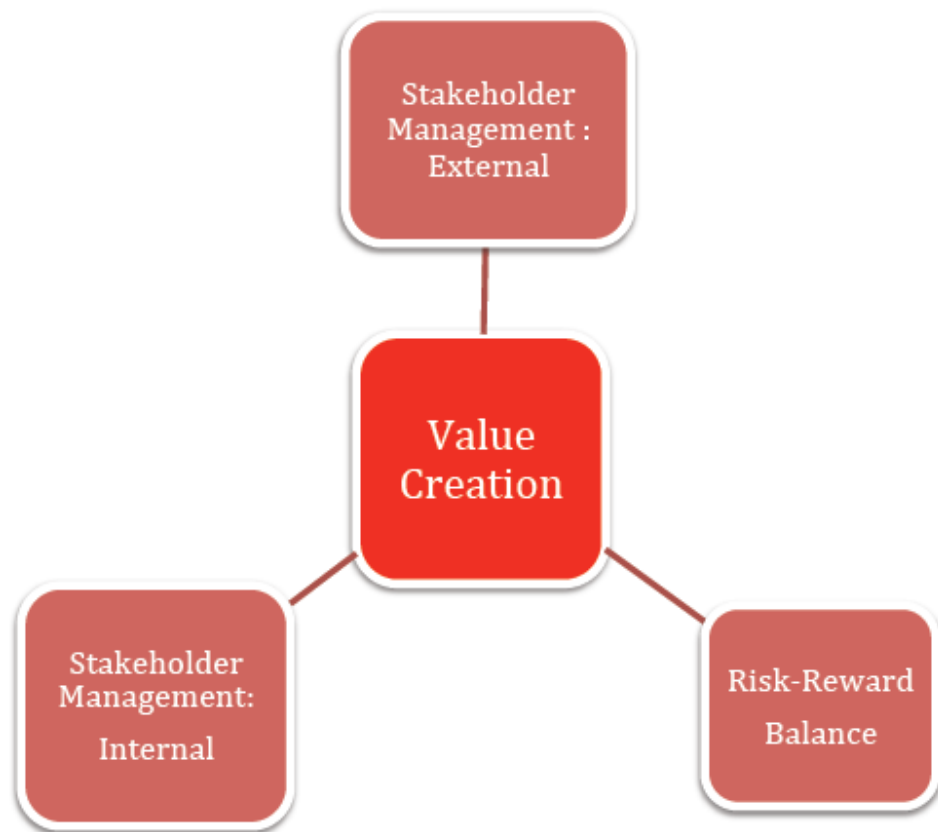
### **5.2.1 Value Creation.**

Focused on the experiences of those involved in NPO-CE collaborations and exploring their understanding of how, and if, value could be created through a cross-sectoral alliance, this study ultimately attempts to understand what attributes (or micro-processes) underpin such value creation. Early literature had focused on single collaborative arrangements and their associated management issues, resulting in the generation of various theses on effective process design (Seitanidi and Ryan, 2007; Glasbergen, 2010). Issues such as partner satisfaction, development of shared objectives and improved partner relationships were explored in support of determining the feasibility and sustainability of cross-sectoral collaborations (e.g. Waddock and Graves, 1997; Austin, 2000; Das and Teng, 2000; Berger et al.,2004; Arya and Salk, 2006; Biermann et al.,2007). The outcomes of such relationships were expressed in resource-based terms and the partnership was seen as transactional in nature; for example a traditional model might be the case of

commercial entity forming an alliance with a NPO as part of their reputation management strategy, in return for the offer of resources to assist the NPO to achieve its mission.

More recent literature, mostly centered around the CSR and sustainability fields of research, has begun to explore how value creation could be expressed in many forms: from purely economic and resource-based gains - expressed in financial terms via a balance sheet - through to a perception that genuine societal change could potentially be enabled through the effective implementation of cross-sectoral alliances (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012a).

Notwithstanding the varied ultimate aspirations for the utility and purpose of any cross-sector alliance model within the literature, this study has suggested that at the core the most favourable outcome of any alliance is that of a demonstrable creation of value for both parties, described by Wood and Gray (1991:161) as the identification and motivation of the 'need and potential' for benefit. It appears that there was little to be gained by either party, certainly in terms of a sustained relationship, if value of some form was not created for mutual benefit. Austin and Seitanidi (2012a: 728) assert that 'creating value is the central justification for cross-sector partnering' and the findings of the study broadly support these views, though what form the value created took varied from relationship to relationship. Perhaps, due to the nature of the study, it was not surprising that the perception of the value created reflected operational and personal level experiences, as opposed to the more strategic aspirations for societal change reflected in some more recent literature on sustainability (London and Hart, 2011; Porter and Kramer, 2011; Austin and Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b;). Notwithstanding the nature of the value created by the NPO-CE relationship the findings suggested that sustained value creation should be underpinned by three core themes and attributes, as outlined at Figure Twelve:



**Figure 12 Value Creation – Summary of attributes.**

[Source: Author]

The first of the three underpinning attributes of the value creation theme was that of effective management of external stakeholders, a general category that drew together many supporting themes from the literature. The benefits of effective external stakeholder management were suggested as increased public support (Austin, 2000) and access to new markets that could lead to increased sales and potential for new customers or subscribers (Yaziji and Doh, 2009). The risks associated with poor external stakeholder relations



included potentially significant reputational costs leading to external scepticism and the disenfranchisement of traditional support bases (Yaziji and Doh, 2009; Millar et al.,2004) and had the potential for a greater impact on NPOs (Tully,2004). The findings also suggested that importance of effective stakeholder management was not limited only to external stakeholders. In order to create value within a sustained alliance there was a need to ensure that the organisation ensured internal organisational understanding of the purpose of the partnership, or risk the potential confusion and demotivation of personnel (Yaziji and Doh, 2009). Perhaps more importantly, if there was effective internal stakeholder engagement then, as the study suggests, there were significant benefits to be realised for the staff engaged in the cross-sector partnership both in terms of motivation and career progression. This finding supports the suggestions in the literature of the benefits for individuals, such as: opportunities for learning (Austin, 2000; Yaziji and Doh, 2009); employee specific benefits such as increased morale, recruitment, skills, productivity and retention (Bishop and Green, 2008; Googins and Rochlin, 2000; Pearce and Doh, 2005; Porter and Kramer, 2002; and Seitanidi, 2010).

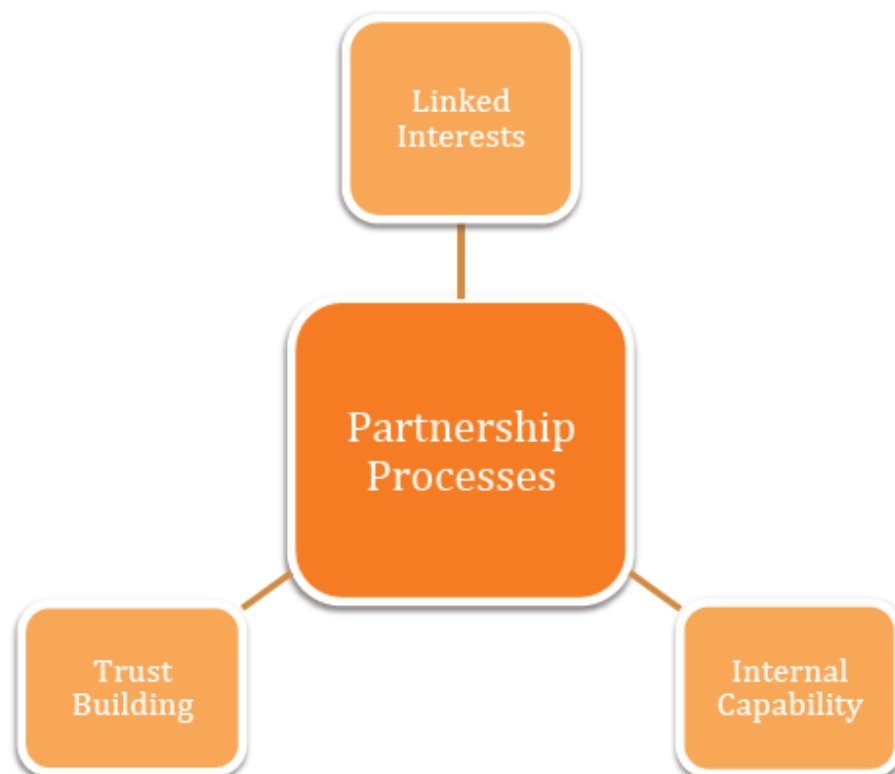
Das and Teng (2002) highlight that the nature of an intra-sector alliance is dynamic and interactive, and that the collective strength of the alliance comes from the 'aggregated resource endowments of partner organisations in relation to the specific strategic objectives that they aim to pursue jointly' (Das and Teng, 2002:730). This dynamic and interactive process has been described within the findings of this study as the third attribute underpinning the value creation theme: the focus across the partnership on constantly seeking to ensure the 'best spend' for resources.

This study also suggests that the essence of value creation has a fundamental impact on the nature of the other two themes explored: partnership selection and relationship dynamics. The themes appear interlinked and interdependent, with the focus remaining value creation, which offers some direction to the building of a discursive framework for

practitioners. The key issue being that if value creation is the focus of the collaboration, do the attributes from within the other themes of partner selection and relationship dynamics impact on value creation, and if so, how?

### 5.2.2 Partnership Processes.

The study suggests that a core attribute of a sustained NPO-CE relationship is the achievement of mutually beneficial value creation, that is: generated value from the collaboration that can be expressed in acceptable terms to both the NPO and CE's stakeholders. The findings suggest that the first step towards value creation is the identification of linked interests, described by Crane (1998) as a congruity of bonds between the partners' resources and activities and thus a critical success factor for successful alliance. The presence of linked interests form the initial impetus to undertake a cross-sector collaboration and was thus identified as the first key attribute for partner selection.



**Figure 13 Partnership Processes – Summary of attributes.**

[Source: Author]

Seitanidi and Austin (2012b: 933) also suggest that a key indicator of the existence of linked interests when determining partner compatibility is 'mission fit' and highlight that 'when the mission of each organisation is strongly aligned with the partnership (Berger et al., 2004; Gourville and Rangan, 2004) the relationship has more potential to be important to both organisations' (Seitanidi and Austin, 2012b:933). This study revealed support for the importance of an aligned mission for both organisations, particularly within the arena of sustainability and the work of both NPOs and large CEs on improving the livelihoods of those communities engaged in coffee growing.

The second attribute that emerged from the exploration of the partnership selection process was that of the organisation's internal capability to engage and sustain the collaboration. One of the main building blocks of the internal capability attribute was the existence of early and effective leadership of the partnership selection process. Pre-existing literature supports the finding that the identification of empowered pre-partnership champions is an important step in the development of cross-functional teams within the collaboration framework (Rondinelli and London, 2003). The findings of this study also suggests that similarly empowered and motivated personnel should exist at multiple-levels within the collaboration framework, as discussed in the next section dealing with the third theme of relationship dynamics.

The research also revealed that the experience of having worked together on previous projects, even if in a broader coalition, had a positive effect on the partnership selection processes in that both sides had a greater understanding of their respective capability and capacity to manage a future partnership. This supports the findings from the pre-existing literature on the importance of the previous experiences of partners (Hardy, Lawrence and Phillips, 2006 cited in Seitanidi and Austin, 2012b: 933) as an indicator of the potential for a successful NPO-CE collaboration, not least in that both sides would be better prepared to understand the requirement to determine the potential costs of any sustained collaboration. Allied to the existence of an understanding of a potential partners' historical capabilities the study also suggested that the

attribute of internal capability should also be underpinned by an early agreement on the need for robust procedural and substantive early-stage partnership processes, such as effective due diligence procedures and clear contractual or memoranda of understanding drafting and agreement processes. Seitanidi and Crane (2009) reflect these findings in their Partnership for Co-Creation of Value model, however where the findings of this study differ from the elegant partnership model suggested by Seitanidi and Crane (2009) is that it includes the explicit articulation of trust building as a supporting attribute to partnership selection theme.

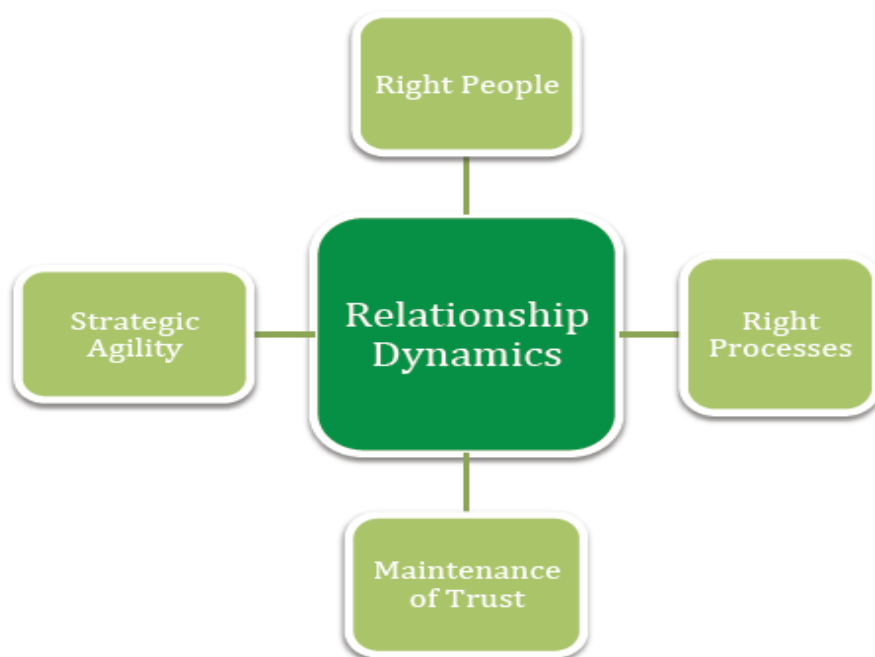
The final attribute to be discussed from the exploration of the process of partner selection within this study was the importance of establishing, building and maintaining trust in order to achieve a sustained NPO-CE alliance. The central tenet of trust pervades throughout the process, and will be revisited on the discussion of Theme 3: Relationship Dynamics in the next section of this chapter. The finding of the importance of trust in achieving a sustainable cross-sector relationship supports the literature on cross-sector relationships and social alliances, most of which suggests that mutual trust underpins successful alliances (e.g. Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Sargeant and Lee, 2004; Nooteboom, 2006; Glasbergen, 2010; Liu and Ko, 2010; Austin and Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b). The operational level perspective of those respondents whose experiences of the phenomena were explored as part of this study offered an insight at the micro-level of the importance of a sense of trust being embedded in the partnership selection process from the very beginning. With both sides having a differing set of core values, certainly at the organisational level, early indicators from both partners that a willingness to compromise and 'meet in the middle' was present proved a decisive factor for most respondents in judging whether they felt they would be able move forward with the collaboration. The study suggests that if NPO-CE relationships of the type explored within this study were to become sustainable then there should exist an explicit willingness, and ability, of both sides to overcome the central challenge of a different set of core values. In business –to- business relationships collaborative alliances have

been identified as logical responses to conditions in which organisations become highly interdependent (Zarco-Jasso, 2005: 24). Within these alliances, it is suggested that the establishing of interdependence can be more readily achieved as the partners 'share the same core logic. They are all used to operating in a competitive system where money is power and the primary goal is the creation of economic value in terms of profit' (Glasbergen, 2005:5). This shared core logic affords a different starting point for the relationship and suggests that interdependence should be readily achievable. However, inter-sectoral alliances are potentially more difficult as the partners are required to assume roles and responsibilities that may be incompatible with their core logic (Waddell, 2005). From the exploration of the experiences of those engaged in the phenomenon this is a key issue for individuals involved in the management of cross-sector partnerships. It forms an essential component within this study's proposed discursive framework for practitioners but presents the challenge to practitioners of how to determine if the issue of a different set of core values could be overcome. As previously stated, early indicators that both sides were willing to engage across the values difference proved an essential component of the trust building process.

The importance of the maintenance of trust is discussed in the next section, which deals with the attributes that underpin the third and final theme of this exploration of the sustained NPO-CE collaboration phenomena: relationship dynamics.

### 5.2.3 Relationship Dynamics.

This section discusses the key findings that emerged from the pursuit of the research objective of identifying the dynamics involved in the success or failure of a sustained NPO-CE relationship. These findings, the majority of which support the literature, are discussed in greater detail later in this section, based around the identified attributes that underpin the theme of relationship dynamics; that is, the exploration of the nature of an existing, operational and sustained NPO-CE relationship. The four themes with supporting attributes that emerged from the findings are shown at Figure Fourteen:



**Figure 14 Relationship Dynamics – Summary of attributes.**

[Source: Author]

Frequent statements on the importance of having the people and processes in place in order to build and sustain the NPO-CE relationships explored within this study reflects the view of the literature that NPO-CE alliances are challenging to establish and manage. Cross-sector alliances, by their very nature formed from organisations with differing approaches and views, were

described in the literature as 'non traditional' in nature because of their 'complexity' (Kanter, 1999:126) and their 'contradictions and conflicts between incompatible objectives, ideals and values' (Holzer, 2001:9). Not all of the literature agrees that this traditional NPO-CE relationship view retains validity suggests that the spectrum of the more recent relationships have shifted to a less conflict- based stance, at least once past the initial stages of engagement (Seitanidi, 2010), and that NPOs have begun to transition, through funding-driven need, to a more business-like approach (Dees, 1998). However it has been a key finding of this study that managing NPO-CE administrative and logistical tensions through the implementation of appropriate policies and the selection and empowerment of willing and motivated partnership teams was seen as the constant challenge and focus of the majority of those interviewed within this study.

Allied to the people and processes attributes was the concept of building and sustaining trust between the partners. As mentioned earlier in Section 1.4, the role of trust featured within discussions around partnership selection and the research reveals that perception of the presence or lack of trust exerted a similar level of influence in discussions on the maintenance of an established cross-sectoral partnership. All agreed that the process of building trust required time and effort and the establishment of personal relationships; a finding supported by Glasbergen (2010): 'Initial trust is an enabling factor for successful partnering. But building trust is not created once and for all. Building trust is a social process that needs to be managed, maintained and supported by positive experiences, both internally and externally, throughout the whole partnership process' (Glasbergen, 2010:5). Effective communication once again emerged as a supporting finding within this theme and was seen by the respondents as the main building block of maintaining trust and as one of the principal outcomes of having selected the right people and employing the right processes (Googins and Rochlin, 2000). The importance of communication in building trust and commitment across a NPO-CE alliance was supported by literature from both the fundraising and



relationship marketing areas (Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Austin, 2000; Sargeant and Lee, 2004;). The positive impact on trust has been described as an important informal measure of control within the NPO-CE relationship (Rivera-Santos and Rufin, 2000). In addition, the findings suggested that the building and maintaining of trust was centered on the perception of both sides of being equal, or near-equal, partners with no one side having a pre-eminent position. This understanding was supported in the literature and described as the balance of power or, perhaps more accurately - as Hamman and Acutt (2003) have suggested - the balancing of power asymmetries within a NPO and CE relationship, which enables those involved in the partnership to build and maintain trust.

The final key finding from the exploration of this research theme was of the need to implement a regular and comprehensive review of the aim and objectives of an existing cross-sector collaboration, and the ability for an NPO to react quickly enough to be able to meet the changing objectives of their CE partner. A common thread that runs through the literature on the management of partnerships is the chronological sequence of relationship evolution (Selsky and Parker, 2005; Seitanidi, 2010). For example, Glasbergen (2010:1) writes of a 'ladder of partnership activity' built on sequential steps for the development of a partnership and Googins and Rochlin (2000:133) suggest a number of critical steps to partnership building: defining goals; senior level commitment; frequent communication; assigning professionals to lead the work; sharing of resource commitment; and the evaluation of progress and the achievement of results. Seitanidi (2010) suggests that the chronology consists of three phases: formation, implementation and outcomes. The chronological nature of a NPO-CE partnership has been reflected within this study itself, with its thematic framework that focused on partner selection, relationship management and outcomes (value creation) reflecting the partnering process suggested by the literature. The findings of the study in part support this approach, in that the majority of the alliances explored appear to have followed this linear path to a

mature relationship, resulting in mutually satisfactory outcomes for both partners. However, one significant attribute for the future framework that is the aim of this study emerged during the exploration of a potentially failing alliance between a major food manufacturer and a fair-trade certification organisation. This attribute can be called strategic agility, reflecting the need to implement a regular and comprehensive review of the aim and objectives of any inter-sectoral relationship and maintaining the ability and willingness to respond in a timely manner.

Gunasekaran (1999) defines strategic agility as the capability of surviving and prospering in the competitive environment of continuous and unpredictable change by reacting quickly and effectively to changing markets, driven by custom designed products and service, whilst Gehani (1995) suggests that agile organisations can quickly satisfy customer orders, introduce new products frequently and get in and out of its strategic alliances quickly. A significant example of the importance of this attribute is the changing nature of a NPO-CE relationship in the sector of food sustainability, and whilst the limited breadth of this study did not allow the opportunity to pursue the exploration of other NPO-CE licensing relationships to provide further support to this finding, partly because only a few such major relationships exist, it is deemed worthy of highlighting as an example of how an NPO could be wrong-footed by the relatively fast pace of strategic change within a corporate entity. Sustainability licensing is often offered as an exemplar of how societal change could be effected by the implementation of cross-sectoral partnership (Glasbergen, 2010; Setainidi, 2010). The findings in this particular case potentially represents a significant example of how even the most successful partnerships can change undergo fundamental change within a limited time period through unilateral action. The study revealed that the inter-sectoral partnership between the major corporation and the licensing organisation had been implemented and managed successfully, with both partners working side-by-side to develop the licensing model over a period of years. As sector and company interest grew in the wider sustainability area, and the

partnership's successes became more apparent with resultant higher sales and increased credibility with customers, arguably the sustainability function within the company 'came of age', demonstrated through a positive impact within the business units of the company. However, it appeared that this success and the drawing of the sustainability function into the business, has resulted in a potential rapid shift in the relationship dynamic between the CE and the certification organisations. The CE had seen the value, crucially – in operational terms - created by the sustainability work and it was no longer perceived as a solely philanthropic effort: it had operational impact and there was perceived value in the integration of the sustainability effort within the business units and their marketing support. As mentioned before, this change in approach represented the success and value-add of the sustainability-focused NPO-CE alliance but with this shift into the mainstream of the business came greater operational scrutiny and its linking to wider cost-cutting (or efficiencies) within the business. Interestingly, the success of the sustainability program ensured that the internal effort was not compromised but that pressure was exerted on the relationship with the NPO partners: the question being asked was 'are we achieving the best spend for our dollar'. The business had evolved beyond asking 'why should we spend on sustainability' to 'is this current spend the best spend to achieve what we want, in terms of effect from our integrated sustainability efforts?'. This example outlines how companies constantly review their partnerships and are capable of acting quickly to end relationships that are no longer deemed to add value, not necessarily in pure financial terms, but more specifically in terms of achieving 'the best spend'.

#### **5.2.4 Unexpected Findings**

On the whole the findings of this study supported the literature, however in one particular area – that of the understanding of the temporal nature of a cross-sector collaboration – the findings that emerged were unexpected in nature. Selsky and Parker (2005:6) assert that 'researchers almost

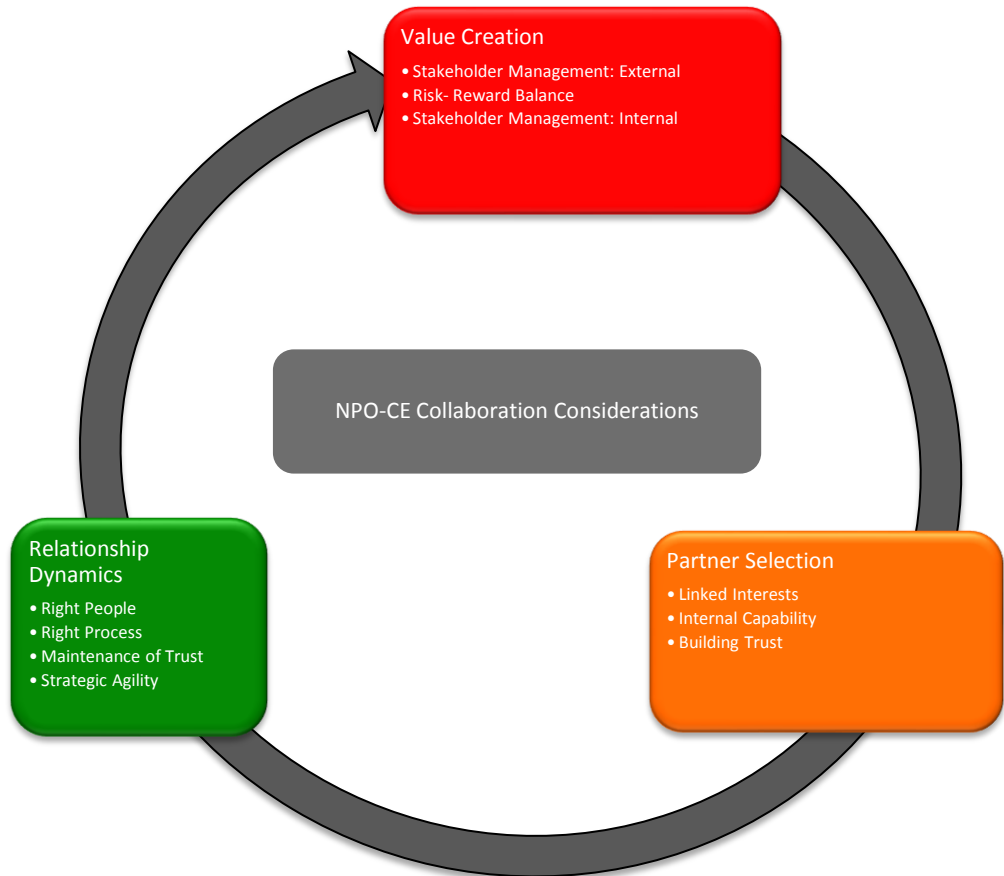
universally agree that [cross sector partnerships] can be examined according to chronological stages' which Seitanidi (2010:35) suggests comprise the stages, or phases, of 'formation, implementation and outcomes'. Following the literature, this study used three central themes to frame the exploration of the respondents' experiences of the NPO-CE partnership phenomena, which mirrored the chronological approach and phases suggested. The study findings suggest that if a collaboration was to be sustained then the NPO partner would have to be able to anticipate and react to the changing interests of the CE partner, who was constantly seeking the 'best spend' in terms of value creation. This attribute to anticipate and react to the relatively fast-changing corporate environment experienced during the timeframe of this study has been described as 'strategic agility' – a capacity to be able to anticipate and react to a changing relationship in a rapid manner. The findings on the attribute of strategic agility suggest that there is a real benefit to the NPO in viewing the relationship process as cyclic - as opposed to a linear – process, in order to continually challenge and refresh the collaboration. This emergent change in perspective of the nature of cross-sector collaborations is reflected in the following discussion on the possible representation of the findings through the use of a conceptual model.

#### **5.2.5 Summary of findings utilising a conceptual model.**

A conceptual model format has been chosen to represent the summary of findings and to help communicate them to a wider audience. Jackson et al. (2000) define a model as an abstraction or simplification of reality used to explore systems and processes that cannot be directly manipulated. Heemskerk et al. (2003:8) describe a conceptual model as 'typically drawn as diagrams with boxes and arrows that show the main elements and flows of material, information and causation that define a system'. The authors go on to describe how 'generating a visual model with colleagues who may not be familiar with one's methods and theoretical approaches can be enervating' (2003:8). Taylor (2000) suggests that building a conceptual model requires

the explanation of why certain elements are important, what assumptions have been made, and how key concepts are defined. The conceptual model as used within this study has not been designed to build theory or to have predictive capabilities (Meredith, 1993), it is intended as a discursive tool around which the study's findings can be introduced and discussed.

The model is a composite of the key findings drawn from the study within the three broad research themes of value creation, partnership processes and relationship dynamics. Each research theme is summarised within a box that represents the attributes, or micro-processes, that were revealed to underpin the cross-sector collaboration process as perceived by the individual respondents, as outlined in the discussion of the findings outlined previously in this chapter. However, in presentational terms, the model differs from other representations of the cross-sector collaboration phenomenon (e.g. see Table Three: Stages and micro-processes of social partnership development). As represented at Figure Nine, the conceptual model of the findings of this study suggest that the linear, temporal framework for the collaboration process may not have reflected the experience of the respondents engaged within this study.



**Figure 9 Conceptual model of study findings.**

[Source: Author]

Indeed, it suggests that the collaboration framework might be represented more accurately as a cyclical in nature, and that if a collaboration is to be sustained, there is a necessity for both partners to have the capability and willingness to revisit the micro-processes of a cross-sector framework on a regular basis. This might be represented by the placing of the three major themes of the findings on a circular, rather than linear, frame; reflecting the personal experiences of the respondents of this study.

It is argued that this conceptual model has value in its potential to encourage practitioners, in particular, to think beyond the initiation phases of a cross-sector collaboration and to consider fully the ramifications of a collaboration form that has been demonstrated to be dynamic in nature. In essence the model is attempting to suggest that the establishment of a collaboration should not be the sole goal: if the relationship is to be sustained it has to be nurtured and its decision-making processes around the significant attributes constantly - or at least regularly and more formally - revisited to assess the continued viability of the collaboration.

One criticism of this model might be that it suggests the whole process is cyclical and thus each individual area needs to be revisited in order. An alternative model might represent each individual area as a cyclical process within the overall temporal, linear framework, representing the requirement for an assessment of the viability of the individual components of the processes within each of the areas. This argument might be based on the assumption that the value creation and partnership processes attributes remain unchanged and unaffected by internal and external pressures once the collaboration has been established and that only the relationship dynamics micro-processes should be revisited regularly. However, this study has revealed that the most significant risk element to the cross-sector collaborations explored has been strategic and organisational changes and their subsequent impact on the assessment of 'best spend' within value creation, particularly within CEs, thus the model stands as a valuable communication tool in that it reflects the findings of this study that the entire framework of the collaboration process should be reviewed regularly.

As stated earlier in this section, this model is conceptual and offers no predictive capabilities, and as such could only be used as a communication tool in its present form. A formal validation process of the model would need to be initiated and such a process is suggested in the consideration of further work arising from this study later in this chapter, following the discussions on

how the research findings met the aim and objectives, and consideration of the implications of the research with regards to researchers and practitioners.

### **5.3 Assessment of the achievement of the research aim**

The aim of this study was: to explore sustained NPO-CE relationships at the stakeholder level and identify their perceptions of those attributes that underpin such relationships. It is assessed that the aim of the study has been met. The research gap identified called for efforts to gain further understanding of the role of the individual in the value creation process of cross-sector collaborations (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012b). This study was focused on the role of the individual who had lived experience of creating, managing and sustaining NPO-CE collaborations. Senior managers with recent experience of operating within sustained NPO-CE collaborations were identified from the not-for-profit and commercial sectors, predominantly within the area of global food production as it offered excellent examples of collaborative efforts, and were approached and agreed to participate with the study. Other stakeholders were identified from the snowball sampling process, including consultancies, non-governmental organisations and independent bodies from within the fundraising sector that enabled the research to gain an additional perspective on the nature of the NPO-CE relationships. Exploration of the stakeholder's perceptions of the nature of the relationship they had experienced was enabled by the use of an appropriate methodology, with the reflective phenomenological approach and aligned methods encouraging the recounting of lived experiences from the respondents (Creswell, 2007). The use of the themes drawn from the literature to assist in framing the initial structure for the interviews gave the respondents a degree of focus that was not overly restrictive, and enabled the findings to be analysed and presented in appropriate categories. The findings give rise to a number of implications for research and practice, which are discussed in the following sections.



#### **5.4 Implications of the study to academic research.**

Central to this study is the adoption of the phenomenological approach that allows the study to focus on the experiences and perspectives of the individuals involved in the operationalisation of strategic NPO-CE partnerships. This approach offers a contribution to the research field in that, whilst the majority of studies on cross-sector partnerships focus on the strategic and organisational level challenges, few have offered insights on the experiences of those individuals tasked with making the partnership work.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, Austin and Seitanidi highlighted that an area which required further research was the exploration of the experiences of individuals involved in the phenomenon of cross-sector collaborations and value creation (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012b: 952). This study, with its focus on exploring the experiences of the individuals who have been engaged in NPO-CE collaborations, contributes to answering their call for further analysis. The study's focus has shown new perspectives on the relative importance of a number of attributes already known and discussed within the pre-existing literature. The first offered was the importance to the respondents of the perception of the ability to build and maintain trust within the partnership selection and relationship dynamics themes was a recurrent area of interest. No consensus was discovered on what trust looked like or how what mechanisms might prove foolproof in ensuring trust building and maintenance – it was a personal and situational variable within the parameters of this study - but it was clear that, in the view of the respondents, it was an attribute that should be explicitly discussed within future NPO-CE partnerships.

The second perspective offered by the study concerned the perception of the chronology of any NPO-CE relationship with the research showing that the value-creation; partnership selection and relationship dynamics themes could form a virtuous circle, as opposed to a single time line process, with value creation as its focus. Selsky and Parker (2005:6) assert that 'researchers almost universally agree that [cross sector partnerships] can be examined

according to chronological stages' which Seitanidi (2010:35) suggests comprise the stages, or phases, of 'formation, implementation and outcomes'. Following the literature, this study used three central themes to frame the exploration of the respondents' experiences of the NPO-CE partnership phenomena, which mirrored the chronological approach and phases suggested. However, the findings on the attribute of strategic agility suggest that there is a real benefit to the NPO in viewing the relationship process as a cycle, as opposed to a linear process, in order to continually challenge and refresh the collaboration. Such an approach would enable and embed the need for strategic agility that emerged from the exploration of the phenomenon. Arguably CEs conduct regular planning and change cycles based around the selected financial budgeting system, so in a sense this suggested process may be purely supplemental, however as revealed from the views of the respondents in this study the adoption of a regular review cycle, synchronised with their NPO partner, may enable an NPO to have increased awareness and influence of the collaboration dynamic. This contribution has a direct read across to the study's implications for practitioners, which are discussed in the next section.

## **5.5 Implications of the study for practitioners.**

The study provides a distinct perspective for practitioners on the key attributes required to establish and maintain a sustained NPO-CE relationship. The findings of this study are founded on the increased understanding of NPO-CE collaborations drawn from the personal experiences of senior executives, from both organisational perspectives, who have been involved in the management of such collaborations over a number of years. A number of findings have implications for those involved on NPO-CE cross-sector collaborations. Firstly, the study emphasises the importance of building and maintaining trust, underpinned by the need for the selection of the right people and the establishment of the right processes from the start of the partnership, both of

which have implications for human resource and operations managers. A key finding of this study was that managing NPO-CE administrative and logistical tensions through the implementation of appropriate policies and the selection and empowerment of willing and motivated partnership teams was seen as the constant challenge and focus of the majority of those interviewed. Allied to the importance of the people and processes attributes was the concept of building and sustaining trust between the partners. The role of trust featured within discussions around partnership selection and the research reveals that perception of the presence or lack of trust exerted a similar level of influence in discussions on the maintenance of an established cross-sectoral partnership. It was found that the process of building trust required time and effort and the establishment of relationships at a personal as well as professional level; a finding supported by Glasbergen who discovered that 'Initial trust is an enabling factor for successful partnering. But building trust is not created once and for all. Building trust is a social process that needs to be managed, maintained and supported by positive experiences, both internally and externally, throughout the whole partnership process' (Glasbergen, 2010:5). Effective communication once again emerged as a critical supporting micro-process and was seen by the respondents as the main building block of maintaining trust, and as one of the principal outcomes of selecting the right people and instituting the right processes (Googins and Rochlin, 2000).

A significant implication for practitioners and managers emerges from how this study goes further than just the consideration of the establishment phase of the collaboration, and offers insight to the maintenance phase and its challenges as experienced by senior managers. The study outlines how companies routinely review their existing partnerships and are capable of acting quickly to end relationships that are no longer deemed to add value, not necessarily in pure financial terms, but more specifically in terms of achieving 'the best spend'. It suggests the requirement for the building of an agile organisation that can respond swiftly to changing relationship dynamics driven

by internal change and external forces, often out with the control of those involved in the partnership. Gunasekaran (1999) defines such strategic agility as the capability of surviving and prospering in the competitive environment of continuous and unpredictable change by reacting quickly and effectively to changing markets, driven by custom designed products and service, whilst Gehani (1995) suggests that agile organisations can quickly satisfy customer orders, introduce new products frequently and get in and out of its strategic alliances quickly. This study reinforces the requirement for the constant evaluation of the nature of, and the strategic drivers for, the existing partnership framework once it has been established (Seitanidi and Crane, 2009) – the attribute of strategic agility. Ultimately it provides a lens to understand the perceptions of senior managers of the fluid nature of a sustained NPO-CE relationship that differs from existing formation-focused (Selsky and Parker, 2005; Seitanidi and Crane, 2009) guidance through its affirmation of the non-linear and emergent nature of collaboration (Ring and Van de Ven, 1994; Martin, 2004). The emergence of the importance of strategic agility as an attribute has implications for practitioners at the strategic level and suggests, as NPO-CE collaborations become more common (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012a; Seitanidi and Crane, 2009; Austin, 2000; Rondinelli and London, 2003), a need for managers to attempt to understand the longer-term organisational demands to ensure strategic agility that might be exacted by a sustained NPO-CE relationship, before embarking on such an undertaking.

## **5.6 Consideration of the limitations of the study.**

The aim of this study was to explore sustained NPO-CE relationships at the stakeholder level and identify their perceptions of those attributes that underpin such relationships. To meet this aim the study adopted an interpretivist, phenomenological methodology, in order to attempt to explore and uncover perspectives that had been previously unheard. This approach was facilitated by the absence of any formal hypotheses that might shape the data collection and analysis and the use of semi-structured interviews that

allowed the respondents to describe their experiences as they saw them and thus honoured their perceptions. This study was not intended to confirm or deny the existing literature on NPO-CE collaborations. The adoption of the interpretivist paradigm and phenomenological approach was an attempt to understand the perspectives of those individuals who had experienced the phenomenon of a NPO-CE collaboration and to draw out those attributes that they offered as key to enabling a sustained NPO-CE relationship. Notwithstanding, it is possible to compare and discuss the findings against the pre-existing literature in order to understand any implications arising from the research and help articulate any contributions to knowledge and practice.

However the adoption of an interpretivist methodology presented a number of issues. Firstly, understanding and assessing the extent to which the researcher has adequately reflected the life experiences of the respondents is a complex challenge, and there is no real guide to knowing if the researcher has succeeded in 'making sense of the participant's own sense-making activities' (Smith and Osborn, 2003). Secondly, the methodology adopted leaves the study open to criticism of qualitative research as lacking the 'scientific rigour' and credibility associated with quantitative methods that assume a value-free framework (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Guba and Lincoln, 1995; Coffey, 1999). A risk associated with the adoption of an inductive strategy is that of 'presupposition', which is the suggestion that objective observations cannot be achieved due to a researcher's preconceptions and that the ideas behind the research project can be biased, resulting in misguided observations (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). However, Blaikie (2000) suggests given that data collection without presuppositions are impossible; recognition of the concepts and theories that underpin any research project are needed before any observations can be made. This view is reflected in this research project, and in particular in the generation of the broad themes for the interview protocol and subsequent data analysis coding structures. The justification for the selected methodology for this study was outlined in Chapter Three and it is offered that the methodology was

appropriate to meeting the research aim, particularly in light of the various mitigation strategies that were employed to ensure trustworthiness and reliability: the use of a peer auditor, the extensive use of reflexive journals and the explicit bracketing of the researcher's experience of the phenomenon. Thirdly, although the degree of access to elite respondents from both NPOs and CEs, and consultancy organisations with interests in NPO-CE collaboration - all with rich experience of the phenomenon - was offered as a strength of the study by the author, the sample size of twelve individuals could be called in to question as unrepresentative for such a complex collaboration structure. The sample size emerged as twelve respondents on the basis of achievement of two criteria: the understanding that whilst guidance on sample size does not suggest a set number of interviews, previous research (Lincoln and Guba;1985; Patton , 1990) suggests between twelve to twenty respondents for a heterogeneous sample; and, more importantly, the reduction in the flow of new relevant information from the interviews, which has been described as the achievement of the saturation, or redundancy, point (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Patton,1990).

Arguably one of the strengths of this study was that it considered and explored the experiences of both parties involved in cross-sector relationships and thus gained insight into their respective sectors. Perhaps greater insight into the nature of the relationship between a NPO and CE might have been gained through the adoption of a case study approach focused on a specific NPO-CE collaboration, however it was of note, particularly in the context of this phenomenological research paradigm, that respondents - within NPOs in particular - proved extremely reluctant to engage in specific discussions on the nature of their relationship with a CE with which they were currently in partnership and who were also part of this study. This observation supported the subsequent findings from the study on the importance of trust building and stakeholder management and it was considered that there would be limited insight to be gained if the respondents were uncomfortable with the case study approach.

Finally, whilst adopting a dual-sector approach the study does not explore the nature of the value created, outside of the perspective of the respondents, and thus does not offer the respondents understanding of 'the extent to which society at large benefitted from the partnership' (Seitanidi, 2010:35). In terms of value creation and partnership processes it offers findings on the need for linked interests and mission congruity in order to achieve a sustained NPO-CE partnership. How the attributes that underpin the three central themes of the study might impact on any aspirational societal value creation is a subject area that requires further study.

### **5.7 Suggested areas for further research.**

A number of areas have emerged that as potential themes that may warrant further research in order to build on the findings of this study. The first and perhaps most significant, based on the findings, is the challenge of how to enable the attribute of strategic agility within a NPO? Exploration of the nature and impact of the enablers and attributes required to achieve strategic agility within a NPO and in particular if a requirement for a substantial shift to a more business orientated model would change the intrinsic nature of the NPO, and thus diminish the NPO's "traditional strengths" with a resultant reduction in its attraction as a potential cross-sector partner? (Berger et al., 2004:81). In addition there is an associated requirement to explore the potential impact on human resource and operational management of meeting the need for the right people and the right processes to build a sustained relationship. The second area that may warrant further research is to explore how the identified attributes that underpin the three central themes of the study might impact on social value creation (Seitanidi and Austin, 2012b). Further work could also be justified in building on the existing literature through more exploration of how practitioners could build and maintain trust in a sustained NPO-CE relationship, particularly with reference to experienced NPO and CE managers' perceptions of the role and nature of trust building and maintenance within the partnership process. Development of a decision

making framework for senior managers: Finally, although the nature of this interpretivist, phenomenological approach limits the transferability of findings, as indeed the aim was to explore the experiences of those individuals involved in the phenomenon, it is offered that the findings of the study could be grouped to allow the drafting of a conceptual model that has wider reach and application outside of the FMCG sector. This is suggested on the basis that the senior executives interviewed had a breadth of experience that was not necessarily constrained by geography or sector, and on the inclusion of the experiences of consultants and non-governmental managers who could offer a non-aligned view in terms of operational sectors. This conceptual model is intended as an aid to be considered by the management teams of those NPO and CEs hoping to engage in a cross-sector partnership at an early stage, and which could complement the existing guidance. The conceptual model, underpinned as it is by the research process of this study, is intended to illustrate the core findings of the study in discussions with both NPOs and CEs, particularly during the initial engagement and decision making processes prior to embarking on a NPO-CE collaboration. In order to assess if such a conceptual model was able to provide a meaningful contribution to practitioners it is further suggested that there would be a requirement to conduct of a number of evaluation processes on any discussion framework, initially within an operational sustained NPO-CE collaboration, and with further exposure to the cross-sector partnership support organisations such as the UK Institute for Fundraisers and the UK Charity Commissions.

## **5.8 Personal professional learning and next steps.**

An integral part of the maintenance of trustworthiness strategy employed within this study was the bracketing of the authors experience of the phenomenon. A key element that emerged from this explicit consideration was the realisation that the author perceived NPO-CE collaborations as a 'good thing' and a valid option for most NPOs seeking to build a sustained



resource stream to achieve their mission. This view was not unique, with many suggesting that cross-sector collaborations offered great advantages to both partners and as such could be considered a 'win-win' scenario (Googins and Rochlin, 2000). However the conduct of the research process for this study has altered the author's perception of the advantages of undertaking a NPO-CE collaboration. The study has revealed that engaging in a NPO-CE collaboration comes with significant risks to the individuals involved and to their organisations - particularly for the NPO. It appears that the CEs engaged in this study by their very nature operate at high tempo, in a state of near-constant change, in order to meet their objectives as a firm and satisfy stakeholders in a difficult economic climate. The essence of organisational instability pervaded throughout the data collection and consideration of the findings and even the most operationally efficient cross-sector collaborations appeared at risk to external forces. Thus the research suggested that for those individuals involved within a NPO the establishment of a partnership with a CE should not be seen as the achievement of a steady state, as there existed a real risk that the organisation with which they have engaged was likely to undergo significant change within the near to medium term. That is not to say that the construct should be avoided, indeed a it was seen that a great many benefits accrue for both sides from a successful and sustained collaboration, however the author has begun to understand that a cross-sector collaboration may not be the best development path for all and that it places significant burdens on those involved who most likely will face a wide range of challenges. It is hoped that the conceptual model for NPO-CE collaboration that has emerged from this study can prove a useful aid to those organisations and their managers considering a NPO-CE collaboration.

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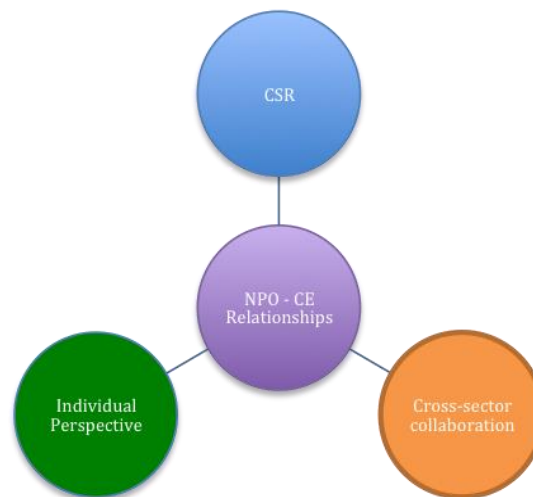
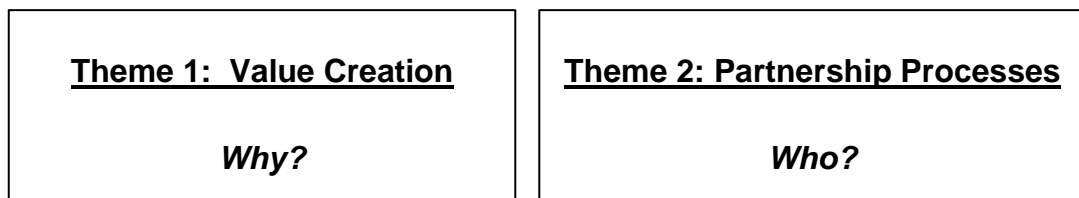
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## Chapter 7. Appendices.

### Appendix 1 Introductory Discussion Framework for Interviews.

**Research Aim:**  
*to explore sustained NPO-CE collaborations  
from the stakeholder perspective.*



**Theme 3: Relationship Dynamics**

*How?*

**Appendix 2 Interview Guide – including supplementary questions (if required).**

1. *Warm up: personal introduction, brief description of research, interview structure, confidentiality, and recording.*

2. *Request short overview of respondent's role and responsibilities*

3. Talk through theme overview (Appendix 1) – Explain subject area themes.

4. **Theme 1: Value Creation**

4.1 Could you explain what you have experienced as the benefits and, if relevant, pitfalls of the collaboration (s) you have been involved in?

*Supplementary (if required): 'In your experience.....':*

- *What value is/was achieved in the partnership?*
- *How is/was the value defined?*
- *Give a practical example of 'value add' from the relationship?*
- *How do you feel that the partnership has added value to your partner organization?*

5. **Theme 2: Partnership Process**

5.1. Could you explain your role in the partnership process, including selection and engagement with the partner and its teams – what was important to you?

*Supplementary (if required): 'In your experience.....':*

- *What qualified the organization for your consideration?*

- *Could you explain the importance to you of any process/due diligence conducted ahead of the partnership?*

## 6. **Theme 3: Relationship Dynamics**

6.1 Could you explain what was the most important part to you of the process of building and sustaining of the relationship?

*Supplementary (if required): 'In your experience.....':*

- *How do you feel the relationship has changed/grown/developed since the start of the partnership?*
- *What are/were the key drivers of change? (Prompt: market conditions / personnel change/ stakeholder influence/societal changes/financial or fiscal influences).*
- *How was the effect of these drivers managed by both entities and what was your role?*

7. Finally, is there anything else you would like to add in terms of your perception/views on the key attributes underpinning the relationship(s)?

*[NB: If not covered in interview – raise possibility of introduction to further contacts...within own organization or in partner organization?]*

*[Ask for initial feedback – check interviewee comfortable with next steps, including opportunity to review transcript and record own comments]*

### **Appendix 3 Example e-mail to prospective participant at a CE (after initial contact authorized).**

**Subject: Request for Assistance for Doctoral Research Thesis – David Axon**

1. As discussed It would be excellent if I could be linked with someone at a relatively senior level who has an understanding of the nature of the organization's relationship with a non-profit entity, predominantly at the strategic, rather than operational level. Ideally, someone with a feel for the CSR, sustainability or communications and marketing functions?

2. An overview of the research project is outlined in the attachment, but in brief what I am hoping to achieve with this interview is to gain an understanding of how a well-established and successful relationship has been founded, nurtured and supported for mutual value creation: an exploration of how commerce feels 'it can be done'. I am very much looking for the personal views and perceptions of those individuals who have a deep experience (good or bad!) of managing a relationship with a non-profit or charitable organization.

3. For any interviews I envisage a max of 45 - 60 minutes, just running through some very open-ended questions about the non-profit relationships, based around "what the academic and business literature suggests", conducted either over the phone or face-to-face (my preference – I am very willing to travel). A pre-brief of the respondent can be provided well ahead of the chat. From a research ethics perspective all interviews must be conducted under UK university research ethics guidelines, primarily under the broad precept of informed consent. A form will be provided ahead of the interview for the respondent to sign to this effect. Anonymity for interviewee and organization involved is absolutely an option if required, and a transcript of the interview will be provided to the interviewee for approval before use in the project's analysis stage.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if there are any further questions or if any clarification is required,

All best wishes,

## Appendix 4 Information Sheet and Consent Form.



### **Information Sheet: Request for your participation in a study on the nature of cross-sector collaboration within the FMCG Food sector.**

I would very much like to invite you participate in a research study on cross-sector collaboration within the Doctor of Business Administration programme at Edinburgh Napier University.

The purpose of the research study is to explore how key individuals felt about their experiences of working within, or in support of, a cross-sector collaboration.

I invite you to participate in this study because I believe that you have the experience and knowledge to be able to illuminate the nature and associated challenges and rewards of working in a collaboration with those across a sector divide.

If you agree to participate I would ask that you consider the following:

- Take part in a one-to-one interview, which will preferably be recorded for later transcription. This transcript will be returned to you once prepared, with an opportunity to comment on content.
- The interview should be no more than an hour in length.
- I would very much prefer that the interviews are conducted face-to-face and I am very willing to travel to ensure that we achieve the interview.
- All data will be anonymous; your name will be replaced with a participant designator that only reflects your business sector (i.e. CD = commercial; ND = non-profit).
- Your organization, and any other organization you mention, will also be anonymous. This will be conducted at the transcription stage and you will have the opportunity to assess any sensitivity in terms of your organizational guidelines.
- All data collected will be kept in a secure place to which only I have access.
- The results may be published in a journal or presented at a conference.

If you wish to discuss the nature of this study with an independent official of the University who knows about this project and the nature of the process, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Lois Farquharson, Faculty Director of Research Degrees, at Edinburgh Napier University (Tel: 0131 455 4345 / e-mail: [l.farquharson@napier.ac.uk](mailto:l.farquharson@napier.ac.uk))

If you have read and understood the information sheet and you wish to participate in the study, please complete the Consent Form (attached).

**Consent Form.**

**Exploring cross-sector collaboration in the FMCG Food sector.**

I have read and understood the Information Sheet attached and this Consent Form.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions about the nature of my participation.

I understand that I am under no obligation to participate in this study and can withdraw at any time, with no obligation to give any reason for my withdrawal from the process.

I agree to participate in this study.

Name of Participant:

Signature of Participant:

Date:

**Researcher Contact Details:**

Name of researcher: David Axon

Address: c/o Dr Lois Farquharson

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## **Appendix 5 Research Diary – Examples of Bracketing Statements.**

### **Initial Bracketing Statement.**

My first exposure to the phenomenon of cross-sector relationships was during the Reputations and Relationships module of my MBA. I initially worked with an international charity in South Africa on the development of their funding model with a focus on encouraging the improvement of the charity's relationship with local businesses. The impact of the work was tremendously encouraging and extremely rewarding at a personal level and as a result I selected cross-sector relationships as the basis for my MBA dissertation, focusing on working with a UK National Health Service arms-length body on the establishment of relationships with commercial entities both nationally and internationally. After a period in the commercial business world I began working with a small charity that aims to establish and sustain mutually beneficial relationships with small charities and social enterprises in Africa with international businesses.

Having worked on a variety of projects over this period after completing my MBA, I came to realize that no consistent methodology existed for charities or NGOs wishing to engage with the commercial world, other than on the basis of a traditional philanthropic relationship: that is, asking for grants or one-off gestures of support for a specific, bounded, project. Very few sustained, mutually beneficial relationships appeared to exist and those that did appeared to have evolved by chance, rather than have been specifically created. The area of food security seemed to offer a number of such examples and it was within this area I began to explore established relationships to try and understand what made such collaborations successful.

### **Bracketing: Personal Motivation for Study**

Having expressed an interest in the area of cross-sector collaborations, I was approached by one of the social enterprises that the charity had been offering

marketing and business development support. Having developed an ingenious piece of simple and cost-effective equipment the enterprise was looking to grow their business base by partnering with a major food producer, starting with a potential to collaboration on providing support to cotton growers in southern Zambia. The social enterprise is relatively well established and had worked with larger commercial organizations before on smaller short-term projects, however the Director who approached was seeking guidance on how they might establish and build a longer-term relationship with an international commercial entity. Specifically, they needed some understanding of the corporate perspective of a cross-sector relationship so that they might take steps to adjust their organization in order to appear attractive and viable as a partner to a large corporation. This request for a framework of engagement formed the basis of my 'business problem' that I felt could in part be addressed through the DBA programme. Having experience of operating both within the commercial and non-profit environments and observing how individuals in key positions can make a real difference, it also allowed me to develop further my interest in how people perceive and understand their interactions with others. I believe that individuals, the relationships they establish and maintain, and their continued questioning of the world and their place within it, are the key to successful, sustained cross-sector relationships. I believe that such relationships are not established, maintained and sustained by institutional intent alone: the role of the individuals chosen to effect these relationships, those at the 'coal-face', are the key to achieving success (or not). Thus a phenomenological approach, which attempts to capture the individual's understanding of their role within the cross-sector relationship phenomena, would appear coherent with my interest in exploring such relationships as the basis for gaining a greater understanding of cross-sector collaborations.

Finally, my belief - developed over my years operating within the public and charitable sector, particularly within international development – is that cross-sector partnerships are an underutilized resource. I see them as a 'good thing' that has potential benefits for all involved. This belief forms an important part of



my axiology at is thus expressly stated here as part of the bracketing process inherent within the phenomenological approach. How, and if, this belief was sustained throughout the process of this study is central to the following discussion on my reactions during the process.

### **Bracketing: Reactions during Pilot Study.**

The conduct of the pilot study first demonstrated to me the real need to be able to bracket my assumptions ahead of the conduct of the main study. For convenience I had selected respondents for the pilot study that I had ready access to and subsequently approached individuals who both knew me and of my interest in cross-sector relationships. After conducting a number of interviews I began to realize that the respondents' perceptions of my beliefs in part influenced their responses: it appeared that they wanted me to succeed and offered answers that were on the whole supportive of their perception of my belief that cross-sector relationships were a 'good thing'. I realized that I would have to ensure that for the main study the selected respondents were, as far as possible, not aware of my personal beliefs on the phenomena. I had to work closely with the organization that I was hoping to support with the resulting framework from the study to select respondents that not only met their requirements, in term of potential future collaborations, but also were drawn from outside my existing personal network, and were thus unaware of my personal beliefs.

As a response to the learning from the pilot study I agreed with my 'client' the type of organization his social enterprise would be most interested in attempting to collaborate with and selected a number to approach, ensuring that I had no previous association with the selected commercial entities. The pilot study learnings further reinforced the need to apply the mitigation strategies associated with maintaining objectivity within the interpretivist approach as outlined in in the selected methodology. Throughout the conduct of this study the researcher's beliefs, assumptions and response to the research process were recorded and reflected upon in an attempt to catalogue and understand

any personal influence on the nature of the study. This process proved an integral part of working to understand the data, particularly when working to make connections between the interview interpretations and the literature and attempting to develop insights about the phenomena as experienced and recounted by those individuals interviewed.

**Appendix 6 Summary of attributes from key findings by category: Data Analysis Steps 2 and 3 (Creswell, 2007).**

Category	Attribute / Microprocess	Key Findings	Example Textual – Structural Significant Statement selected post-horizonalization
Value Creation	Risk – Reward Balance	Achieve best spend	<i>'are we spending our money on programmes that have a direct impact on our profit, and if not, why should we maintain these projects? CD1</i>
		Reputation management	<i>'I think the return would be...I mean clearly that's where it's the reputation, the corporate reputational piece.'</i> CO2 .
		Increased sales	<i>'With certification the product they offer clearly translates into product communication, that's the big thing. So the tool they offer translates into a credible product claim. So whether you do it for defensive reasons or you do it for aggressive reasons, it needs to translate to return on investment'. CD2</i>
		Greater resources to deploy	<i>'we engaged on the ground with [the CE] because we desperately needed funding to support our volunteer programmes' ND1</i>
	Stakeholder Management - External	Alienate support base  Mission at risk	<i>' we have privileged access, earned over many hard years, and we are respected for our neutrality..just a whiff of a different agenda, say getting</i>

			<i>access for companies seeking profit or political influence would kill us stone dead in some areas..literally!’ ND2</i>
		Wider stakeholder engagement	<i>‘I think the return would be...I mean clearly that’s where it’s the reputation, the corporate reputational piece.’ CO2 .</i>
		Increased sales Greater resources	<i>‘we engaged on the ground with [the CE] because we desperately needed funding to support our volunteer programmes’ ND1</i>  <i>‘.....[we decided]... let’s start working with them. Because it seems it’s a better fit for what we want to do, they seem to be more pragmatic, they seem to offer a tool which can literally help us scale [up] and appeal to a broader market’ CD1.</i>
	Stakeholder Management - Internal	Internal discord potential	<i>‘...doesn’t matter how much they gave us, we couldn’t accept it as it would cause outrage from all of our subscribers and we would lose most of our core supporters’ .FP1</i>
		Potential reduced internal confidence through failure	<i>‘..this generation of employees seem to need more than just a job that pays the bills...the great companies strive to</i>

			<i>meet their needs as people and citizens of a global society....the fact that [CE] does great work in sustainability and that the employees can get involved, is important to their sense of social contract [with the CE]' CO2..</i>
		Increased engagement	<i>: 'I don't want to sound all 'holier than thou' but I really feel that [CE] is doing something good here and that makes me want to come in to work' CD3</i>
		Greater effect through greater resources	<i>' ... was not all plain sailing....it could be tricky...we just wanted the funding and to be left alone to do what we wanted to do...but working with [CE] reps [representatives] made us think about the 'how' of what we were doing differently....it was a good learning experience for me' ND1</i>
Partnership Processes	Linked Interests	Resource demand	<i>aims 'the big charities [NPO] had the manpower but not always the capability to get it done....some of the villages in [region in Northern Kenya] were in a terrible state...women walking miles, at risk, to get dirty water in old diesel drums... getting attacked or raped, horrible stuff, [it] got us all together at that time.....they were looking for solutions and we had the tech that could make this thing work so it seemed like a great fit, but we had to find a way to get together and</i>

			<i>make it work' .CD3</i>
		Mission complementarity	<i>'So the common ground was this concept of community and... So it was a complementary strategy that I suppose [CE] looked at it and said actually, what we need to do is we need the workforce to stay there, we need to do more than just support the farmer, perhaps we need to do more community based work, and that complemented the work that these guys were doing that you knew about. And so that was the reason for the interactions. CD2</i>
		Insufficient joint interests	<i>'...[attempted partnership]..totally failed at that time..... at that time the big corporate [global food brand] together with [NPO], didn't work out. .[NPO] were appealing to the more activist type of consumers that wouldn't buy [global food brand] anyway'. ND1.</i>
	Building Trust	Communication – informal and formal	<i>'I remember meetings where we sat across the table from each other, not saying anything, looking for ways to move forward and get things done...its like we were 'big business'...come to exploit everyone...it took a long time...and a lot of beers..to get us talking openly about what we wanted...it's a bit more structured now but back then we were just relying on</i>

			<i>personalities to make it work' . CD2</i>
		Contractual structures	<i>'In the case of projects where an NGO was an implementer, they're normally ..... selling the tools. I mean this is almost a commercial...even contractually this becomes a contract. I mean with [NGO] it's a contract. So [NGO] would get premiums and fees and at least in the past they were getting origin development, basically money every year to develop strategic supply in certain places.'</i> CD4.
		Due diligence	<i>'partnerships, who ever they were with, need contracts and the contractual process has to be applied...its how we deal with all of our suppliers.....services ...consultants and the like..[it] is a de-risking measure for [CE] that we all understand'. CD4</i>
	Internal capability	Leadership	<i>'It's what we always tell our clients: recruit or select the right person to lead the partnership, especially for the early stages, or you will be planning to fail . CO2</i>
		Sufficient internal resources	<i>'...[we] didn't understand just how complicated the arrangement would be for us...in the end we had to ask for outside help just to deal with [the CE]'</i> ND3.
		Insufficient	<i>'sometimes the company has to step</i>

		Organizational capacity	<i>in and provide help with the contractual process, it can be difficult for the smaller charities and NGOs, who just want to get on the ground and deliver and hate to see funding being used to support internal processes....although that has changed over the recent years with the larger, global charities ..[who]... often have a more commercial capability....particularly in terms of fundraising effort...but not all can do that'. CO2</i>
Relationship Dynamics	Right people	Motivated and well-led	<i>'you needed the right people to make this thing [collaboration] work....our team leader was great ..he had credibility with [the NPO] as he had been in country before and they knew him...and he was mates with their Director.....and he was senior.. and experienced enough to be able to take all these great ideas back to the [regional leadership team] and sell them the story.CO2</i>
		Unable to engage across sector	<i>'....in my experience where it works best is when all of the team have bought-in to the plan...and also these things [collaboration structures] are complicated...with lots of processes on lots of differing levels...so its important that guys can feel they can step-up and take decisions to make sure that things keep moving...we tell</i>



			<i>our clients all the time' CO2</i>
Right processes	Control measures and division of responsibility		<i>: 'I mean sometimes some of these NGOs they have a pretty good reputation and they test the companies they work with, especially when it's big corporation. There's a lot of going through the plans and the programmes which basically leads to a decision of whether to fund or not, and that's how the trust and due diligence is done' CO1</i>
	Inadequate communications measures		<i>'.....people found it difficult....different ways of working...different language almost...and who can make the decisions...it was tough for some of them' CD3</i>
Strategic agility	Aware and capable of conducting change		<i>'we've found that things move quickly in business, mergers and acquisitions, re-structuring and rationalizations often mean that companies can change owners and a charity can suddenly find itself aligned with someone they would never consider being with...it's risky'. CO2</i>
	Risk-reward equation unbalanced		<i>'once [CE] was acquired it [sustainability programme] changed...[CE – new owner] loved the brand enhancement but priorities shifted..efficiencies were to be made and all existing relationships were reviewed .....and quickly run-down if they weren't adopted by [CE-new owner]' CD5.</i>
Maintenance of	Effective communications		<i>'And that [compromise] comes with trust and trusting those people. I think</i>

	trust	and relationships	<p><i>that's been a real driver if you like of the relationships with the [NGO] for example, is getting that trust. Yeah, we don't get on all the time, that's fine. But we have that trust where we can say something and it's not taken the wrong way, hopefully anyway'. CD2</i></p>
		<p>Poor communications internal and external</p>	<p><i>'.....looking them in the eye .....and knowing them personally made bumps in the road a little easier to deal with' NP2.</i></p> <p><i>'I think the area where trust is mostly discussed in this space is about actual endorsement. Because obviously these all translate, even the community studies all translate into some form of corporate communications. And it's always a fine line between what you can say, you cannot say, what NGOs are comfortable to say, what the company want to say. CD1.</i></p>

**Appendix 7 Example of textual and structural description: Data analysis  
Steps 4 and 5 (Creswell, 2007) - Respondent CD1.**

**Summary: CD1.**

CD1 a VP (Sustainability) for a global food manufacturer had moved into his present senior role from communications and marketing, where he was involved in designing and delivering corporate communications strategies to highlight the collaborations with which the company was engaged. At the time of the interview process he had responsibility for the delivery of such programmes and his structural focus was very much on exploring the articulation of value creation in a way that demonstrated the worth of the cross-sector collaborations in a meaningful way to his internal and external stakeholders.

**Textual description: CD1 - factors of cross-sector collaboration.**

Value creation: the category of value creation was of primary interest to CD1. His perception of his experience of the phenomenon reflected his daily concerns over the justification of the continued support of the CSR-delivery programmes with which he was involved. He engaged widely, with both internal and external stakeholders and travelled extensively to visit existing projects. Motivated and absolutely 'bought-in' to the CSR agenda he left an impression - at the practical, experiential level - of 'business-being-business' irrespective of the nature of the partnership, collaboration, or intent of the delivery programme.

Partnership Processes: Closely allied to the CD1's focus on value creation was the understanding that selecting and working with partners that had linked interests through: geography; core purpose; and a willingness to engage and respond to the demands of a corporate partnership, were intrinsic to any successful collaboration. He discussed reputation at the global level, and

offered some thoughts on the experiences of others, including competitors, that served as a warning to getting collaborations right.

Relationship Dynamics: CD1 described the value of being able to rely on motivated and competent people within his own organization in order to do his job but his most interesting insight in terms of this study was his clear focus on the cyclical review process conducted by a corporate entity with regards to budgeting and return on investment. He had earlier described the requirement to justify best-spend, but he went on to describe how this was revisited, informally and formally, on a regular basis within the organization, and how such cross-sector collaborations were compared with other spending across functions.

**Structural description: CD1 - factors of cross-sector phenomenon..**

Value creation: CD1 spoke of the challenges of capturing and communicating value creation. He suggested that he required almost two different forms of language: that of talking to delivery partners and that of translating the value created to an effective and meaningful format to his superiors within the organization. He realized that for the cross-sector programmes to be effective and sustained he had to couch their progress to the management team in financial terms, and to demonstrate that what was being achieved through the collaboration could not be achieved more effectively through other, less-expensive means, hence the discussion on the concept of 'best spend'. Being able to link the programme to increased sales, directly, appeared to be the holy grail for CD1. Many meetings seemed to fill his day and his data-capture and presentation skills appeared to be at the forefront of his skill-sets for the position, not least a firm grasp of the internal reporting management system.

Partnership Processes: Focused at the strategic level. He described the scenario of their relationship with a certification organization and how this had been revisited based on recent internal and external pressures. One of the

contributing structural factors appeared to be a lack of adequate communications measures at that stage of the collaboration's development.

Relationship Dynamics: Interested in the contractual, governance and compliance processes. Indicated that they had, in the past, help to build the capacity of a partner in order to be able to work with them. Interesting that they were prepared to do that, but it did raise the question of how did the partner maintain their status as a partner and not impact on their core mission and thus affect their own stakeholders?

## **Appendix 8 Respondents' Profiles and summary of structural descriptions.**

This Appendix provides a summary of the structural descriptions of the experiences of the respondents of the cross-sector collaboration. The descriptions are drawn from the interview transcripts, responses to initial contact of the respondents from the interviewer and extracts from the research reflexive journal. The structural descriptions provide context for the experiences of the respondents and are reflected, where appropriate, within the textual-structural descriptions and the generation of the description of the essence of the phenomenon.

### **CE respondents.**

The CE-based respondents all had significant experience of operating across the NPO-CE inter-sector boundary and had thus experienced the cross-sector collaboration phenomenon in a variety of different ways. All were currently engaged in some facet of the managing of a cross-sector collaboration when interviewed, thus offering not only a rich set of experiences but also reflecting a contemporary commercial view, albeit from their individual perspective. CD1 a VP (Sustainability) for a global food manufacturer had moved into his present senior role from communications and marketing, where he was involved in designing and delivering corporate communications strategies to highlight the collaborations with which the company was engaged. At the time of the interview process he had responsibility for the delivery of such programmes and his structural focus was very much on exploring the articulation of value creation in a way that demonstrated the worth of the cross-sector collaborations in a meaningful way to his internal and external stakeholders. CD2 worked for a global food brand and had deep experience of initiating cross-sector collaborations for over twelve years and was heavily involved in establishing the certification process for the support of growers. He had spent significant time 'on the ground' in West and Southern Africa and had worked with many NPOs as part of the collaboration and partnering process initiated by his company.

CD2 spoke most of the structural issues around the establishment of a trust with NPO partners. He saw the value of knowing the person 'on the other side of the table', getting out in the field, and working in a collaborative manner in order to break down potential barriers to success. CD3 owns and manages a social enterprise that is concerned with the provision of safe and clean drinking water. He is currently based in Johannesburg, RSA and lives cross-sector collaboration every day, dealing with NPOs and other CEs from global water charities to local church groups. He has experience of both successful and unsuccessful cross-sector collaborations, which offered an interesting contrasting set of perspectives of the phenomenon. His inclusion as a respondent was enabled by a fortunate set of circumstances that allowed an interview in Belgium at a sustainability technology conference. He is in the process of attempting to build a collaboration with a major commodity corporation and his structural focus was on how best to prepare and present his organization as a viable candidate for a collaboration. CD4 was a Director of Compliance at the same global food company as CD1 and had experienced the phenomenon within a number of different engagement processes with a number of NPO partners and potential NPO partners. Her experience of the phenomenon afforded the perspective of an overview of the 'right processes' to initiate and sustain a cross-sector collaboration, not least giving some insight to her experience of the governance challenges of the phenomenon. CD5, a communications director with a UK global food brand, had experienced the phenomenon both on the ground within a Sub-Saharan African country - where she was involved with agreeing the joint-formulation of both internal and external messaging – and later within the UK headquarters dealing with the communication challenges of a changing priority for the company's sustainability and engagement programme after a take-over of the company. The inherent risk in a poorly considered or delivered communications strategy was at the foremost of CD5's structural issues.

## **NPO respondents.**

The NPO respondents consisted of three senior managers currently employed within the charitable sector (ND1,ND2,ND3) and two fundraising professionals (FP1 and FP2). ND1 was the director of a charity engaged in sustainability projects in Africa, India and the Far East. He had personally experienced the phenomenon whilst working in Indonesia on a forestry project that had engaged a number of commercial partners as well as his charity. His experience within the sector had resulted in his clear focus on the structural issues surrounding the potential risk to reputation and the subsequent impact on stakeholders. ND2 was the Chief Operating Officer of the UK arm of a child-protection charity. He had current experience of the phenomenon due to the charity's ongoing engagement with a global food company and their community-based projects in West Africa, centered around the protection of women and children. ND3 was the Director of a UK-based health charity and had experienced the phenomenon working for his charity on a national awareness campaign in partnership with CEs. FP1 and FP2 were fundraising professionals and had extensive experience of the demands of fundraising and partnership selection and engagement. Both were employed on temporary contracts within major charities within the UK and had been engaged with a clear remit to generate new ways of working to achieve sustainable funding for their respective charities. Both had experience of cross-sector collaborations and were willing to be interviewed on the basis of their interest in the subject area. For both respondents their significant structural issues centered on the identification of shared interests and pre-partnership selection protocols.

## **Other Respondents.**

CO1 was the Director of a consultancy based in Switzerland that specialized in providing support to NPOs seeking to engage with CEs. He had originally worked within the commercial sector and moved into disaster relief with a number of charities in mainland Europe. He offered an interesting overview of



the partnership and collaboration processes and was predominantly concerned with the support of NPOs in the decision making phase of any potential collaboration. CO2, a life-coach currently working within a learning and development consultancy to a CE, provided insight into the institutional and personnel benefits afforded by a cross-sector collaboration. Coming from a HR background CO2 focused on the structural considerations of the challenges to personnel in any collaboration framework.