Erasmus+ Partnerships

The Beginner's Guide





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ERASMUS+ PARTNERSHIPS. THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE

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Contents

Introduction4
1. Project concept8
1.1. Needs analysis10
1.2. Defining project objectives16
1.3. Activity planning19
1.4. Defining project results23
2. Essential elements of project implementation
2.1. Project management28
2.2. Monitoring and evaluation
2.3. Outcome dissemination and sustainability
2.4. Project impact
Examples of projects – Key Action 2
Erasmus+ project implementation outline
Links41
Publications

Introduction

When Erasmus+ was launched in 2014, it was mainly associated with student mobility. Now, almost a decade later, this perception has changed. Public awareness has been clarified that this major EU initiative supports the development of various forms of education and training and promotes sport projects and the projects for the young people and sports. The main objective of the programme is to realise social potential and promote lifelong learning.

The Erasmus+ 2021–2027 is divided into five fields corresponding to areas in which formal, non-formal and informal education takes place: Higher Education, School Education, Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education and Youth Education. There are two decentralised actions in each, i.e. the ones managed at a national level*. In Poland, they are operated by the Foundation for the Development of the Education System, which is the National Agency for the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes:

- Key Action 1 offers funding for supranational exchanges (known as the learning mobility of individuals), whose participants can be pupils, students, adult learners, education staff and company employees. Mobility participants can acquire knowledge and skills (vocational, linguistic, digital, etc.) that are useful when developing a career in the labour market, pursuing an education pathway, and in private life. What is more, upon the completion of their exchange, they build greater intercultural awareness and become active participants in society.
- New Action 2 funds cooperation partnerships, i.e. projects focussing on international cooperation of educational institutions, companies and organisations that also involve mobility. Depending on the objectives of a project, characteristics of participating actors, and expected impact on the partners and their stakeholders, project consortia can vary in scale and scope. However, the principal objective of cooperation is the development, transfer and implementation of innovative practices, as well as joint running of initiatives that promote interaction, mutual learning and exchange of experiences at a European level. It is vital that projects carried out under Key Action 2 make project results, i.e. developed solutions and good practices, available at a local, regional, national and transnational level.

The programme also includes Key Action 3 managed by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), which has been designed to support policy development and cooperation at an EU level. Key Action 3 promotes the development of new policies that can contribute to modernisation and systemic reforms in education, training, youth and sports.



This guide focuses on Erasmus+ Key Action 2. Depending on the field a wide range of actors may carry out projects under Key Action 2; non-governmental organisations (associations and foundations), public and private kindergartens, schools and universities, as well as companies and various types of institutions involved in education (libraries, learning centres, museums, national parks and even penal institutions). This publication outlines opportunities offered by the projects and the benefits of their implementation. And the latter will be greater the more carefully planned activities are. This applies to all aspects of project implementation, ranging from communication and management, through training and cooperation with partners, to the dissemination of project results. Using the project development methodology presented in this guide will help you draw up a quality plan.

To do so, a needs analysis should be the starting point for your work. Each project should present a solution to an identified problem, and activities should improve the situation, which can prove challenging. Before developing a project concept, you should analyse the needs of individuals, groups and institutions to whom the project will be addressed. The development of the applicant and partner organisations can serve as a great driving force for a project.

To successfully pursue your goal, you need to define project objectives and plan the activities accordingly. These steps should lead to project outcomes that will satisfy the identified needs. Once you have completed the planning stage and defined the project objectives and results you want to achieve, you need to consider which of the options offered by the Key Action 2 you want to use and which field of the programme you want to focus on.

What is on offer? Under Erasmus+ Key Action 2 (2021–2027), at a national level, applicants can submit proposals for the funding of Cooperation Partnerships (under Key Action 220) and Small-scale Partnerships (Key Action 210). Cooperation Partnerships call for the involvement of at least three institutions from three different EU Member States and third countries associated with the programme. Key Action 220 projects can last from 12 to 36 months and can have a budget of EUR 120,000, EUR 250,000 and EUR 400,000. Small-scale Partnerships, on the other hand, were designed for applicants taking their first steps in the programme. These kinds of



projects must involve at least two organisations from two different countries, they last between 6 and 24 months, and have a budget of EUR 30,000 or EUR 60,000.

To avoid mistakes, a careful analysis of needs and opportunities is essential to make sure, for example, that you do not embark on a task that exceeds the organisational and financial capacity of your institution. It is worth remembering that although a project grant under Key Action 2 can cover up to 100% of the project costs, Erasmus+ National Agencies only pay 80% of the grant to the beneficiaries in the form of an advance payment. The remainder of the grant is paid once the project has been settled.

This guide is not intended as an instruction manual for submitting proposals under Erasmus+, so it does not provide hints on what to enter and in which section, or how to justify each activity. However, what you will find here is guidance on the steps that you need to take in order to create a successful project. Using the proposed methodology will allow for the development of a good project plan, increasing the chances of obtaining funding and, once the financial agreement is signed, will facilitate the smooth completion of the activities and the achievement of the expected results.

We wish you an enjoyable read and success in your projects!



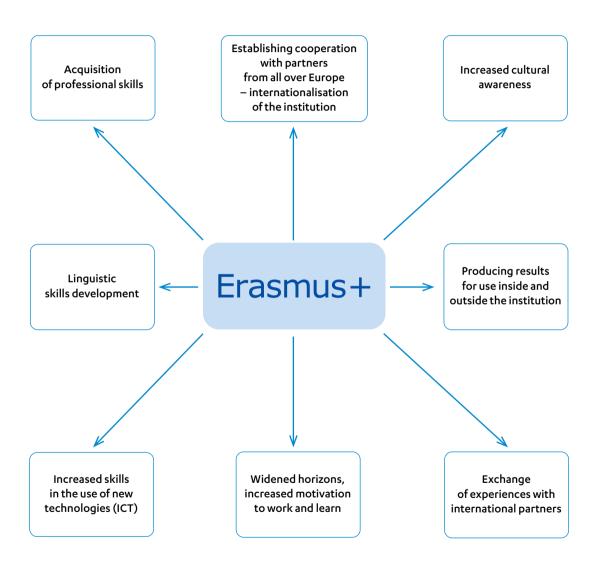


1. Project concept



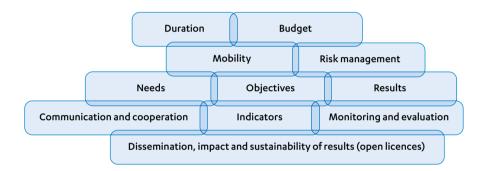
PROJECT CONCEPT

Benefits of Erasmus+ projects





Project: a complex undertaking intended to be carried out over a specific period of time and aimed at the achievement of a defined objective with using specified resources



1.1. Needs analysis

As stated in the introduction, your work on a partnership project should begin with analysing the needs of your institution or organisation. In other words, you should first identify the problems it faces and improvements that should be made. The subject of such an analysis could be, for example, areas in which the poorest learning outcomes are achieved; competencies of staff, pupils, students, adult learners and teachers that need to be further developed; or measures your organisation would like to introduce. This is why, at the project planning stage, it is worth entertaining the question of what should be done in order to improve the quality of teaching and education, raise the competencies of staff, teachers and learners, increase the effectiveness of activities, etc.



Determining the needs of the institution/organisation is a key element of any project. It should be a starting point for designing the overall project and serve as a common denominator for planning subsequent activities. Such an approach contributes to the consistency of your project.

A needs analysis is necessary to:

- appropriately target activities and effectively support the organisation's development;
- learn about the potential and resources of the organisation and its employees;
- plan initiatives that address the actual expectations of target groups.

A project that meets accurately diagnosed needs is much easier to carry out. Project participants are more likely to engage in activities whose purpose is clear to them and from which they will derive tangible benefits. Moreover, tangible results (e.g. methodology guides, new curricula, training offers, workshop scenarios, collections of good practices) developed on the basis of a sound analysis will certainly be more useful and relevant. Consequently, they will be used more frequently by the institution's/organisation's staff and learners (students, pupils, young people, adult learners) during and after the project.

How to carry out a needs analysis?

A needs analysis should precede the project planning phase. It should therefore be timed appropriately, taking into account the way the organisation works and the people responsible for the process.

1.1.1. Data sources

When describing your needs, it is very important to justify your choice by specifying the grounds for the analysis.

Documents that can be used at this stage are usually available at the institution/organisation. These include, for example, student observation sheets, external examination results (in schools), internal and external evaluation reports, student/staff surveys, data on adult learner learning outcomes, material produced in previous projects, existing research and analyses (e.g. carried out by professional organisations).



- When identifying specific needs, it is worth using adequately prepared surveys and interview/observation questionnaires that will help you collect quantitative and qualitative data.
- A SWOT analysis, through which the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation, as well as the opportunities and threats in a particular area are identified, can also be of use.
- It is useful to consult statistical data (Eurostat, Eurobarometer) and EU and national policy documents (e.g. EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027, YouthWiki encyclopedia) and other statistics (if available) relating to local conditions and communities to be targeted.
- In addition, it is possible to draw on your own observations and experiences from ongoing work with target groups.

Deepened analysis - problem tree

The problem tree method provides a holistic view of a problem, identifying its various causes, immediate effects and further consequences. Bearing in mind that one project will not solve all the problems or the reasons behind them, the purpose of using the problem tree methodology is to indicate the actual, critical need, and, at the same time, the most important areas for intended project activities. Accurate identification of the roots of the problems is crucial, as they can only be solved by tackling their causes.

It may turn out that the original problem is, in fact, a result of other issues, and the project will therefore aim at eliminating its deeper causes.

Example: needs analysis

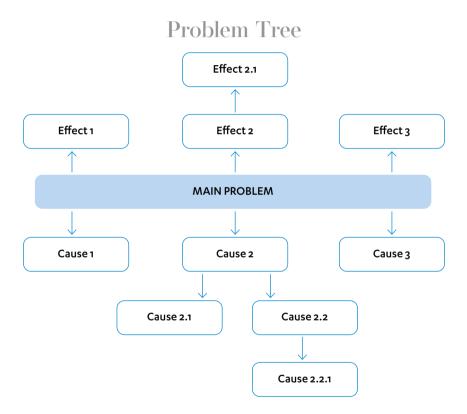
How to translate theory into practice?

Let's assume that the diagnosed problem is **low motivation to learn**.

- The problem tree methodology has indicated that the reasons for this situation are the difficulty for learners to assimilate learning contents and poor learning outcomes on the one hand, and the predominance of expository teaching methods coupled with insufficient use of activation approaches on the other hand.
- An in-depth analysis of the causes has further revealed problems with the organisation of the institution's work, namely insufficient number of teaching hours, which prevents teachers from focussing on students with learning difficulties, shortage of modern teaching aids and limited access to new technologies.



Poor motivation primarily results in unsatisfactory learning outcomes (so it is both an effect and a cause of the problem), low attendance, increasing drop-out rates and, as a consequence, a decline in the prestige of the school/institution/organisation.





1.1.2. Specifying the problem and project target groups

By accurately identifying the area in need of improvement, you can narrow down the thematic scope of the project, e.g. focus on a specific subject or topic, offer training in accounting, finance and economic analysis, or teach basic skills and key competencies during training to institution/organisation staff.

It is worth noting that such a precise definition of the problem makes it possible to almost automatically identify people who should be involved in the implementation of the project (e.g. teachers, educators, trainers, HR and administrative staff – both as project participants and members of the project team). It also helps to decide who should form the target group of the project activities. The target group can be identified by asking questions related to the essence of the problem (e.g. Which learners have the biggest problems with motivation to learn?; Are there learners with special educational needs among them?; Which staff members of the organisation can have the greatest impact on improving its operations in a particular area?).

Descriptions of target groups should also include the institution's/ organisation's staff members, link directly to their diagnosed needs, and be supported by relevant data sources.

1.1.3. Needs analysis and its significance

Needs analysis at the institution should be carried out before a partnership group is formed. Partners in projects under Key Action 2 should be selected based on converging or complementary expectations. Discussing the needs after the partnership is formed is also a good idea, as shared motivation to undertake project activities is key to their success.

Note: Institutions and organisations eligible to participate in Erasmus+ in a given field are described in the *Erasmus+ Programme Guide* (bit.ly/48MjS1e).



1.1.4. Project team and partner search

Work should start with the appointment of a project team. Team members responsible for the development of the project will support one another and replace each other in case of absence. The team will ensure uninterrupted project planning and smooth implementation process.

It is a good idea to start the search for partners in advance. It is not advisable to put off this task until the last minute.

- The eTwinning platform is very useful in finding a partner for a project involving schools. eTwinning registered users have access to a forum where they can respond to a project invitation or post information about their own projects. Invitations are also distributed via national Eurodesk units. As Polish schools do not have legal personality, if funding is granted, the party to the grant agreement is a legal representative of a school's governing authority or a duly authorised headteacher. It is worth informing your governing authority about the intention to submit a proposal in a call and inform it about the requirement of the Erasmus+ programme stipulating that the coordinating institution is held liable (also financially) for the implementation of the project and distributes the funds among international partners once the grant agreement has been signed. This facilitates cooperation during the preparation of the required documents and gives the municipality, county or city the opportunity to include your project in their budget planning.
- In the field of VET, informal networks can be used for finding project partners (e.g. erasmobility.eu; eupartnersearch.com).
- In the field of Higher Education universities often make use of contacts established in the course of scientific cooperation, at conferences and seminars or during joint educational projects. It is also worth seeking cooperation with institutions or organisations that have not previously participated in projects of this type.
- In the field of Adult Education you can use EPALE Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (epale.ec.europa.eu/en/partner-search) for this purpose.
- In the field of Youth familiarity with salto-youth.net including the OTLAS database (salto-youth.net/otlas) is an asset.

Note: It is worth checking if the city, county or municipality has established cooperation with international bodies that could join the project as partners.



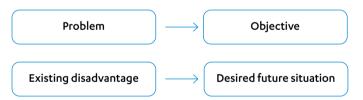
1.2. Defining project objectives

Once the needs have been analysed and specific areas of the project's focus have been identified, it is time to move on to formulating the project objectives.

General (main) objective refers to the main principles of the project and sets the direction for activities. It should be worded in general terms (e.g. improving language competencies, enhancing the quality of education and training, improving learning).

Detailed objectives: their achievement is a precondition for the accomplishment of the project's main objective; they relate to particular thematic areas and activities; they should be specific and measurable.

Project objectives define what you would like to achieve in the course of the project's implementation. They describe the desired future state and form the basis for outlining project outcomes. Objectives stem from the identified problem and are formulated by transforming identified disadvantage into a positive picture.



Therefore, if the main problem in an institution/organisation is low motivation to learn, then increasing learners' motivation can be considered a project objective.





Objective tree

When defining project objectives, it is worth using a method that is parallel to the problem tree, through which specific solutions to the diagnosed shortcomings can be proposed.

The objective tree presents the cause-and-effect relationship between individual objectives and provides an overall positive reflection of the needs analysis (see chapter 1.1.).

Example: Objectives

- Learners' motivation to learn will increase when the obstacles to their knowledge acquisition are removed and their performance improves. This can be achieved when active learning and problem-based learning methods predominate in the teaching approach.
- Organisational changes in the institution aimed at improving quality of the activities it offers and allowing more time for individual work with learners will also contribute to meeting the objective.
- Increased motivation to learn will improve learning outcomes and reduce drop-out rates among learners. As a result, more learners will apply to the institution, which will increase its prestige.

1.2.1. Precise definition of objectives – SMART methodology

Clearly defined objectives translate into the success of a project. By clarifying them, you will know the direction you are heading in and what you can achieve. It is important to specify the most important objectives, i.e. those whose achievement will have a direct impact on meeting the diagnosed needs. A useful tool here is the SMART methodology, according to which the objectives should be:



S pecific	Clearly described, addressing specific challenges
	faced by the institution/organisation
	or a particular target audience.
easurable	Translatable into project results set out
	in the proposal numbers/measures (quantified).
A cceptable/accurate	Previously discussed and agreed upon with
	the project's key stakeholders. Accurately stated
	objectives refer directly to identified problem,
	must result from the described challenge
	and cover its key causes.
Realistic	Achievable through the project's implementation.
	Objectives should not relate to any tasks or areas
	that will not be covered by the project; planned
	project activities should be closely related
	to the objective and clearly contribute
	to its achievement.
imebound	Limited in time, by which they are to be achieved.

Both general and specific **project objectives** should primarily respond to the needs, have direct relevance for the target groups, and be achievable within the forecasted time frame.

Examples of objectives

GENERAL OBJECTIVE: increased learners' motivation to learn

SMART OBJECTIVE: increase in motivation among 30 people participating

in intercultural education workshops conducted

as part of the project



1.2.2. Project objectives and their role in different project types

- Objectives should be set taking project partners into account. Defining objectives and further planning of activities should be done in consultation with all the parties to the project.
- Erasmus+ identifies horizontal priorities for the programme as a whole and priorities for specific fields. The project must be aligned with at least one field-specific priority or at least one horizontal priority (a maximum of three priorities can be selected). The choice of each priority should be justified in the grant application.

A description of priorities and other rules applicable to the project's implementation can be found in *Erasmus+ Programme Guide*, in the chapter on Key Action 2 (*Partnerships for cooperation*).

1.2.3. What to have in mind when setting project objectives?

Project objectives are easier to define when the planned initiative is seen from the outset as a process, the completion of which implies the achievement of the desired outcomes (e.g. an increase in the target group's knowledge in a particular area or introduction of organisational changes in the institution).

You should not set too many objectives, as it may prove difficult to achieve them all in the course of the project. As with the needs diagnosis, it is recommended to focus on the most important aspects. You should choose the main objectives resulting from the needs of the institution and project participants, and then formulate specific objectives. The more precise the set goals are, the easier it is to select the right tools to achieve them.

1.3. Activity planning

Once you know what your institution or organisation needs and what its objectives are, it is important to think about the activities through which they will be achieved. You need to follow this order to maintain project consistency, and also significantly facilitate the work on the concept as a whole.



What doesn't work is an intuitive approach where you first consider what you want to do and what activities you will carry out (e.g. serving an internship/training in a partner organisation; participating in an international exchange; building a drone; developing a course/workshop programme, an academic handbook or manual; delivering an online training course), and afterwards consider what objectives will match these activities.

Once you have a clearly set SMART objective, you should consider what to do in order to achieve it. The choice of specific activities depends on what the institution or organisation will focus on, its capacity to carry out the project (i.e. what resources it has at its disposal), as well as its experience in similar initiatives and its motivation to initiate and undertake new ventures.

Example: Designing activities

OBJECTIVE: increased motivation to learn among 20 project participants

Such an objective can be achieved by organising international exchanges in which representatives from all partner organisations would take part, such as workshops organised in cooperation with local education institutions. This will enable them to share experiences, learn about new teaching methods and jointly develop attractive lesson plans. In turn, learning exchanges to partner institutions abroad, apart from the obvious educational aspect, will give a motivational boost and serve as a basis for the development of new training solutions.

1.3.1. Examples of project activities

Note: Already at the project proposal stage, specific objectives and the contents of the activities (e.g. mobility) must be carefully planned, bearing in mind that they must fit in with the project and lead to the achievement of its principal objective.

Key Action 2 projects can be very diverse (Small-scale Partnerships – KA210 and Cooperation Partnerships – KA220). No pre-defined budget categories or catalogue of activities apply. In the following section, examples of project activities are presented. You should plan them in accordance with project objectives and scale. They should also satisfy the needs of project participants and your organisation.



Local activities

Projects should include local activities, i.e. those carried out by each partner in its country. These may include workshops, presentations, seminars, conferences, training courses, thematic lessons, and initiatives taken in cooperation with entities from the institution's immediate environment, such as community centres, libraries, schools, universities, NGOs, enterprises, etc. Local activities should be planned by all partner organisations and their scope should relate to the theme of the project and cover all target groups. Local activities also include mobility preparation activities.

Note: Primary and secondary schools can use the eTwinning platform.

It offers many opportunities for expansion of project topics, professional development of teachers and increased student involvement.

Producing results

Project results can include publications, lesson plans, workshops and training courses, new subjects, modules and curricula for students, handbooks, online platforms, mobile apps, collections of good practices, research reports and brochures. The development of results is not compulsory, but during the implementation of Cooperation Partnerships (larger-scale undertakings) it often proves necessary in order to disseminate project achievements. This applies, among other things, to partnership initiatives in higher education. In the case of smaller consortia (Small-scale Partnerships), tangible outcomes are developed as needed by an organisation and target groups, and with taking into account the scale of the project. Smaller projects of this kind often involve an exchange of experiences and good practices and focus on the acquisition of knowledge by teaching staff and learners.

Dissemination activities

Dissemination activities – e.g. conferences, seminars, webinars – should be included in the project in order to promote its results and achievements and let other organisations learn about them. Dissemination activities should be planned adequately for the objectives and scale of the project and targeted at groups that may be interested in using the developed solutions.

In the case of non-formal education projects, it is worth considering the development of a training course on the HOP platform (hop.salto-youth.net), which can be used, for example, by NGOs.



You can disseminate the results of projects in the field of Adult Education on the EPALE (Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe) platform (epale.ec.europa.eu/en).

Mobility

As part of your project you can organise learning mobility for learners and staff of your institution. Mobility participants can participate in various activities offered by host organisations in cooperation with project partners, and possibly with local actors. Such activities include training, workshops, study visits, internships, seminars, job shadowing.

In Key Action 2, mobility project is not an end in itself. However, it can be a step towards achieving the overarching goal, which is driven by the needs of the institution or organisation and fits into its long-term development plan. International exchanges have a strong impact on their participants, so it is worth preparing them well. Depending on the programme field and the needs of the participants, these activities may cover linguistic, cultural and pedagogical, substantive, technical and organisational areas. The premise is that the benefits of a stay abroad are maximised and produce the expected results.

Note: It is worth involving representatives of the target group in the planning of activities and in determining how they are to be carried out.

Participants are often very knowledgeable (e.g. about new technologies) and the opportunity to put their own ideas into practice promotes their greater commitment to the project.



Project activities and the implementation of the core curriculum Both the Erasmus+ programme and the eTwinning / European School Education Platform entail synergy with the curriculum and with implementation of the core curriculum. This is achieved thanks to combining project activities with everyday school work and teachers using project elements in their classes. An example of such synergies are lessons on a subject linked to the project theme or using teaching methods developed as part of the project in the classroom. Such an approach increases the impact on the target group, facilitates the introduction of changes within an institution, and increases the opportunities for the follow-up of some of the project activities after its completion. This also helps to prevent the project from being carried out exclusively after hours, requiring teachers and students to devote their free time for project activities.

1.4. Defining project results

In addition to the fact that all project activities bring you closer to achieving your goals, they should also lead to the production of results (not necessarily tangible ones).

Results of educational activities form an important element of projects. The results are the ultimate answer to the needs diagnosed at the project planning stage. They fill the identified gaps and contribute to solving existing problems. If a challenge is, for example, low motivation to learn and project work results in a positive change in this area, it can be concluded that the project's activities have improved the situation and have helped to fill the diagnosed competency gap.

1.4.1. Types of project results

Project results vary depending on the type of project and activities carried out. Moreover, they can be both tangible products and intangible outcomes. The results the project aims to achieve should be defined in relation to specific objectives and follow from activities carried out.



Examples of project results

Tangible results:

Lesson plans, curriculum, syllabus, publication, research report, teaching package, number of people trained and lessons conducted, website, e-learning platform, teaching method/methodology, educational game (e.g. online or board game)

Intangible results:

Increase in knowledge and skills, changes in attitudes, use of participatory approaches and digital solutions, new or improved competency recognition and certification, increased effectiveness of community outreach, new or improved way of meeting the needs of target groups, modernisation within the organisation, increased capacity and professionalisation of the instutution which allows to carry out international initiatives

1.4.2. Result indicators

While our example of an intangible result, namely increased motivation to learn, is defined correctly, you should think how you will verify if it has actually been achieved? What elements will indicate the success of your activities? To ensure the verifiability of the project's key results, you need to use appropriate success indicators, i.e.:

OBJECTIVE: increased motivation to learn in a selected area

RESULT: increased motivation to learn among learners

INDICATOR: 70% of learners declare higher motivation to learn in an evaluation

survey conducted at the end of the project



1.4.3. Result indicators and SMART methodology

To properly match an indicator to a result, it is useful to use the SMART methodology (discussed above). The same criteria that help clarify project's objectives will be useful in defining its expected results in more detail. Just make sure the indicators you choose are specific, measurable, achievable within the set time frame and in line with project's objectives.

Tangible results

The tangible results of a project should be verifiable by means of appropriate indicators: quantitative ones (e.g. number of lesson, activity or workshop plans developed; number of publications, collections of good practices and learning modules developed and implemented in the curriculum), and qualitative ones (e.g. quality of developed plans as assessed by teachers, educators and learners using them; educational value of learning modules as determined in evaluation).

Intangible results

An increase in competencies (e.g. linguistic, social, methodological, basic or key competencies) can be measured by referring to the same data sources as those used to diagnose the need in a particular area, for instance:

- level of language proficiency (indicator: increase from B1 to B2; better score on a proficiency level test);
- statements concerning attitudes or changes in attitudes in an evaluation survey (indicator: a learner declares motivation to learn at level 4 on a scale of 1 to 5 or an increase in motivation by 50%);
- number of classes taught using newly learnt teaching methods (indicator: at least 15 lessons or classes conducted using the method developed in the project).

Note: In order to adequately measure the level of success, adequate indicators should be chosen, i.e. the ones that allow full assessment of key results.

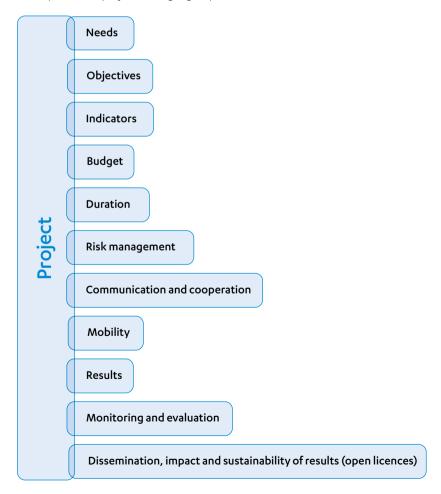


2. Essential elements of project implementation



The logic behind designing a project concept presented in the first part of the Guide does not exhaust all the elements that need to be taken into consideration. To prepare a comprehensive plan of an initiative, the following areas should be addressed:

- management (multi-faceted management that includes financial issues, time schedule, ways of ensuring the quality of activities and results, anticipated possible risks, and established rules for cooperation and communication in the project);
- monitoring of progress and evaluation of activities and results;
- dissemination of results (including tools and ways to ensure their sustainability);
- impact of the project on target groups and stakeholders.





2.1. Project management

The multifaceted nature of your project and the characteristics of target groups call for adopting an approach that minimises the risk of failure. You can identify six project management elements that are particularly important. These are:

- Time management: Already at the planning stage, a preliminary work schedule should be developed and used as a reference when conducting project activities. Timing them appropriately, taking into account the characteristics of your institution/organisation (e.g. the school or academic calendar, holiday and other breaks, schedule of major conferences and training courses), needs to be analysed in advance. However, the schedule should be flexible so that it can be updated in the event of unforeseen circumstances without negatively impacting the project, its objectives and results. It is worth visualising project plans. A Gantt chart or other online management applications (e.g. Basecamp, Trello, Slack, Monday) can be of use here. You can agree with the project group which tool will be used.
- Team management: Provision should be made for replacements for those involved in project tasks. Appointing one person to be responsible for the coordination of all activities, especially in a large-scale venture, is not effective and, moreover, can disrupt the project. It is better to set up a team whose members will support each other, mobilise to work and share tasks during the project. Also having in mind possible accidents, unforeseen situations and other factors (e.g. ones that prevent participants from going abroad), a reserve list should always be prepared!
- Quality management: It is extremely important to observe the quality of project activities and monitor the achievement of its results on an ongoing basis. Therefore, an evaluation plan should be prepared, especially for key elements of the project. For mobility planning, the QualityMobility.app (salto-youth.net/tools/qapp) can be used.
- Budget management: Financial monitoring consists in an ongoing control of the use of granted funds and the compliance of the expenditure incurred with Erasmus+ rules. It is worth planning the costs of managing the project's finances by employing people in your own organisation or outsourcing this task (e.g. to an accountancy firm).
- Risk management: In order to identify ways of mitigating risks you need to analyse circumstances that may have an adverse impact on the project. Identifying potential problems is experience-based, but this process can be structured and simplified by organising brainstorming sessions, regular project team meetings, using evaluation findings and information from project team members. Once a potential risk has been identified, it is important to determine the likelihood of its occurrence and its



possible impact on your project. Risk-mitigating methods will only apply to situations that are highly probable and would have significant negative consequences for the implementation of the project (special attention should be paid to issues related to the collection and protection of personal data). You should specify who will be responsible for preventing risk situations and what action will be taken in this regard.

Cooperation and communication: The selection of adequate rules for cooperation and forms of communication is crucial for the success of your project. The division of tasks, the scope of responsibilities and operating rules should be established at the project team level, but these aspects are particularly important when international and intercultural cooperation is involved. The rules must be clearly defined and accepted by all partners. This should include issues concerning the division of substantive tasks, the choice of methods and frequency of contact. Arrangements should be written down in the form of bilateral agreements between the project coordinator and individual partner institutions/organisations (possibly one partnership agreement for a project consortium). It is a good idea to include a clause on dispute settlement and the country of jurisdiction in these documents. In case arbitration or mediation is needed.

2.1.1. Things to remember when planning a project

Although in partnership projects, success is the result of all the consortium members' work, the coordinating institution has a particular responsibility for the course of the project. A lot of attention during the preparatory phase should be paid to determining the principles of cooperation and communication and to creating a schedule of activities that will take into account the differing school calendars. Financial issues are also very important (e.g. rules for transferring funds to partners and other key elements included in the cooperation agreement). It is worth agreeing these in advance. In addition, issues concerning the organisation of mobilities need to be specified.

It is also important to bear in mind that the last tranche (balance payment) amounting to 20% of the grant awarded will only be transferred to the coordinating institution if the project has been completed and the final report on its implementation is submitted and accepted by the Erasmus+ National Agency. In practice, this means that any organisation or institution implementing a project must take into account the need to provide its own funds amounting to 20% of the grant in order to be able to carry out all the activities planned in the project.



2.2. Monitoring and evaluation

2.2.1. Monitoring

Project monitoring involves the systematic collection and analyses of information, which makes it possible to verify that the project is progressing as intended. The approved work plan, including tasks and deliverables, is monitored – you should examine if these are carried out in line with the schedule and budget. This will enable you to identify any delays and to motivate the team to make up for them. Monitoring activities often involve the authorities of the institution/organisation or the unit responsible for the project, and in the case of schools or other organisational units of local government, the supervisory authority.

- Project documentation, including the application form, time sheets, certificates issued to participants in training or meetings, course logs, recruitment records, attendance lists, certificates, surveys, and interim reports, can also be analysed.
- Monitoring results provide the information necessary for the ongoing assessment of project progress and the interim and final evaluations.

2.2.2. Evaluation

Evaluation is an examination of selected aspects of the project's implementation to check whether the adopted assumptions and objectives are achieved. Evaluation also allows for a qualitative assessment of the project's implementation. Thanks to the evaluation, you can find out, for example, whether participants benefit from taking part in activities, whether the outputs produced are of good quality and meet the needs of the people they are intended to serve, whether the work organisation is optimal, and objectives are met. Key areas need to be investigated in such a way that the information obtained can support the project's implementation, and, if necessary, the taking of corrective or remedial measures. Data for such an evaluation can be provided by, among other things, properly planned monitoring. For larger-scale packages of activities and results, it is useful to identify milestones.

Types of evaluation and project life cycle

• Initial (ex-ante) evaluation → conducted before the start of the project's activities, it consists in examining the initial state of your organisation/institution. This includes: learning outcomes, knowledge of learners and teachers/educators/trainers, level of



specific competencies (e.g. of young people, students, institution staff, adult learners), the quality of the institution's/organisation's work as perceived by staff/learners/community, research findings and reports on the industry/sector or the topic of the project.

Note: Conducting an initial evaluation is a key element of the needs analysis. These processes relate to the same sources of data. By drawing up a reliable analysis of the institution's or organisation's needs, the initial evaluation activities are carried out at the same time.

- Interim evaluation (on-going) → is carried out in the course of the project and refers to key activities, i.e. the ones that are the most relevant for the achievement of its objectives.
- Final evaluation (ex-post) → is carried out at the end of the project. It should cover the same areas that were evaluated at the beginning of the project and during its implementation. The goal of the final evaluation is to establish the extent to which the project objectives have been achieved and to develop appropriate indicators for evaluating the results.

Why is an on-going evaluation worth making?

An on-going evaluation allows for the verification of whether the selected ways of solving a problem or filling in a gap works in practice (e.g. whether it has the expected effect, meets the requirements of the recipients and is accepted by them). If the obtained results are not satisfactory, it is possible to make changes to the way things are done and avoid the failure of all or a part of the project. The evaluation is therefore an extremely important tool for project quality management.

Elements of the evaluation process:

- defining the purpose and subject;
- formulating research questions;
- defining the criteria;
- selecting tools (e.g. survey, interview, tests, observation, document review);
- data collection;
- analysing data, drawing conclusions and presenting them in a report.

The evaluation should be carefully prepared. You need to develop a plan covering key elements of the project and appoint individuals responsible for its implementation.



Example 1: on-going evaluation

- Three members of a beneficiary organisation return from a study visit to a partner organisation, which was combined with training. When planning an exchange and wishing to determine whether the partnership with the institution contributes to the achievement of the project's objectives, a beneficiary can decide to carry out an evaluation study.
- It takes place upon the return of staff members from the exchange, at the point when they incorporate elements of knowledge gained abroad into their daily work in the area they want to improve.
- The evaluation method used consists in analysing mobility reports and interviewing participants from both organisations about the course of the study visit, and in testing knowledge gained during the training. In the case of employees from your organisation, in the interview you can also ask about good practices observed and how they can be adapted in everyday work.
- The collected information will form the basis for the next steps and changes in the way they are implemented, e.g. improving the plan for the partner's study visit to your organisation and introducing more practical elements into the next training.

Example 2: on-going evaluation

Educational material have been produced as part of the project and you want to find answers to the following questions:

- 1. Are they used by people involved in the project and by other staff in the organisation?
- 2. To what extent are these material tailored to their needs?
- 3. To what extent are they tailored to the needs of beneficiaries (learners)?

How to obtain this information?

Ad. 1–3. Survey or group interview with teachers who use the material.

Ad. 3. For example, using the traffic lights method; material are used in training or other learning activities and participants and learners are asked to evaluate them either by completing a questionnaire or by raising red ('I don't like them'), yellow ('I like them, but they need to be improved') or green ('I like them') cards. Then, you group the respondents by card colour and ask them about the reasons why they chose a given card (you can have a discussion or ask them to write their answers down).



To explore opinions of beneficiaries, alternative evaluation methods can be used, such as:

- traffic lights method;
- shooting target method;
- bin, suitcase, bag method;
- hand method¹.

Commonly available apps, such as **Kahoot!** and **Mentimeter**, can also be used in evaluations.

Note: Always remember to write down the methods used in the evaluation of project activities.

2.3. Outcome dissemination and sustainability

Promotion and information activities are obligatory in any project. The goal of dissemination activities is to share project results with specific audiences, both at the stage of project implementation and upon its completion.

Dissemination differs from information and promotion activities because:

- it is not aimed only at providing information about the project that is carried out;
- it implies taking steps aimed at multiplying the benefits, i.e. achieving a multiplier effect (e.g. the emergence of new local initiatives) or using the results developed in the project (teaching methods or curricula, learning modules, procedures, e-learning courses, lesson plans, teaching material, etc.);
- it should reach project stakeholders thanks to well-chosen methods and tools, other than those used for promotion (e.g. leaflets, brochures).

¹ Ciężka, B. (2019). 'Dziecięce' metody ewaluacji [Children's methods of evaluation]; bit.ly/450iyph [accessed: 17/10/2023].



Note: Any dissemination activity is promotion, but not every promotion activity is dissemination.

2.3.1. Internal dissemination

It assumes that the project's results will be known to the widest possible target group within the institution/organisation (as defined in the grant application). Internal dissemination involves, for example, sharing newly learnt working methods or teaching material with staff not directly involved in the project, at least at the level of the substantive team or, in the case of schools, the subject or industry team. However, it is possible to involve more staff members in these activities, who, thanks to open training (or training councils), will be able to develop their professional skills and then use new solutions in their work.

2.3.2. External dissemination

It goes beyond the institution/organisation implementing the project. The aim of this type of activity is to share project outcomes with other actors. This way, the results developed can benefit more people outside the group who obtained project funding. Recipients of dissemination activities can be organisations with a similar profile, working in the same sector or for the same target groups, as well as representatives of local authorities or, in the case of schools, the supervisory authority. Thanks to external audiences (by using a variety of information channels, including social media), project information can be disseminated and drive change in approaches to challenges addressed by your initiative.

2.3.3. Dissemination channels and tools

Dissemination of results, whether in digital or physical form (e.g. books, articles in local press), should aim to inspire new audiences, sharing experiences and skills with them, and providing them with good practices that can be adapted in other organisations and institutions.



Examples of dissemination channels and tools

Channels	Tools
websites, social media	social media profiles (Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, Pinterest), TwinSpace platform, HOP platform, newsletters, articles, photo reports, video conferences, webinars
face-to-face contacts	presentations, meetings, get-togethers, teachers' meetings, subject team meetings
mass media (TV, radio, press)	reports, press articles, interviews with project participants, trainers, educators, vocational skill instructors
events	conferences, seminars, workshops, exhibitions, trade fairs, galas, symposia
printed material	leaflets, brochures, guides, textbooks

An effective dissemination tool is the **Erasmus+ project results platform** (erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects), which is a space where beneficiaries of Key Action 2 are obliged to upload material developed in their projects. It aims to widely disseminate information on the results of projects, as well as to facilitate the exchange of experiences and promotion of good practices. The platform also includes project descriptions and success stories. These resources are openly licensed, and they can be used freely.

Schools participating in Key Action 2 and eTwinning projects often opt for dissemination through the **TwinSpace**. Project partners can decide for themselves which parts of their work will be made available to the public and which parts will remain exclusively at the disposal of the students and teachers carrying out the project.

The European School Education Platform (school-education.ec.europa.eu) combines contents and services available on eTwinning and School Education Gateway, while introducing many new capabilities. School Education and Youth projects can also use the OTLAS search engine, in which several thousand European organisations and informal groups are registered (salto-youth.net/otlas). The HOP platform (hop.salto-youth.net) is a good choice, too.



The results of projects in the field of Adult Education can be disseminated on the **EPALE** – Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (epale.ec.europa.eu/en).

2.3.4. Sustainability of results

It is important that the project's results stay in your institution or organisation for good. This will ensure that their benefits are long-lasting. The sustainability of results is of paramount importance because:

- it is an indicator of success of a project, resulting from its long term impact (e.g. through commercialisation, accreditation or integration of results into day-to-day operations of an institution/organisation);
- it is a proof of project quality;
- it makes it possible for a much larger group of people than just the participants to benefit from the project's results (even after the project has ended).

How to make project results sustainable?

The answer to this question depends on how your institution/organisation operates. It can also be assumed that if the results have been developed in response to specific needs of target groups, they will be implemented and used by them. For example, the use of new teaching methods or aids in a school can be included in the teaching plan of a given subject (e.g. with taking into account social issues addressed by project activities) or in teaching, prevention and educational plans of the institution.

In projects implemented by higher education institutions, the results in the form of new modules, courses and study programmes should be included in a given field (or fields) of study as compulsory or optional elements of education. In foundations, associations, cultural institutions, public entities and commercial companies, the results should support the performance of statutory tasks and activities aimed at different audiences. Care should be taken to integrate project results into the operations of the institution/organisation in such a way that those associated with it can easily benefit from them.



2.4. Project impact

Well planned and carried out project and dissemination activities lead to a growing impact of the project on its stakeholders.

Achieving the required level of project impact should be tantamount to achieving its objectives, i.e. implementing beneficial changes that respond to the needs that were diagnosed at the outset. These changes should form part of a long-term development strategy of the institution/organisation and contribute to improving the quality of its operations. One of the elements that prove the project's impact is the fact that the entity takes on further challenges, including new international initiatives. Changes initiated as a result of cooperation with international partners are often of great importance not only for participants in the projects, but they also translate into improved operations of the entire institution/organisation, e.g. through the introduction of new procedures and upgraded staff competencies.

It is also worth to consider the broader impact of the project at municipality, county or regional levels by including representatives of local and education authorities in the project's activities. Trade associations and organisations operating in various sectors should also be involved. Therefore, specific dissemination activities addressed to relevant groups and project team members should be planned very carefully at the early stages of developing a project concept. In order to determine whether they have been reached and, at the same time, to achieve the required impact on the institution or organisation and its stakeholders, it is necessary to establish at the outset how these activities will be evaluated.



Examples of projects – Key Action 2



Be a master – think creatively

Field: School Education

Beneficiary: Przedszkole nr 32 z oddziałami integracyjnymi w Koninie

Project information: bit.ly/3uV7p9k

European Partnership in STEM Education

Field: School Education

Beneficiary: Szkoła Podstawowa nr 7 z Częstochowy

Project information: bit.ly/3T4UQCB





AlterDrive

Field: Vocational Education and Training Beneficiary: Centrum Kształcenia Zawodowego

w Wysokiem Mazowieckiem

Project information: bit.ly/3zeeofX

Furniture and Language innovative integrated learning for sector Attractiveness and Mobility Enhancement (FLAME)

Field: Vocational Education and Training

Beneficiary: Ogólnopolska Izba Gospodarcza Producentów Mebli

Project information: bit.ly/3PF1SLX





Learning circles in libraries

Field: Adult Education

Beneficiary: Fundacja Rozwoju Społeczeństwa Informacyjnego

Project information: bit.ly/3yMrgbB

Leading my own life

Field: Adult Education

Beneficiary: Polskie Stowarzyszenie na Rzecz Osób z Niepełnosprawnością Intelektualną, Koło w Gdańsku Project information: bit.ly/3uWbud3







Modern logistics learning: Certified module on master study level

Field: Higher Education

Beneficiary: Wyższa Szkoła Logistyki z siedzibą w Poznaniu

Project information: bit.ly/3obDbes

University Network for Cultural Heritage – Integrated Protection, Management and Use

Field: Higher Education

Beneficiary: Politechnika Lubelska

Project information: bit.ly/3zcxcMw





The colours of feelings and needs

Field: Youth

Beneficiary: Fundacja Arte Ego

Project information: bit.ly/3aPyeEL

Leaders of Youth Business Academy

Field: Youth

Beneficiary: Fundacja Alternatywnej Edukacji 'ALE'

Project information: bit.ly/3IJJmj2





Empowerment education of girls and young women through educating youth educators and creating girls' centres

Field: Youth

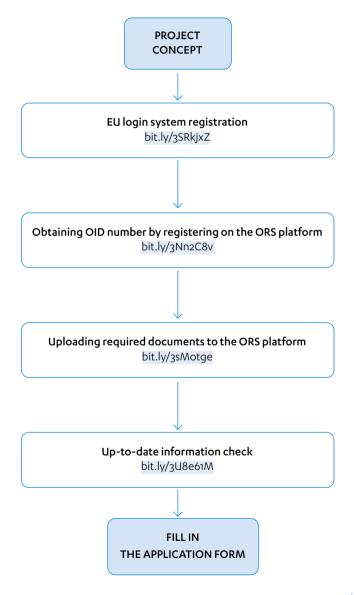
Beneficiary: Fundacja Autonomia

Project information: bit.ly/3od8CEU



Erasmus+ project implementation outline

Once your project concept is ready, you can proceed with the formalities associated with participation in the programme.





Links



Polish Erasmus+ National Agency website erasmusplus.org.pl

Erasmus+ programme website hosted by the European Commission erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/en





Erasmus+ project results platform erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects

eTwinning Poland etwinning.pl





European eTwinning portal etwinning.net

European School Education Platform school-education.ec.europa.eu/en





HOP platform hop.salto-youth.net

SALTO Resource Centres salto-youth.net





Youth Wiki national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki

European Education Area bit.ly/3xY7QB5





Publications



Erasmus+ 2014–2020 a umiędzynarodowienie polskich uczelni [Erasmus+ 2014–2020 and the internationalisation of Polish universities] bit.ly/3L4xbhW



Współpraca szkół branżowych z pracodawcami [Vocational schools' cooperation with employers] bit.ly/3DjQ2nC



Vocational Education and Training with eTwinning bit.ly/3txi8ZJ



Erasmus bez barier [Erasmus without barriers] bit.ly/3L7ofsi



Erasmus+ i Europejski Korpus Solidarności dla początkujących [Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps for beginners] bit.ly/3RC7SGC



Współpraca międzynarodowa a jakość i organizacja pracy szkół [International cooperation and the quality and organization of school work] bit.ly/3By7ovz



Współpraca przedsiębiorców z sektorem edukacji [Entrepreneurs' cooperation with the education sector] bit.ly/3QD9n65



Standardy jakości Erasmusa w praktyce [Erasmus quality standards in practice] bit.ly/3RWbxyJ





Nowa jakość kształcenia [New quality of education] bit.ly/3RDFZoL



Evaluation in Educational Practice bit.ly/45ATAfz



T-Kit 3: Project Management bit.ly/3cfEB5e



Podziel się sukcesem. Upowszechnianie rezultatów w projektach edukacyjnych [Share your success. Dissemination of results of educational projects] bit.ly/3eDzY5l



Daj się odnaleźć! [Let yourself be found!] bit.ly/3RDUQZ4



Strategic Partnerships in Higher Education bit.ly/3PRVkey



The Faces of Erasmus+ (vol. I) bit.ly/48RMq9B



The Faces of Erasmus+ (vol. II) bit.ly/48OFfPD



This guide is a 'first aid kit' for those considering implementing **Erasmus+ Key Action 2** projects. It presents the opportunities offered by such projects and benefits resulting from them. It is not intended as an instruction manual for submitting proposals under Erasmus+ calls, so it does not provide hints on what and in which box to enter or how to justify each activity. However, it offers a recipe for success – a description of the steps that need to be taken to develop a successful project.

Erasmus+ Key Action 2 funds international co-operation projects carried out by educational institutions, companies and organisations. The principal objective of partnership projects is the development, transfer and implementation of innovative practices, and joint running of initiatives that promote interaction, mutual learning and exchange of experiences at a European level.

The Foundation for the Development of the Education System operates since 1993. It is the Polish National Agency of the Erasmus+ Programme and the European Solidarity Corps for 2021–2027. Since 2014 it has participated in the implementation of the Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development (pl. PO WER), and since 2023 – European Funds for Social Development for 2021–2027. FRSE is also responsible for other European educational and informative initiatives in Poland, such as eTwinning, Eurodesk Polska, Eurydice, Europass, EVET and EPALE. The Foundation supports cooperation with countries in the East via the Polish-Lithuanian Youth Exchange Fund, the Polish-Ukrainian Council of Youth Exchange, SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre. One of the most important educational events in Poland – the Education Congress – is organized by FRSE.







