



## Engineering Project Organization Journal >

Volume 2, 2012 - [Issue 4](#)

434 | 34  
Views | CrossRef citations to date | Altmetric

Original Articles

# Collaboration in public construction— contractual incentives, partnering schemes and trust

Geert Dewulf & Anna Kadefors

Pages 240-250 | Received 05 Apr 2012, Accepted 10 Apr 2012, Published online: 11 Jun 2012

<https://doi.org/10.1080/21573727.2012.684876>



[Full Article](#)

[Figures & data](#)

[References](#)

[Citations](#)

[Metrics](#)

[Reprints & Permissions](#)

[Read this article](#)

[Share](#)

## Abstract

It is increasingly common that public construction projects are procured and managed with explicit intentions to establish closer collaboration between partners. Opportunities for negotiation and the freedom to choose partners are more restricted in a public setting than in a private one. Thus, many relational requirements that are generally considered essential to trust-based collaboration are more difficult to fulfil. Based on two case studies from the Netherlands and one from Sweden, we investigate how this formalized context, including formal partnering models to support relationship management, influences relational development in public sector construction contracts. Collaboration is primarily needed in projects where uncertainty is high and exchange conditions cannot be comprehensively defined. The contractual ambiguities, together with the limited opportunities for pre-contractual sense-making and relationship-

building, imply that the early post-contractual phase is of significantly higher importance in public projects than in private ones. After signing a contract, it is important that the parties use the interpretive flexibility to signal trust and commitment and also that joint learning processes are organized to resolve ambiguities and enable joint learning. Formal partnering models are helpful in structuring this interaction, but also incentive arrangements may be important in shaping interaction and signalling trust.

Keywords:

Collaboration

partnerships

trust

#### Related Research Data

[Strategizing for anticipated risks and turbulence in large-scale engineering projects](#)

Source: International Journal of Project Management

[Incentive Mechanisms for Project Success](#)

Source: Journal of Management in Engineering

[The seven pillars of partnering A guide to second generation partnering](#)

Source: Unknown Repository

[Trust, Reciprocity, and Social History](#)

Source: Games and Economic Behavior

[Conceptual Model of Partnering and Alliancing](#)

Source: Journal of Construction Engineering and Management

[Developmental Processes of Cooperative Interorganizational Relationships](#)

Source: Academy of Management Review

[Not So Different After All: A Cross-Discipline View Of Trust](#)

Source: Academy of Management Review

[Partnering: what is it, when should it be used, and how should it be implemented?](#)

#### Related research

People also read

Recommended articles

Cited by  
34

## Information for

Authors

R&D professionals

Editors

Librarians

Societies

## Opportunities

Reprints and e-prints

Advertising solutions

Accelerated publication

Corporate access solutions

## Open access

Overview

Open journals

Open Select

Dove Medical Press

F1000Research

## Help and information

Help and contact

Newsroom

All journals

Books

## Keep up to date

Register to receive personalised research and resources  
by email

 Sign me up

  

  

Copyright © 2025 Informa UK Limited Privacy policy Cookies Terms & conditions

Accessibility



Registered in England & Wales No. 01072954  
5 Howick Place | London | SW1P 1WG