

Learning Together



How to work effectively with partners and get the best out of your European project

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LEONARDO AND GRUNDTVIG PROJECTS

There are a variety of different activities that can be funded under the Leonardo and Grundtvig programmes. This handbook will focus on projects which involve partners from across Europe. You can find out about other opportunities available under the programmes by looking at our websites. See www.grundtvig.org.uk for information on funding for adult education training courses, or www.leonardo.org.uk for activities supporting organisations engaged in Vocational Education and Training (VET).

It's easiest to look at projects in terms of the types of activities that are supported. The Leonardo and Grundtvig programmes fund:

- Mobility Projects;
- Small Scale Cooperation Projects; and
- Large Scale Co-operation Projects.

Mobility Projects

Under the new Lifelong Learning Programme, mobility activities have a high priority and the aim is to encourage 80,000 work placements across the participating countries each year by the end of 2013. Some projects are funded under the Mobility measure of the Leonardo programme. Organisations involved in VET can apply for funding to organise European work placements for trainees, employees, people looking for work and vocational training staff from one week up to thirty nine weeks. Some cultural or linguistic preparation of participants may take place prior to travelling to enhance their experience. You can also apply for Preparatory Visits funding for individual mobility, whether to meet new partners or to visit existing ones.

Small Scale Co-operation Projects

Partnership projects are funded under both Grundtvig and Leonardo and are a great starting point for organisations that have never been involved in a transnational project before. They can also suit organisations wanting to work in co-operation with European organisations but on a small scale. Activities and outputs tend to be less 'intense' than with larger scale co-operation projects and can include, for example, seminars, workshops, conferences, research, exhibitions, or exchanges of staff and learners. Partnership projects are a good way of 'getting to know' partner organisations whilst working together on small scale activities on a particular theme or topic in adult education or VET.

Large Scale Co-operation Projects

Leonardo Transfer of Innovation projects are larger scale initiatives that encourage you to identify and build on best practice in VET by participating in European partnerships to transfer innovative solutions between countries. Projects must focus on key priorities set by the European Commission, which can include topics such as developing quality in VET practices, improving the competencies of teachers and trainers or using innovative Information and Communication Technology solutions in designing or delivering training. Transfer of Innovation projects are ideal for organisations that already have some experience in the management and delivery of European co-operation projects since they involve large amounts of funding and a greater level of project management. This kind of project is very focused on producing outcomes. In this way they differ from Partnerships which are all about the process of working with European partners.

Using the Handbook

Although each kind of project works differently, we find that similar project management techniques are used whatever type of European project you're involved in. There are many similarities between small and large projects, and many of the issues that arise during the project's lifetime can be tackled in the same way. The advice in this handbook is applicable to all mobility, small scale and large scale projects. Where further advice is available for a specific project type we've indicated this in a box, and we also point you to more in-depth or focused sources of advice where necessary. You'll also find some project examples, to place the advice in context. The first of these are below, and are designed to give you an idea of what can be achieved through the Leonardo and Grundtvig programmes.

Opening the Internet for the Elderly

Within this Grundtvig Partnership, partners from seven different European countries developed learning and teaching methods for seniors and exchanged existing approaches like peer-learning and intergenerational learning.

Participants played an active role in specialised courses by reflecting on their cultural experience of learning. During the project they were helped to use the Internet and explored new ways of using a computer, such as e-learning.

Enhancing Medical Training across Europe

Birmingham Women's Health Care NHS Trust led a Leonardo Transfer of Innovation project to develop a European Qualification in Evidenced Based Medicine (EBM) in order to improve the quality of medical training in Europe.



Doctors using the online training at Birmingham Women's Hospital

The EU EBM project developed an EBM curriculum integrated into clinical practice. The curriculum was translated into each partner country's language and is flexible enough to include country specific modules which are related to national clinical guidelines and legislation.

The resulting EBM training increases the practical knowledge of doctors and ultimately enhances patient care.

"It's a once in a life time opportunity that could really change your life for the best"

A young chef's Leonardo-funded work placement led to a job offer from his placement firm. Stuart Deacon spent four months working at the Munich's Hotel Excelsior. His employer liked him so much that he asked him to stay on in the job as a Commis de Cuisine!



In his end of visit report Stuart said: "I've really enjoyed myself on this Leonardo da Vinci programme and when you get the offer and the chance to stay on as a full time employee, it's one of the best things that can happen in life."

Stuart's work experience was organised as part of City College Plymouth's European Hospitality Placement Project for young people. The project was supported through Leonardo Mobility funding.

Re-Vision: Celebrating Diversity through Photography

The Re-Vision project was co-ordinated by the Bournville Centre for Visual Arts and involved seven European organisations.



The partners collaborated in a two year Grundtvig Partnership project which focused on creative learning for socially disadvantaged adults. All the organisations involved in the project use creative approaches to teaching and learning, which meant they were well-placed to share experiences and knowledge during the project.

PLANNING YOUR PARTNERSHIP: Finding Partners

Putting together a good partnership is probably the most important thing you can do for your project! Having the right kind of partners is the foundation of a successful project, whether you need new partners or wish to build on current relationships. Your National Agency can offer you help with finding partners and making existing links stronger. You can also use the resources below if you want to become a partner in a Grundtvig or Leonardo project.

Remember that all your partners must come from a country that is participating in the Lifelong Learning Programme. A full list can be found on Page 26.

How many partners will you need?

The table below shows the minimum number of partners you will need to participate in the Leonardo and Grundtvig programmes. We would recommend that you always try to include more than the minimum number in case a partner drops out during the application process or as your project develops.

Project	Minimum number of partners
Leonardo Mobility	One partner from another participating country
Leonardo or Grundtvig Partnership	Three partners from three different participating countries
Leonardo Transfer of Innovation	Three partners from three different participating countries

What makes a good partner?

A good transnational partner is one who is involved in the project theme or topic and who has the right expertise to contribute to the work of the partnership. They need to be reliable, since you'll be working with them for up to two years, and committed to the project.

It's important to take time to get to know potential partners and work out if they are right for your project.

Libby Urquhart of ARCH, an organisation involved in the Leonardo programme, makes the following recommendations:

“International partners are our greatest asset. Each one is a marriage of shared goals and shared responsibility. Our partners are also our hosts who will take care of the practical issues of visiting a new country with an unfamiliar culture. They will often act as translators and go-betweens with the experts in the chosen field.

Our criteria for selecting the perfect partner:

1. We must have shared objectives and visions.
2. They are respected practitioners who have access to all levels of their area of expertise.
3. People who can add an extra dimension to your project. They need to be adaptable and able to change the content of the programmes to the training needs of the participants.
4. People you like and will get on with. You are working with an individual, not an organisation.”

Finding new partners

Organisations involved in European projects find their partners in many different ways. The table below offers some ideas and suggestions:

Using existing institutional links	Many organisations already have European links through networking bodies, partnerships or work contacts. Using partners already known by your organisation means you can rely on a pre-existing relationship to add commitment to the partnership.
Taking advantage of local initiatives such as town twinning	Some projects find partners by talking to their local council about towns or regions their local area is twinned with. Again, building on existing links may make it easier to find reliable partners. You can find out more about town twinning and access useful links at http://international.lga.gov.uk/international/Establishing_a_partnership/index.html . You can also consult a database of twinning towns here: http://international.lga.gov.uk/international/Establishing_a_partnership/twinning_search.html .
Using European support organisations	The European Commission's EuroDesk service can help you find partners. According to their website "By sending a simple email message to your Eurodesk contact explaining what kind of project you have, what kind of partners you are looking for and your contact details, our request will be sent to a special folder on the Eurodesk intranet, where more than 500 organisations can read it and send it

	on to their own networks!". See http://www.eurodesk.org/edesk/Contact.do?go=ukstes.htm for a list of all the UK EuroDesk contact points.
Logging onto European partner search databases	Various databases exist which are designed to help European organisations find new partners. They can be programme specific, or general. You will normally need to register your details, in order to search through the other registered organisations, and you should be able to search by area of interest and country. Some examples are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK Leonardo Partner Search Database at www.leonardo.org.uk • PartBase for the Grundtvig and Comenius programmes at www.partbase.europro.se • The British Council's Global Gateway portal can help schools and colleges link with each other. You can find it at http://www.globalgateway.org.uk/.
Attending partner-finding events	National Agencies across Europe run specific events to help organisations find partners – see the section on Contact Seminars below.
Using other projects	Why not contact current or past Leonardo and Grundtvig projects in the area you're interested in and see if they can recommend a partner? You can find details of projects on our websites at www.leonardo.org.uk and www.grundtvig.org.uk .

Preparatory Visits: Meeting your Partners

Before you even apply for a mobility, small scale or large scale project, your National Agency can provide a small grant (known as a Preparatory Visits grant) which will enable you to meet with potential partner organisations in advance to discuss and begin work on your project application. These grants typically cover travel expenses and a contribution towards subsistence costs, but not staff costs. Generally speaking, proposals from applicants that have participated in Preparatory Visits tend to be of a higher quality, since it is often clear that they have considered and discussed the project in more depth.

Preparatory Visits funding can allow you to travel to meet your European partners, or you can host the Preparatory Visit. The first option allows you to see your partner organisation(s), to have a good look at their facilities, meet senior staff members and get an idea of the organisational culture. The second option, of hosting, might be better if you are planning to co-ordinate the project since you could arrange for several of the partners to come to your organisation at the same time.

To host the meeting you would need to ask your partners to apply to their own National Agency for Preparatory Visits funding to enable them to travel to you. However you must bear in mind that the funding available for Preparatory Visits varies from one National Agency to another, with many of the new EU countries having far fewer resources. For this reason, do be prepared to travel if necessary and to conduct the meeting in another country.

Preparatory Visits offer you the chance to meet your partners before working with them on a more formal footing – which gives you an opportunity to see how serious they really are about the project. Remember this process works both ways!

It's up to you to set the agenda for your Preparatory Visit but you should try to factor in time for:

- Partner introductions
- Discussing the project theme
- Setting of aims, objectives and outcomes for the project
- Identifying needs in partner countries
- Allocating tasks and budget
- Planning dissemination

You should find that you have lots of questions to ask your partners, and they will probably ask you for a lot of information too. You may find it helpful to prepare a pack of materials about your organisation, the problems you face in your region or country, and your aims and objectives for the project. This will ensure your partners have all the information they need. Why not ask them to prepare something similar?

Important Note:

You can only apply for one Preparatory Visit grant per organisation, per application round. You can either apply to meet with existing partners or to attend a Contact Seminar – you can't do both in the same year.

Preparatory Visits: Contact Seminars

Contact Seminars are organised by your National Agency and by other National Agencies around Europe. As they are attended by similar organisations from other countries, they represent an ideal opportunity to find new partners for your project.

The Seminars tend to be arranged around a particular theme (e.g. intergenerational learning) and will cover Grundtvig, Leonardo or both programmes. They are normally very popular and attended only by serious project promoters.

One advantage of Contact Seminars is that they enable you to meet with potential partners face to face before deciding whether or not to work with them in the longer term. Also, the programme will include thematic workshops which enable you to discuss project ideas in greater detail.

A further advantage is that you can use Preparatory Visit grants to help meet the costs of attending (delegate fee and travel costs), provided you apply at least six weeks in advance of the Seminar and submit an expression of interest in attending the Seminar.

The box on the right gives you an idea of what you can expect at a Contact Seminar.

Many Leonardo and Grundtvig projects have found partners through a Contact Seminar. Dundee College successfully established a new partnership with a Turkish partner (METU) through attending a Leonardo contact seminar in Ankara in December 2004. The new partner hosted six business and

administration trainees on a four week work experience placement. This experience was reciprocated in 2007 when Dundee College hosted a number of Turkish students.

Typical Contact Seminar Programme (based on an event run by the German National Agency)

Day 1:

Arrival and registration

Day 2:

Introduction to Lifelong Learning Programme

Introduction of the main theme (e.g. basic skills)

Discussion on common topics (e.g. e-learning)

Social event (e.g. dinner)

Day 3:

Project presentation and discussion

Plenary session introducing project ideas

Workshops drafting further project ideas

Social event

Day 4:

Question and answer session

Presentation of new project ideas

Visits to local attraction (e.g. academy)

PLANNING YOUR PARTNERSHIP: Putting in Your Application

Once you've found suitable partners for your project, you'll need to work together to write your application. The best quality applications tend to come from partnerships that have had at least one face-to-face meeting to discuss their ideas and share out responsibilities and tasks.

If you're unable to meet in person, then why not consider a virtual meeting using video conferencing facilities, internet phone calls or even an internet chat facility? Getting all the partners' firm agreement to project objectives and a work plan at this stage means you'll be well placed to start your project once your application is successful.

It's important that everyone understands the project's aims and objectives, agrees on the work to be done, accepts the different roles and responsibilities they will take on, and fully comprehends the financial implications of the application. Everyone should agree on the final application and endorse it before it's submitted. This is particularly important if you're applying for a Partnership project since your partners will need to submit a copy of the application endorsed by their organisation to their own National Agency. For Mobility and Transfer of Innovation projects this isn't necessary; only the lead organisation needs to submit an application.

If you check our websites you will find detailed Guidance Notes for each type of project setting out exactly what you need to do and telling you how to complete the application form correctly. Your

partners can also access similar materials in their own language by contacting their own National Agencies.

Only the best quality applications will become projects, so you need to make sure your partnership is presented in the best possible way.

Your application needs to show that you have a strong, committed partnership which shares the project's aims and objectives. It's also incredibly important to show that you have considered how your partners will work together, given that you are all based in different countries.

The section below on managing your partnership (p13) contains useful hints and tips that you can incorporate into your application. The assessors will want to understand how you will communicate with your partners (how, when, in what language), how you will overcome potential language or cultural barriers and how you will collect updates on partner progress.

If English will be the partnership language, then you should consider how you will help those partners who don't speak English as their first language. Can you use smaller working groups during project meetings to enable everyone to get involved in the discussion in an informal environment? Can you add a short review to each meeting session to go over what has been discussed and agreed so it's clear to everyone? Can you agree to follow up phone calls with emails so that everyone has a written record of what has been said? These are some of the ways you can facilitate good communication within your partnership.

PLANNING YOUR PROJECT

Planning is really the first stage in managing your project, partnership, or exchange. The first task will probably be to revisit the work plan submitted with your project application, as the scheduling of activities may have changed in the intervening weeks or months between submission and decision. A useful first step in the planning process is to break the project down into distinct phases, e.g. start up phase, realisation phase, co-ordination phase and finalisation phase.

The start up phase might involve activities such as recruiting your project team (for partnerships) or confirming the timing of your placements (for mobility projects). During this phase, you might also host an initial partnership meeting, or undertake a short language refresher prior to undertaking a placement. The realisation phase, as the name suggests, relates to the period when the research, training, or placement actually takes place. Finally, the finalisation phase is when the participants consider their next steps, or exit strategy for the project. The phase that is often forgotten (co-ordination) involves activities such as monitoring, dissemination and evaluation, financial management and reporting.

The length and detail of your work plan will depend on the scale of your project. Partnership projects will generally need a less complicated work plan, while Transfer of Innovation projects will typically have a complex work plan with many phases.

Suggested Format for your work plan

- Divide the project into phases e.g. research
- Outline objectives for each phase
- Describe the activities that will take place
- State which partners will be involved and who has responsibility for delivery
- Anticipate what the result(s) will be
- Explain how you will measure them
- Estimate how much time will be involved
- Set a deadline for completion

Aspects to Include

- Management & co-ordination
- Delivery of activities (e.g. seminars)
- Project meetings & other mobilities
- Monitoring of aims & objectives
- Dissemination at all stages
- Evaluation of the processes & results

Review & Revision

- Make sure timescales are realistic
- Try to stick to the broad chronology
- Be flexible enough to change where needed
- Significant amendments may require approval from your National Agency
- Plan for the whole duration of the project

MANAGING YOUR PARTNERSHIP

Any project will only ever be as good as its weakest partner! Whilst larger partnerships can be difficult to manage, smaller partnerships can present problems of their own, particularly if one of the organisations decides to drop out. For this reason 5-6 partners seems to be the optimum number for Transfer of Innovation and Partnership projects.

We recommend that you ask your partners to sign up to some mutually agreed guidelines on how the project will be run and how partners will work together. These guidelines could range from very formal individual partnership contracts to a more relaxed partnership protocol depending on what suits your project type and partnership best. The key point is to make sure that none of the partners are left in any doubt as to what is expected of them in terms of project delivery and the provision of monitoring information.

Individual contracts are most suitable for Transfer of Innovation and Mobility projects where the co-ordinating partner holds the grant. Partner contracts will ensure that the lead partner has security against any financial problems caused by the partners. Partnership projects (where each partner manages their own funding) will probably find this too bureaucratic. Partners in these projects could sign up to a mutually agreed protocol covering partnership working – things such as how partner meetings will be run, when and how progress reports should be provided, how often partners will communicate and so on. This is much less complicated than issuing individual contracts but still helps all the partners know what they can expect of each other.

Any contract or agreement should cover the provision of progress reports so that the co-ordinating partner has a clear idea of how the project is developing.

Standard contracts are provided by the National Agency for Leonardo Transfer of Innovation projects. These contain all the clauses you'll need and can be further customised to suit your project. Leonardo Mobility projects can also access standard contracts designed to help placements go smoothly. Some suggestions for Leonardo and Grundtvig Partnership projects are made below:

What could your project protocol contain?

- A copy of the project work plan setting out each partner's activities and responsibilities.
- A schedule of progress reports and an overview of what they should contain.
- Some basic rules on how partners will communicate (e.g. through email lists) and how often.
- Some ideas on how partner meetings should be run e.g. how to ensure everyone can contribute, how far in advance the agenda should be circulated etc.
- How partners can raise problems or issues.
- How the partners will share any resources developed during the project.
- A glossary of key terms to be used in the project which your partners could translate – this helps to avoid misunderstandings.

However well you prepare and run your project, sometimes things will still go wrong! Examples can include some partners contributing more than others, whilst others may drop out altogether or simply deliver their part of the project in isolation. These problems can be potentially avoided by making sure all partners feel involved and consulted during the project meetings and that communication between meetings includes everyone. If you make sure that you have a strategy in place to deal with such problems from the start of the project, you may be able to overcome them before they get too serious. Don't forget that National Agency staff are always here to help with any problems you may have, so don't hesitate to get in touch.

The following case study shows how partners worked together in a Grundtvig Partnership project:

The **Teddy Bear** project, run by the Educational Centres Association (ECA), involved working with older vulnerable learners.

During the project the learners developed reminiscence studies that were then introduced by them as local history directly to school aged children. The ECA worked with partners from Finland and Italy for three years and in the final year a Slovenian partner joined the project.



The ECA felt that the project's success undoubtedly stemmed from three principal factors;

1. a strong underlying educational concept;
2. committed, effective staff; and
3. warm personal relationships between the partners.

The project overcame some obstacles such as the co-ordinating partner changing during the project, and even some problems within the partnership. For example, at a transnational event certain tensions regarding communication gaps became evident within the partnership. Communication was therefore given priority and the problem was eased with the extensive use of email, the development of voice communication over the internet (using Skype) and the use of a web-based resource for information and file exchange as well as more conventional means.

ECA explained:

“Advanced budgetary information from the partners made our travel and accommodation arrangements easy to deal with but we will be really glad when, as a UK organisation, we can bank in euros!

Overall the chance to meet learners old and young and to share their enthusiasm on their home territory was thrilling, as was recognition that the underlying project formula worked in many places and is thus transferable.”

MANAGING COMMUNICATIONS

Regular communication is essential to the success of any transnational project, particularly with overseas partners, whom you may only meet face-to-face two or three times. Traditional forms of communication, such as telephone, email and fax work well but it is also worth considering using the internet for cheap phone calls (skype), online chat systems (such as MSN) or online conferencing systems such as WebCT, First Class or Tiki Wiki. A quick Google using www.google.co.uk will give you a world of information on these facilities and how to use them! Additionally you can read our article on new ways to communicate overleaf. It was originally published in Issue 3 of edUKation our quarterly newsletter for the Leonardo, Grundtvig and Transversal programmes. Please email llp@ecotec.com if you would like to subscribe.

Another way of communicating is to set up an online group for your partnership. For example Yahoo Groups offer a home page, message board, file area, photographs, polls and calendar of events. You will need to sign up to Yahoo (www.yahoo.co.uk), but there is no charge for using the facility. You can post documents (e.g. monitoring templates, learning materials, course outlines) that can be centrally accessed by all of the partners. It is easier to post messages (which remain on the forum) rather than sending individual emails, which can later be lost or mislaid.

Whichever option you choose for your project, the important thing is to make sure that it is accessible by all partners, so that they feel involved in discussions and are generally aware of what is going on.

Also, communication rules need to be established at the first project meeting, so that partners understand their obligations.

Communication Platform – Sample Format

Home Page

An overview of the project, to remind partners of the aims, objectives and key activities.

Message Board

An area where partners can post and receive messages to/from the whole partnership.

File Upload Area

A reference point for project documents such as meeting minutes.

Photographs

A place to upload photographs of partnership meetings or training events for dissemination.

Polls

A tool to enable partners to vote on collaborative decisions, such as the choice of project logo.

Calendar

A useful way of reminding partners about forthcoming deadlines.

Members

A brief profile of the personnel involved in the project.

Your guide to...

New ways of communicating with partners

The idea of working with several European partners may seem daunting but don't let phone bills and travel expenses put you off! New technology can help you to run your project from your desk. Think virtual meetings and internet phone calls!

Here are a few options for you to consider:

Internet phone calls

In what is being branded a revolution in telecommunications, a growing number of companies are offering free phone calls over the internet.

Calls are made through a handset which plugs directly into your PC. These are available at most high street electrical stores from as little as £5.

If you've got a web cam, you can use it as a videophone too – great for conferencing.

Try:

www.skype.com www.google.com/talk
www.tescointernetphone.com

Instant messaging

This works like a phone call except, instead of talking, you use a keyboard. Many of you will have already used instant messaging tools like Microsoft's Messenger or AOL's AIM to communicate with friends, but using it as a tool for business is less common. Give it a go!

Try:

<http://im.live.com/messenger/im/home>
<http://info.aol.co.uk/aim>

Online collaboration: internet word processing, presentations and spreadsheets

In an ideal world you'd be able to drop-in on your partners whenever you wanted. Unfortunately, with limited time and resources to spend on travel, this isn't often possible.

Fear not; new online software is extending the potential for collaboration beyond simply being able to talk about what you want to do. Free internet-based word processor, spreadsheet and presentation tools allow you and your partners to work on documents together, at the same time...and to have a conversation while you're at it. Best of all, it's compatible with traditional office software.

Try:

www.zoho.com
www.thinkfree.com
www.google.com/google-d-s/b1.html

Online groups

A good way to stay in touch is to set up an online group. Project participants and partners can upload their photos, diaries and news onto shared webspace for other invited members to view. Group calendars help you to keep track of what you are all doing and a message board allows you to make sure all your partners are up-to-date. Some sites even allow you to conduct online polls to find out what your partners think!

Try:

<http://groups.yahoo.com>
<http://groups.google.com>

Go forth and collaborate!

Please let us know if you discover any other useful means for long distance collaboration. Please note that, where we've referred to companies, we are not endorsing or promoting their products or services. We just thought it would be useful to provide examples of what is available. Have a look around for yourself.

Send your recommendations to
llp@ecotec.com

MANAGING PARTNERSHIP MEETINGS

A successful first meeting is an essential ingredient in the perfect partnership, as it often sets the tone for the remainder of the project. For this reason, if you are the co-ordinator it is always a good idea to host the first meeting so that you can (i) have control over the logistical issues; (ii) establish your organisation as an effective co-ordinator in the eyes of your partners; and (iii) set expectations for the other meetings.

Hosting a partnership meeting is immensely hard work, but is also enjoyable and, if done correctly and thoughtfully, will almost certainly pay dividends later on. Your work is likely to begin many weeks if not months before the meeting is due to take place and the first task will probably be to select a suitable venue for the meeting (ideally a comfortable room within your own organisation, though if this is not possible, it is acceptable to meet off-site).

Always be prepared to 'go the extra mile' in terms of looking after your partners, from booking their hotel rooms to collecting and depositing them at the airport (this probably means hiring a minibus in order to transport them). Also bear in mind that joint social events are a key tool in the partnership bonding process, so be prepared to arrange those and join in too. Although this all makes for a long day, if co-ordinated properly, it should also be a really satisfying experience.

When planning the meeting bear in mind that working patterns do differ according to alternative cultures across Europe, for example lunch breaks tend to take place later and for longer in Southern Europe. Also be aware of the fact that most of your partners will be working in a 'second language' (e.g. English) so try not to make the agenda too intensive and leave plenty of breaks for tea/coffee and informal discussions.

In terms of the agenda, it can also be a good idea to introduce short workshops, which enable partners who are perhaps less confident in English, to get their points across in small groups that appear less intimidating. It is essential that all partners feel they have a chance to contribute, as ultimately the project is a collective venture where decisions (and progress) should be owned by the partners.

Project meetings are a unique opportunity to make decisions and review project progress since you will have all the partners in the same place. It's a great idea to get partners to present progress reports verbally at meetings. If they have failed to do their work or meet an agreed deadline, the onus will be on them to explain to the rest of the partners why.

Another useful approach is to arrange a visit to your local community or target group that the project is going to work with. This will get everyone out of the meeting room and really bring the project's work alive.

Meeting Agenda (Example)

Day 1:

Arrival of Partners (*Informal gathering at local pub*)

Day 2:

09:30 Welcome & Introductions

10:00 Presentation of Partner Organisations

11:00 Tea/Coffee Break

11:30 Review of Project Work plan

12:30 Introduction of Communication Tool

13:30 Lunch Break

15:00 Financial Issues/Monitoring

16:00 Review Evaluation Strategy

16:30 Summary of the Day's Discussions and Close of Meeting

20.00 Welcome meal

Day 3:

09:30 Activities & Next Six Months Deadlines

11:00 Tea/Coffee Break

11:30 Discussion of Project Dissemination (Workshop)

12:30 Planning of Next Meeting (Workshop)

13:30 Lunch

15:00 Visit to Local Community/Target Group

16:30 Summary of the Day's Discussions and Close of Meeting

Day 4:

Partners Leave

The importance of communication in a Leonardo Mobility project:

“Regular communication with our partners is vital to the success of the programme. Establishing close working relationships has ensured that marketing techniques and promotional literature are streamlined and consistent to facilitate a constant promotional drive. The Leonardo Programme Management Committee is comprised of key contacts from each participating Higher Education Institution and creates a clear communication channel. Partners host meetings on rotation, providing the perfect forum to exchange methods of best practice and discuss programme updates.”

Kelly Fish from the North West Universities Association



Project staff and beneficiaries work together at a meeting of the My Voice Grundtvig Partnership project

MONITORING YOUR PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES

Monitoring the project activities and finances are important in terms of being able to demonstrate that your project has both delivered what it intended to deliver and achieved the aims and objectives stated in the application.

The appropriate levels of monitoring vary according to the type of project you're participating in. It's a really good idea to have a look at the Final Report for your project as early as possible, and make sure you set up systems to record activities and expenditure in a way that enables you to complete the Report. Have a look at the financial section and make sure you record expenditure against the headings in the report - that way you will have all the information you need in the right format from the start. If you aren't sure where to start, why not contact another project and see how they are doing it? You will be able to meet other projects at the Project Seminars organised by the National Agency to which all new projects are invited, or you can find their details on the programme websites.

Once you've worked out the information you need to collect during the project, it's a good idea to develop common templates. Try to develop these at the very beginning of the project and circulate them to all partners. Regular progress reports for the project allow all the partners to see how the project is going, demonstrate their progress with the project activities, and identify any potential problems or delays. You can then take action to alter the work programme or deal with problem accordingly. Ideally, your templates should be branded with the project logo (if there is one) and the Grundtvig or Leonardo logo. All new LLP projects use the

same logo, which can be downloaded from the Useful Documents and Information section of the Leonardo and Grundtvig websites.



The purpose of this branding is to help give the project a distinct European (as opposed to local) identity, which implies joint ownership by all the partners. Also, the target audience should be aware that the project is being delivered with European funding.

It will make project management easier if these templates are uploaded to the e-platform (e.g. yahoo group) so that partners can access them at any time and not have to use photocopies.

Financial Monitoring

The table below sets out how you need to record financial information for the project, since the scale of monitoring varies between the different project types:

Leonardo Mobility projects	As project co-ordinator, you are responsible for all the project's funding. You will need to keep records of all the expenditure incurred during the project and include this information in your Financial Report at the end of the project.
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<p>Grundtvig and Leonardo Partnership projects</p>	<p>Even if you are the project co-ordinator you will only be responsible for monitoring the funding paid to you by the UK National Agency. Your partners will receive their funds directly from their own National Agency so you will not be required to monitor their expenditure or report on it. You will be awarded a lump sum which requires very minimal financial reporting.</p>
<p>Leonardo Transfer of Innovation projects</p>	<p>As project co-ordinator, you are responsible for all the project's funding and for making payments of funding to other partners. You will need to keep records of all the expenditure incurred by all the partners during the project along with official records of payments made to partners and include this information in your financial report at the end of the project. This makes it doubly important to set up standard templates (such as timesheets) at the beginning of the project and to establish deadlines by which your partners must send copies of all relevant invoices/receipts for inclusion within the interim or final report. A system of reporting that requires them to send this documentation regularly, e.g. every three months, is a good idea. You could also</p>

use partner meetings as an opportunity to help partners with their financial monitoring by checking their systems and files when they host a meeting.

Remember to check the documents you receive from the National Agency thoroughly to ensure you understand exactly what evidence you need to keep. It's a good idea to write a summary of the relevant rules and share this with all the partners so that everyone has the right information. A session on the monitoring requirements might also be a good idea at the first partner meeting. Everyone can ask questions (these could be recorded and emailed to the National Agency if you aren't sure of the answers!) and share their expertise. You might be pleasantly surprised by your partners' knowledge and experience and find that they have everything you need for your monitoring activities. Don't forget to ask!

Finally, it's worth thinking about how you will keep your own staff up-to-date with these requirements. If you are going to have some assistance from a member of your organisation's financial team or you will have someone helping you to manage the project, you need to make sure they are included in all the emails and discussions. If your budget allows, it would be really useful for them to attend the first partner meeting so they understand the project and know who they will be working with.

DISSEMINATING YOUR PROJECT

Dissemination is all about publicising your activities and making sure that the people and organisations that could benefit from your experiences are aware of your work. Everyone involved in your project needs to get involved in dissemination, and you should start promoting your work as soon as the project begins. Dissemination is much more than an end of project press release or conference. Many project managers make the mistake of assuming that dissemination activities can only begin once the results are known, whereas in fact really effective dissemination activities form part of a co-ordinated strategy. A successful strategy should take into account the real purpose behind the dissemination and who will be reached through the activities (target audience). Different target audiences may be relevant at different stages of the project and the tools used should reflect this.

The structure and depth of the dissemination strategy will naturally vary according to the size and scale of the project. One common tool used in dissemination is the project website, yet there are some good practice issues that need to be observed here. Firstly, the website should have its own independent domain name (address) so that all partners take ownership of it. Secondly, it should include at least a summary of the aims and objectives in each of the partner's national languages. Thirdly, it absolutely must include an acknowledgement of the relevant funding programme and logo.

It is also useful to make a distinction between internal dissemination and external dissemination. Internal dissemination would normally include amongst its target audience members of staff within the co-

ordinating and partner organisations, whereas external dissemination usually implies trying to reach some kind of audience beyond those organisations directly involved.

Less formal (and often less obvious) methods and tools can be used for internal dissemination, for example team meetings, articles in staff newsletters, email alerts etc. A particularly innovative approach is to use 'screensaver news' (where a selection of slides about the project automatically appears on PC screens throughout the organisation, instead of more familiar Windows screensavers).

Most important of all however, is to ensure that all dissemination activities appear interesting and are easy to relate to. One way of helping to ensure this, is by using visual images such as photographs or videos wherever possible, as this helps to bring the project to life and present a more human face.

Some interesting project websites, with examples of visual images and project logos, are:

www.spokenspaces.eu

www.languages.dk

www.peermentor.bdf.es

www.addressproject.com

You should also think about how to sustain your project results after the end of the project. Have a look at our Valorisation Guidance Note at www.leonardo.org.uk or the European Commission's website at http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/valorisation/index_en.htm for some ideas.

Dissemination ideas

The amount of dissemination you carry out and the kinds of activities you get involved in will depend very much on your project budget. However, you don't need a huge amount of money to make an impact! It makes sense to look at different ways to reach your target audience, and to fully utilise your partners' resources and skills. You could use your first partner meeting to find out what each partner brings to the project. They might have:

- Access to cheaper printing facilities so that the partnership can produce more leaflets or documents at a lower cost.
- Graphic design expertise so they can come up with some ideas for a project logo or leaflets.
- Web expertise to help set up your project website.
- Translation skills to translate promotional materials into different partner languages.
- Excellent networking links at national or European level.
- Really creative ideas for promotional items.

Three steps to effective dissemination

1. Work out your target audience

Your target audience includes those people and organisations who will benefit from knowing about your project. These might be organisations similar to yours, organisations working with those groups who stand to benefit from the project, other teachers or trainers and so on. Don't forget to think about larger networking organisations such as national or European associations who will have access to a large number of suitable organisations. You should put all of these organisations into a contact database or

spreadsheet, find out their contact details, and think about the best way to reach them. Remember that the target audience will vary across the partner countries so you will probably end up with different lists across the partnership.

2. Work out what to disseminate and when

You will need to disseminate your project from the very beginning, but the kind of information you will disseminate will change as the project continues. Initially you may just want to do some awareness raising activities to let people know what your partnership will be doing but later on you might want to disseminate specific results, lessons learned and good practice. Draw up a dissemination timetable at the start of the project and schedule in your dissemination activities, using your work plan as a guide.

3. Work out how to disseminate

You can use lots of different methods to disseminate your project:

- A project website in all partner languages.
- Promotional items such as pens, post it notes, postcards and leaflets printed with the project logo, the programme logo and your contact details/web address.
- Electronic newsletters – a really good way of reaching a large audience at low cost.
- Attending relevant events and seminars – ask the organisers if you can distribute your leaflets or just hand them out to everyone you meet!
- Submitting news items and articles to UK National Agency resources such as edUKation, our monthly e-flashes and our websites. Email llp@ecotec.com for more information.

EVALUATION

Evaluation feedback should be obtained and used continuously to help improve the quality and delivery of your project. The important thing to remember is to allow enough flexibility for the project to be responsive to the results of any evaluation activities. The main purpose of evaluation is to use its results to improve performance.

An effective evaluation strategy should not only look at the outcomes, but also the processes that lead up to delivery of the outcomes, such as communication between partners, clarity of direction by the co-ordinator and equality of contribution to the tasks and discussions. This is particularly relevant in Leonardo and Grundtvig partnerships where the focus is on the process of European cooperation rather than outputs. It can also be helpful to seek independent opinion (e.g. from other providers or community groups) on how adaptable the methods or products might be for them.

The evaluation should also include an assessment of the outputs and outcomes, which means using quantitative indicators (e.g. how many people attended a course) as well as qualitative ones (e.g. what was different for them as a result of attending). If you decide to use an external evaluator, be prepared for constructive criticism. For smaller scale projects such as Partnerships you won't be expected to sub-contract to an external evaluator. In this case, a good alternative is to bring together a group of representatives from other organisations working at local level to participate in focus or discussion groups regarding the project and its potential extended value to their own work. Or, if there isn't time for a face to face

meeting, send them a short questionnaire or a copy of any reports produced and ask for their comments.

In terms of 'internal evaluation' it can be a useful exercise to obtain feedback from your project partners on how they feel the project is developing and in particular the success and relevance of the partnership meetings. A key point to bear in mind here is that there will almost certainly be cultural (if not linguistic) variations in working practices and methods between your partners and your work plan and meetings schedule should demonstrate an appreciation of these. For example, some countries (e.g. Spain) pretty much 'shut down' during half of July and most of August, whereas others (e.g. Finland) have legislation discouraging working at weekends.

At the end of each partner meeting you could have a feedback session on what worked well and what could be improved.

Evaluating Your Partnership Meetings

- Did each partner contribute to the discussions?
- Is there mutual understanding of the objectives?
- Were all the partner organisations represented?
- Was the meeting content related to the aims and objectives?
- Was there a relevant mixture of activities/workshops etc?
- Were the needs of participants taken into account?
- Was sufficient information issued to participants in advance?
- Was accommodation of an appropriate quality?
- Were special requirements (e.g. dietary) met?
- Did the organiser pay attention to practical details (e.g. airport transfers)?

USEFUL RESOURCES

Transnational Partnership Guidance Note

This Guidance Note was developed in 2003 for Leonardo projects operating under a previous phase of the programme. However, the ideas it contains are still valid and it discusses transnational working in depth. A good read for the more experienced project co-ordinator.

<http://www.leonardo.org.uk/page.asp?section=0001000100230002&itemTitle=Information+and+Guidance>

Tips on Managing Transnational Projects

The "Survival Kit for European Project Management" has been compiled to help you manage your European partnership. It is written in an easily accessible style and has lots of good tips.

<http://www.grundtvig.org.uk/page.asp?section=0001000100200002&itemTitle=Information+and+Guidance>

The Swedish Guide to Grundtvig Partnerships

The Swedish National Agency has published a document providing questions and answers about Partnerships, Preparatory Visits and Contact Seminars. Although some of the information is now out of date it is still a good source of advice on the programme. The Guide can be downloaded from

<http://www.grundtvig.org.uk/page.asp?section=0001000100200002&itemTitle=Information+and+Guidance>

The Grundtvig Navigator

A great source of information for all Grundtvig Partnerships. The Navigator helps you get your bearings as it guides you through the different steps of setting up and managing a Partnership. It offers practical advice from organisations that have managed Grundtvig projects. The Navigator can be found at

<http://www.grundtvig.org.uk/page.asp?section=0001000100200002&itemTitle=Information+and+Guidance>

The QAS project

The QAS project - Project Support for Quality and Sustainability - is a joint project between the National Agencies of the Czech Republic, France, Sweden and the UK. It supports partnerships within Comenius and Grundtvig by providing useful resources for project management and sustainability. Resources include a guide to Project Management for Beginners and a Summary of Good Tips and Hints for a Successful Partnership. See

http://www.programkontoret.se/Default_5836.aspx

EQUAL Guide to Partnership Working

Developed for the European Social Fund programme EQUAL, this guide contains useful information on working in partnership, and a good section on dealing with change and conflict.

<http://www.equal.ecotec.co.uk/resources/gpg/>

CONTACT US

If you have any queries about the material in this handbook, or any suggestions you would like to see included, please let us know. You can also contact us if you need more advice on any of the topics discussed or assistance with any problems you may encounter during the lifetime of your project.

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If you would like to subscribe to any of our newsletters please use the subscribe function on the websites or email ljp@ecotec.com.

We look forward to hearing from you!

GLOSSARY OF USEFUL EUROPEAN PROJECT MANAGEMENT TERMS

Eligible Countries – THE 27 EU Member States (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom), plus the three European Economic Area countries (Norway, Iceland & Liechtenstein) and the Candidate Country Turkey.

Lifelong Learning Programme – Parent programme designed to promote exchange, co-operation and mobility between education and training systems within eligible countries.

Grundtvig Programme – Sub-programme of the Lifelong Learning Programme that has a specific focus on the development of teaching and learning for adults and young people not involved in tertiary education.

Leonardo da Vinci Programme – Sub-programme of the Lifelong Learning Programme that has a specific focus on the development of vocational education and training for employees, students and educational staff.

Comenius Programme – Sub-programme of the Lifelong Learning Programme that has a specific focus on the development of school education for children, young people and staff.

Erasmus Programme – Sub-programme of the Lifelong Learning Programme that has a specific focus on the development of teaching and learning experiences for students and staff in Higher Education.

Transversal Programme – Sub-programme of the Lifelong Learning Programme that has a specific focus on Policy Development, Information and Communications Technologies, Languages and Dissemination.

Transnational Partnerships – Groups of organisations from eligible countries who agree to work together on a specific piece of work, research, project or exchange.

Mobility Activities – Activities which involve staff, students or employees travelling to a host organisation within an eligible country to participate in an exchange, visit or project meeting.

Centralised Actions – Those activities funded by one or more of the various sub-programmes, where project promoters both apply and report back directly to the Executive Agency in Brussels.

Decentralised Actions - Those activities funded by one or more of the various sub-programmes, where project promoters both apply and report back to their appropriate National Agency.

Dissemination and Exploitation of Results – The manner in which the results of an exchange, partnership or project are exploited or continued after the funding period ends.

Staff Costs – The costs of members of staff directly involved in implementing the partnership or project activities, including where appropriate, employers pension and national insurance contributions.

Direct Costs – Costs associated with travel, subsistence, small items of equipment, or out-sourcing of activities.

General Costs – Expenditure which is not directly attributable to the partnership or project, such as overheads or central administration costs.

National Agency – The organisation(s) responsible for administering the Lifelong Learning Programme in each eligible country. In the UK, ECOTEC manage the Leonardo, Grundtvig and Transversal programmes, and the British Council manage Comenius and Erasmus.

Executive Agency – The Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency who are responsible for administering the centralised actions of the Lifelong Learning Programme at European level

Project Co-ordinator – Organisation responsible for submitting an application on behalf of a transnational partnership. In some cases (Leonardo Mobility and transfer of Innovation projects) this also means holding the contract and budget for the whole project, managing the project and reporting on progress.

Project Partner – Organisation responsible for working collaboratively with other organisations in eligible countries.

Project Compendium/Directory – A directory of projects funded via the Lifelong Learning Programme programmes, published each year and containing an overview of the aims, objectives, results and partner organisations involved in each project.

Project Outputs – Quantitative indicators of a project's progress, success or impact (e.g. the number of people participating in language skills training as a result of the activity).

Project Outcomes – Qualitative indicators of a project's progress, success or impact (e.g. people having become more employable as a result of being able to converse in a second language).

Evaluation – The review of project activities and outcomes either by the partnership (internal evaluation) or by an external contractor or group of organisations (external evaluation).