survival kit

Holger Bienzle
Eerika Hedman
Ray Kirtley
Vesa Purokuro
Calin Rus
Silvia Wiesinger
Eija Wilen

Managing Multilateral Projects in the Lifelong Learning Programme

Project coordinator:

die Berater – Vienna, Austria
www.dieberater.com

CIMO – Helsinki, Finland
www.cimo.fi

Humap Ltd – Jyvaskyla, Finland
www.humap.com

University of Hull – Hull, United Kingdom
www.hull.ac.uk

Institutul Intercultural Timisoara – Timisoara, Romania
www.intercultural.ro

Survival Kit website: **www.european-project-management.eu**

This publication has been developed in the framework of the project
Survival Kit for Lifelong Learning Projects
(141745-LLP-1-2008-1-AT-GRUNDTVIG-GAM)
The project has been funded with support from the European Commission.

Education and Culture DG
Lifelong Learning Programme

Survival Kit

Holger Bienzle
Eerika Hedman
Ray Kirtley
Vesa Purokuro
Calin Rus
Silvia Wiesinger
Eija Wilen

Managing Multilateral Projects in the Lifelong Learning Programme

Survival Kit. Managing Multilateral Projects in the Lifelong Learning Programme

Authors: Holger Bienzle, Eerika Hedman, Ray Kirtley, Vesa Purokuro,
Calin Rus, Silvia Wiesinger, Eija Wilen

Production: word up Werbeagentur

Publisher: “die Berater” Unternehmensberatungsgesellschaft mbH
Wipplingerstraße 32/23–26
A-1010 Wien
www.dieberater.com

ISBN: 978-3-9502772-3-4

Content

Preface

This *Survival Kit* publication is the second of its kind.

In 1999/2000 a team of project co-ordinators and programme managers in National Agencies produced *A Survival Kit for European Project Management* to support co-ordinators in the challenging task of successfully managing a centralised project in the Socrates programme. Although the project at the time was rather limited in terms of scope and resources, the *Survival Kit* was received very favourably by many project actors and has been widely used over the years.

In the years since the production of the Socrates *Survival Kit*, however, the context in which transnational co-operation in education takes place has significantly changed due to:

- The increased complexity of working environments
- The emergence of new technologies which boosted the potential for co-operation over distances
- The rapid quantitative increase of European co-operation activities in education
- The changed funding mechanism in the new generation of EU programmes, i.e. the Lifelong Learning Programme (2007–2013)

These changes were not adequately reflected in the old *Survival Kit*. Therefore another project was started in 2009 to develop a new guidance publication on project management for actors of Multilateral Projects in the Lifelong Learning Programme, funded by Grundtvig Accompanying Measures.

Multilateral Projects are a specific type of co-operative project in the Lifelong Learning Programme, the main EU funding mechanism in the field of education and training. Their characteristics are described in detail in *Chapter 1*. Several institutions from as many countries work together to jointly develop or transfer, test and disseminate innovative education products, e.g. curricula, courses and learning materials. This temporary partnership is funded on the basis of a work programme, and has a clear central figure: the project co-ordinator, who leads the project and is responsible for its success on behalf of the contracting institution. It is this institution which signs the Grant Agreement with the funder, the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

While the *Survival Kit* is tailor-made to the specific needs and context of Multilateral Projects much of its content is relevant for other types of project in the Lifelong Learning Programme including:

- Networks, which have the same funding mechanism, but for whom two separate publications exist: The Art of Networking and the Resource Pack for Networkers, downloadable at **www.networks-in-education.eu**
- Partnerships and Transfer of Innovation Projects, managed by the National Agencies in the participating countries
- Transnational projects in other EU funding programmes in education, training and related fields

The new *Survival Kit* aims to provide guidance for education professionals on how to plan, organise, implement, monitor and evaluate, disseminate and sustain Multilateral Projects in Grundtvig and other actions of the Lifelong Learning Programme. To this end, the former Socrates *Survival Kit* was revised, amended and in most parts completely re-written.

The publication addresses, above all, project co-ordinators with little or no previous experience with European co-operation. At the same time, the team of authors also hopes to offer some new ideas and practical tools for the experienced European project manager.

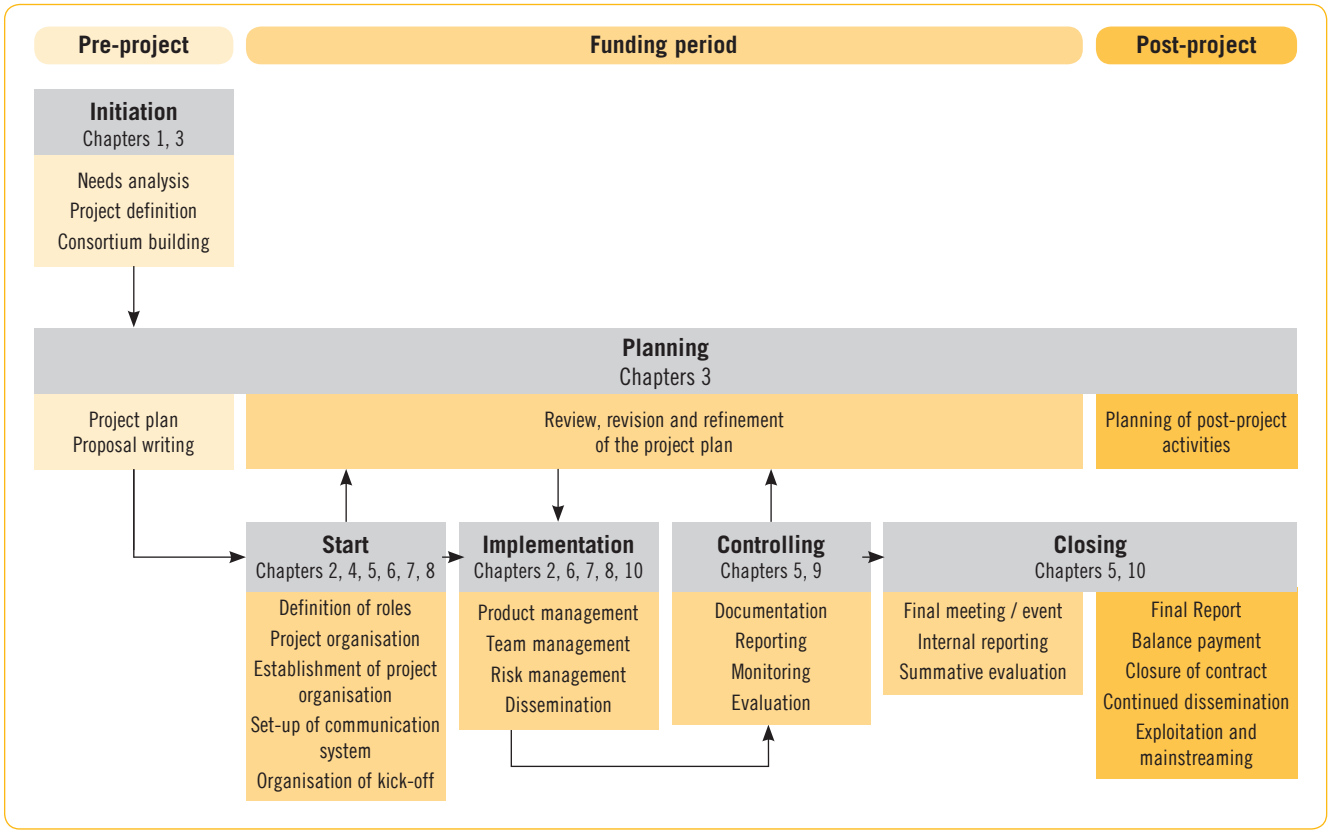
Compared to the former Socrates *Survival Kit* the new publication covers several similar aspects of European project management:

- *Planning a Multilateral Project (Chapter 3)*
- *Project Administration (Chapter 5)*
- *Effective Collaboration (Chapter 6)*
- *Quality and Evaluation (Chapter 9)*

While these aspects have been substantially expanded and updated, other chapters have been added or completely re-organised:

- The subject of project co-ordination (*Chapter 2*) is now presented from two perspectives: Firstly as the more technical task of project management, taking into account recent developments like Agile Project Management, and secondly as the more people-oriented theme of leadership in a Multilateral Project.
- *Intercultural Elements in European Project Management* (*Chapter 7*) were only implicitly dealt with in the old *Survival Kit*, but are now fully covered in a separate chapter.

Box 1: Phases of the management of a Multilateral Project



- Similarly, *ICT Tools for European Project Work* (*Chapter 8*) are now discussed in much more detail, this is more than justified in the light of the technological revolution which has taken place in the past decade
- Dissemination (*Chapter 10*) has a much higher visibility in the new *Kit*, reflecting its greater importance in the new programme and complemented by the concept of the exploitation of results which has emerged since the Socrates Programme

These chapters deal with transversal aspects of project management of a Multilateral Project. However, one chronological chapter was added. This is *Chapter 4: Getting the Project Started*. The authors felt that the first months of a Multilateral Project deserve particular attention. It is the phase when newcomers to the co-ordination of a multilateral project in the Lifelong Learning programme need to inform themselves about a number of important management roles and thus are most in need of support. At the same time the management measures taken in this starting phase determine to a high degree the following course of the project.

The publication is not intended to be read from the first to the last page. Different parts may be consulted on specific occasions. There is some deliberate overlapping. Some aspects, for instance team building, are dealt with in more than one chapter. In *Effective Collaboration (Chapter 6)* it is systemically presented as a key management task, *Chapter 7: Intercultural Elements in European Project Management* deals with the cultural differences in multinational teams, while *Chapter 4: Getting the Project Started* suggestions are made about how the team building process can be successfully initiated at the beginning of the project.

The graphic in Box 1, which is also presented in *Chapter 4*, may help the readers, together with the table of contents, to find in the *Kit* the information needed for a specific purpose.

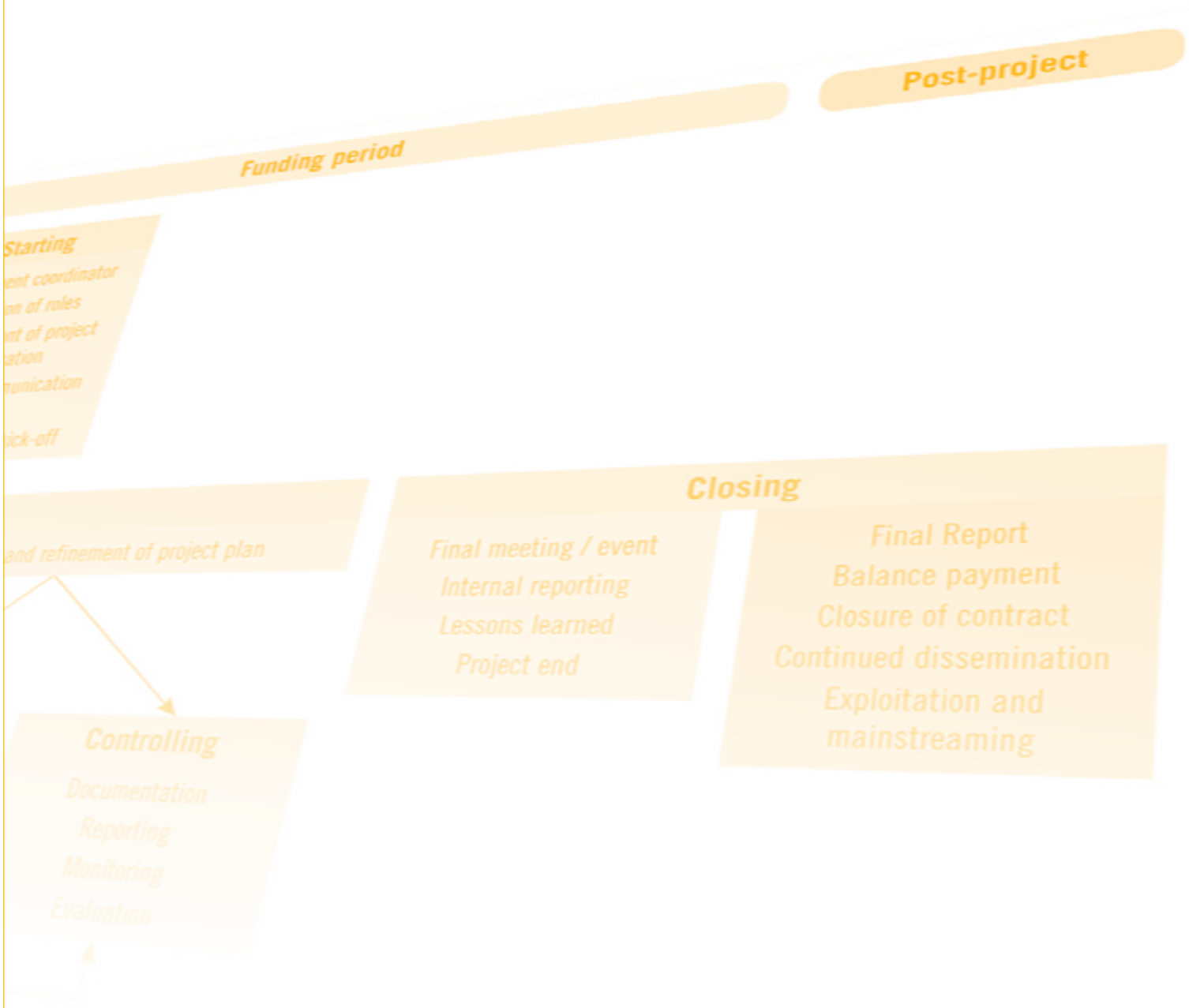
The *Survival Kit* offers different types of information:

- Theoretical inputs from project management and related disciplines
- Recommendations based on the European project work of the authors

- Best practice collected in many conversations with other project actors, programme managers and evaluators
- A range of practical templates, resources and examples

The latter are also available separately for download on the *Survival Kit* website www.european-project-management.eu, which complements the publication. On this website the *Survival Kit* can also be downloaded in English, German, French, Romanian and Italian.

To avoid one misunderstanding from the very beginning: The *Survival Kit* is not to be confused with the *Project Handbook: Guidelines for Administrative and Financial Management and Reporting*. While the latter is an official document issued by the funder, the Executive Agency Education, Audiovisual and Culture, the *Survival Kit* is a peer-to-peer publication produced by a project partnership. While officials from the Agency have approved its overall direction, the recommendations made in the following pages do not have in any way an authoritative character.



Chapter 1: Multilateral Projects in the Lifelong Learning Programme

This chapter introduces the context of the publication. The key term *project* is defined briefly in general terms and, more specifically, in terms of the transnational co-operation structure known as the *Multilateral Project* in the European Union's Lifelong Learning Programme. After setting the scene, typical challenges arising from the mission and structure of a Multilateral Project are highlighted.

1. What is a project?

Projects are as old as mankind. Daniel Defoe mentions the first project ever:

> *The building of the Ark by Noah, so far as you will allow it human work, was the first project I read of, and no question seem'd for it, and had he not been set on work by a very peculiar Direction from Heaven, the Good old Man would certainly have been laugh'd out of it, as a most senseless ridiculous project.*
> Defoe, Daniel (1697), An Essay upon Projects

More recently, the PMBOK Guide, widely acknowledged as the standard reference book on project management, defines a project as follows:

> *A project is a temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product, service or result.* (PMBOK Guide (2008), p. 5)
> The 1996 edition of the same book adds: *It is performed by people, constrained by limited resources, planned, executed, and controlled.*

Temporary: As opposed to routine activities, the duration of a project is defined. It has a clear starting date and a fixed end.
Unique outcome: A project is product-oriented, it is geared to the accomplishment of a novel outcome which has not existed before.
Performed by people: A project is implemented by a project team which has been formed for this specific purpose and which is normally dissolved at the project's end.
Constrained: There are several fixed factors which prevent a project expanding without restraint.
Limited resources: Time, budget, as well as the human resources and technical equipment available to a project are limited.
Planned: A project is a highly organised effort, a set of activities carefully structured before it starts and constantly refined.
Executed: Something must happen in a project, it is an action-oriented exercise.
Controlled: Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are needed to ensure the accomplishment of the envisaged outcome.

A project may comprise very different undertakings, for instance organising a birthday party, building a pyramid, sending the first man to the moon or, in our case, developing innovative educational concepts and materials.

2. Characteristics of Multilateral Projects

This publication focuses on a specific type of project: Multilateral Projects (MP) in the European Union's main funding mechanism in education, the Lifelong Learning Programme (2007–2013).

The Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) is the European Union's main funding instrument in the field of education and training. The LLP has four sectoral sub-programmes and four so called *transversal* programmes. In addition, the Jean Monnet programme is part of the LLP. It stimulates teaching, reflection and debate on the European integration process at higher education institutions.

The general objective of the Lifelong Learning Programme is to contribute through lifelong learning to the development of the Community as an advanced knowledge-based society, with sustainable economic development, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, while ensuring good protection of the environment for future generations. In particular, it aims to foster interchange, co-operation and mobility between educa-

tion and training systems within the Community so that they become a world quality reference.

The programme has these specific objectives:

(a) To contribute to the development of quality lifelong learning, and to promote high performance, innovation and a European dimension in systems and practices in the field.

(b) To support the realisation of a European area for lifelong learning.

(c) To help improve the quality, attractiveness and accessibility of the opportunities for lifelong learning available within Member States.

(d) To reinforce the contribution of lifelong learning to social cohesion, active citizenship, intercultural dialogue, gender equality and personal fulfilment.

(e) To help promote creativity, competitiveness, employability and the growth of an entrepreneurial spirit.

(f) To contribute to increased participation in lifelong learning by people of all ages, including those with special needs and disadvantaged groups, regardless of their socio-economic background.

(g) To promote language learning and linguistic diversity.

(h) To support the development of innovative ICT-based content, services, pedagogies and practice for lifelong learning.

(i) To reinforce the role of lifelong learning in creating a sense of European citizenship based on understanding and respect for human rights and democracy, and encouraging tolerance and respect for other peoples and cultures.

(j) To promote co-operation in quality assurance in all sectors of education and training in Europe.

(k) To encourage the best use of results, innovative products and processes and to exchange good practice in the fields covered by the Lifelong Learning Programme, in order to improve the quality of education and training.

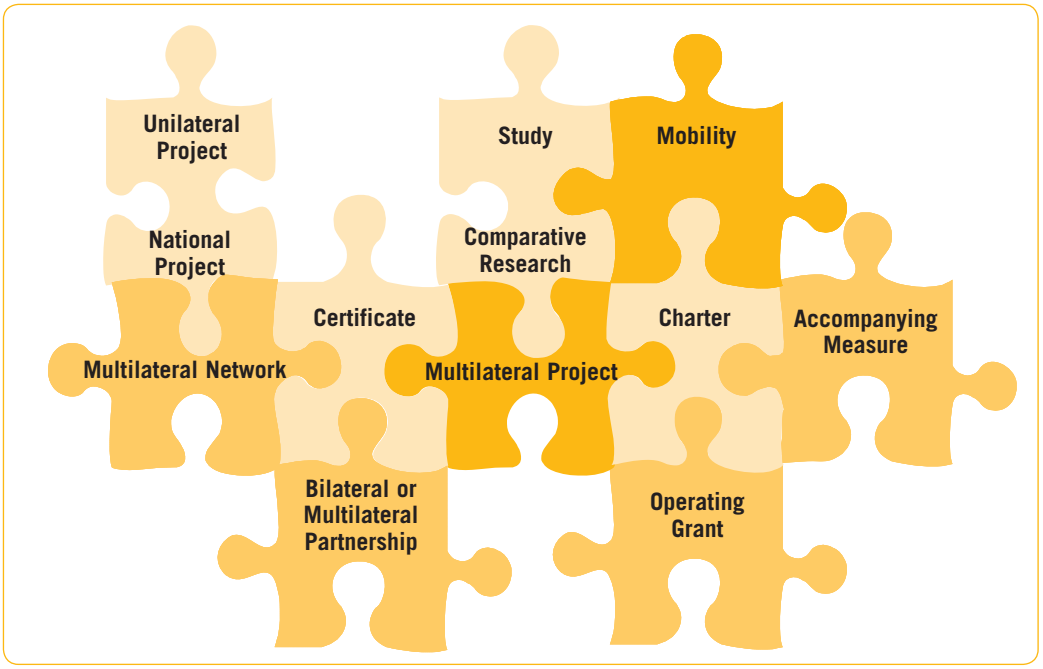
(Decision No 1720/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 November 2006 establishing an action programme in the field of lifelong learning)

In order to *foster interchange, co-operation and mobility between education and training systems*, a number of different types of co-operation and mobility activities for educational institutions, their staff and learners are funded by the programme, as shown in Box 1.

Multilateral Projects are a specific form of transnational co-operation between institutions which need to be distinguished from other project types, above all from Partnerships and Networks:

Networks primarily aim at pooling expertise and bringing together key actors in a specific thematic area with the purpose of networking, reflecting on current and emerging needs and practices, disseminating best practice and making strategic recommendations to decision-makers.

Box 1: Action categories in the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP)



Partnerships, on the other hand, are a smaller-scale European co-operation activity between institutions active in an education sector (school education, vocational education and training, adult learning). In Partnerships the focus is on sharing experience and learning from each other for the benefit of the institution, its staff and learners.

In contrast to networks and partnerships Multilateral Projects have a distinct mission:

A Multilateral Project is defined as *a European co-operation activity with a defined and exploitable outcome developed jointly by a formal or informal grouping of organisations or institutions* (Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) Guide 2010. Part I: General provisions, p. 8: http://ec.europa.eu/education/llp/doc848_en.htm)

Multilateral Projects can be found in almost all strands of the Lifelong Learning Programme (cf. Box 2). Their focus varies between the sub-programmes concerned:

Comenius Multilateral Projects are there to improve the initial or in-service training of teachers and other categories of personnel working in the school education sector with the ultimate aim to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom.

In **Erasmus** Curriculum Development Projects support the process of innovation and upgrading in any academic discipline of higher education teaching.

Leonardo da Vinci Multilateral Projects are called *Development of Innovation Projects*. They aim to improve the quality of Vocational Education and Training (VET) systems through the development of innovative contents, methods and procedures.

Grundtvig Multilateral Projects develop concrete and innovative results/products, with the ultimate aims of improving:

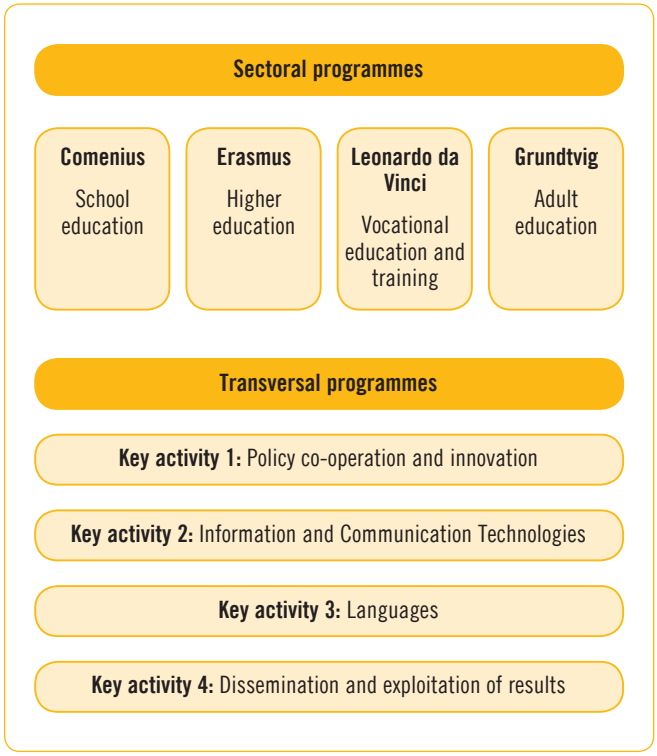
- The content and delivery of adult education
- Adult education at a system or policy level
- The accessibility of learning opportunities for adults
- The management of adult education

Key Activity Languages promote language awareness and access to language learning resources or they develop and disseminate language learning materials, including online courses and instruments for language testing. They support and encourage the learning of European official languages as foreign languages and as a pre-requisite to working or studying in another Member State. Particular focus is on the less widely used and taught languages (LWULT).

Multilateral Projects in **Key Activity ICT** develop innovative ICT-based content, services, pedagogies and practices for lifelong learning. They complement ICT enhanced learning projects in the sectoral programmes by addressing ICT teaching and learning needs across two or more education sectors.

In **Key Activity Dissemination and Exploitation of Results** Multilateral Projects create a framework for the effective exploitation of the results of the Lifelong Learning Programme and previous related programmes at sectoral, regional, national and European levels.
(Descriptions based on: (Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) Guide 2010. Part IIb: Explanations by action: http://ec.europa.eu/education/llp/doc1943_en.htm).

Box 2: LLP sub-programmes which can generate Multilateral Projects



Despite the specific purposes defined in the different sub-programmes they all share some fundamental structural and functional characteristics:

- Multilateral Projects are **product-oriented** pilot projects. They typically **develop or transfer innovative concepts or educational products**, test and disseminate them in the educational community concerned and ensure they are used by the envisaged target groups
- These projects are performed by **temporary partnerships** of institutions which provide education or contribute to education in other ways
- A Multilateral Project partnership consists of **partner institutions from different countries participating in the Lifelong Learning Programme**. The number of partners and countries required varies between different actions
- One partner, the beneficiary or contractor, has the lead role in this **centralised project concept**. This institution acts on behalf of the whole partnership and concludes the Grant Agreement (often referred to as *the contract*) with the Executive Agency. The contractor is accountable for the achievement of the envisaged project results and for ensuring that the budget is spent according to the financial regulations
- The **project co-ordinator**, who is normally, but not necessarily, a member of staff of the contracting institution, is in charge of the implementation of the project by the multilateral partnership
- The **level of funding** of Multilateral Projects may vary according to the action and year but is fixed for all the projects selected under the same call
- The **project duration** is normally between one and three years. Again, this may vary according to the action and year

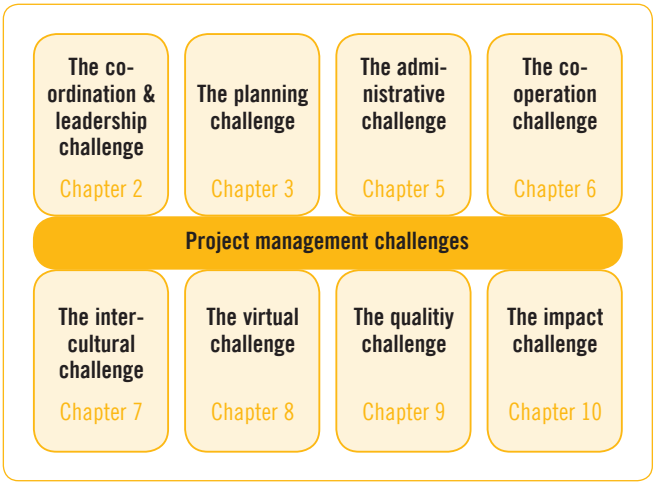
The precise requirements for Multilateral Projects in the various strands of the funding programme are published in action-specific explanation fiches (http://ec.europa.eu/education/llp/doc1943_en.htm) and in the documents of the Call for Proposals concerned: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/index_en.php

In 2010 Multilateral Projects were opened up to institutions from 'third countries', provided their participation creates a clear added value and they have demonstrably important expertise to share with their European counterparts.

3. Challenges arising in Multilateral Projects

The benefits generated by participation in a Multilateral Project are typically accompanied by a number of challenges for the project co-ordinator:

Box 3: Project management challenges in Multilateral Projects



The co-ordination and leadership challenge:

The co-ordinator of a Multilateral Project has to fulfil two roles: He (or she) should have the technical skills to be an efficient project manager and the personal qualities of an inspiring and assertive project leader. There are different approaches to choose from for both of these at these fundamental roles.

The planning challenge:

Multilateral Projects in the Lifelong Learning Programme are complex undertakings which require considerable planning. It is challenging to prepare a detailed project proposal with a diverse consortium of partners with different institutional backgrounds, from different education sectors and in different countries. In addition planning is not restricted to the application stage, but necessary throughout the project's life cycle.

The administrative challenge:

The administrative requirements and regulations of the funding programme are considered to be rather rigid and burdensome

by many project actors. A relatively high administrative work load with regard to documenting and reporting of the project's activities and costs has to be dealt with.

The co-operation challenge:

Multilateral Projects require co-operation between different institutions which do not normally co-operate. A project manager is confronted with diverse motivations, interests, and organisational cultures in often so-called *mixed partnerships* of institutions with complementary expertise and different approaches. This concept of profiting from diversity constitutes a challenge as well as an opportunity for learning.

It is not only the institutions, but also people, (most likely of different professions, age, experience and status) working together for the first time and needing to be transformed into a committed and high performing team.

The virtual challenge:

As opposed to in-house projects, the team in a Multilateral Project is geographically dispersed all over Europe. Consequently, frequent or spontaneous face-to-face meetings are not possible. Communication and collaboration must be organised over distances, team building and conflict resolution likewise!

A consequence of the distance between partners is that communication and collaboration are mostly done virtually, supported by information and communication technologies (ICT). A project manager needs to have a sound knowledge of the existing tools and good user and facilitation skills with regard to ICT.

The intercultural challenge:

The project partners are not only located far away from each other, but come from different countries. This involves cultural differences with regard to values, attitudes and beliefs, which will show up in the joint work. Moreover, education systems and approaches vary considerably in different European countries, and a common understanding and terminology needs to be developed by a project. Language barriers may influence the project, too.

The quality challenge:

Expectations of the funding programme for Multilateral Projects are high. A project is selected for funding on the assumption that it will deliver innovative outcomes of high quality and thus contribute to improving the overall quality of education in Europe. Consequently quality management and evaluation need to be taken seriously in a project.

The impact challenge:

It is not regarded as sufficient that a project partnership develops something valuable and profits from this activity. In the participating countries, if not in Europe as a whole the educational community concerned should benefit. A project needs to make a real effort to reach these target groups and to make sure that they use the developed products.

These typical project management challenges are addressed in the following chapters of this publication. An additional chapter is dedicated to the start up phase of a Multilateral Project (*Chapter 4*: *Getting the Project Started*), because this is a crucial phase in which the course is set for the whole project.

But this introductory chapter should not conclude without emphasising that the project management challenges introduced here do not merely constitute a burden for the co-ordinator of a Multilateral Project. They also provide opportunities for learning and development at personal, professional and institutional level and make participation in European co-operation such a rewarding endeavour.

Chapter 2: Project Co-ordination: Management and Leadership

A Multilateral Project in the Lifelong Learning Programme has a clear central figure, the project co-ordinator who steers the project activities of all partners and makes sure that the project achieves the aims and objectives as described in the project proposal. A good co-ordinator has a double role: he or she needs to have the technical skills of project management, but at least as important are leadership qualities. There are different approaches at project management and project leadership, and co-ordinators have to find their own, authentic style of steering the project.

1. Project co-ordination as a multiple task

The project co-ordinator is normally, but not necessarily a member of staff of the contractor, the institution which signs the Grant Agreement with the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Co-ordination entails a high responsibility, since, at the end of day, the contractor is legally and financially accountable to EACEA for the overall project success and adherence to the administrative regulations.

As a consequence, a range of skills and competences are necessary to run a Multilateral Project successfully.

Box 1: Project management and leadership

Project management: the factual dimension

- Planning
- Organisation
- Monitoring
- Contractual management
- Financial management
- Reporting

Leadership: the interpersonal dimension

- Vision
- Team building
- Motivation, encouragement
- Support and feedback
- Values
- Communication
- Conflict resolution
- Understanding of interaction and development processes

On the one hand co-ordination entails the technical management of the project, i.e. to plan, organise, administer and monitor it from the first idea until the end. For this, sound management competences, as well as a good knowledge of the rules of the funding programme, are indispensable. In project management tools like plans, tables and charts play an important role.

On the other hand a Multilateral Project is executed by people, and not by plans, regulations and reports. Therefore it is as important that a project co-ordinator has good communication, motivation and conflict solving skills, as well as an understanding how teams function and processes in organisations work. Perhaps most importantly, leading the project means *to go in front*, to develop a common vision and lead the project team towards that shared goal.

For successful project co-ordination both elements – management and leadership – are needed.

There are different approaches to project management as well as to leadership. They vary according to different cultures and different personalities. The co-ordinator of a Multilateral Project needs to make a choice of how to manage and how to lead the project.

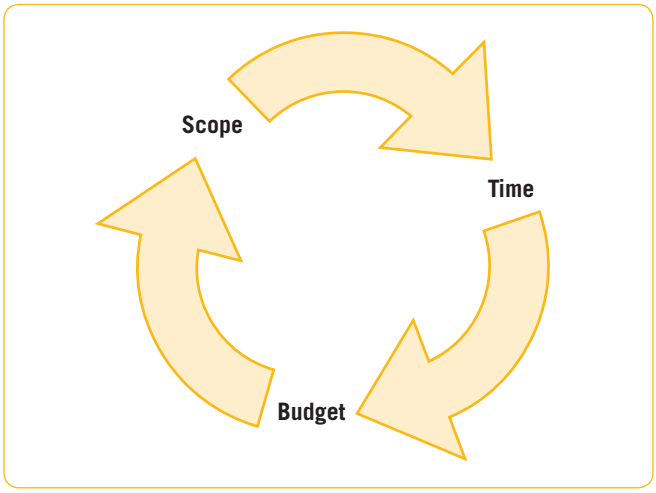
2. Principles of project management

Project management is a spin off from general management theories which have developed rapidly since the 1950s. It is a management discipline mainly developed in the construction, engineering, defence, and, more recently, the software development business. Its principles are universally applicable to all types of projects:

Project management is the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet the project requirements.
(PMI (2008), A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge , p. 10)

In other words project management is a particular management approach which ensures that projects will succeed in achieving

Box 2: Project management constraints



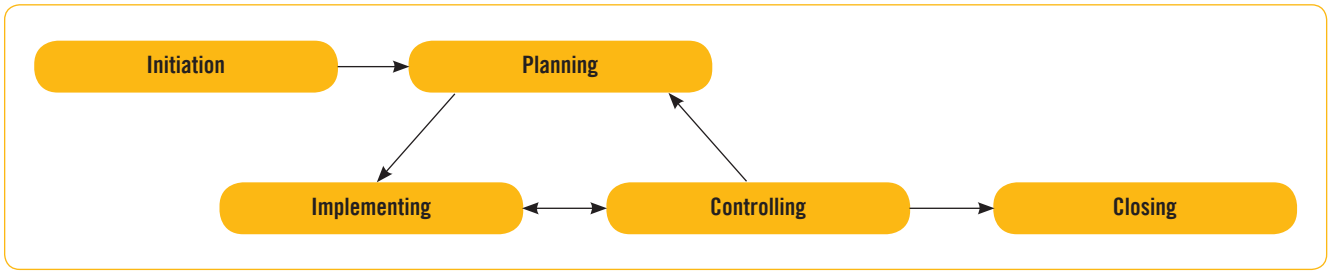
what they set out to do. Project managers do not only have to make sure that the full scope of the project, i.e. its envisaged outcomes, main activities and the level of quality strived for will be accomplished. This needs to be achieved while respecting the other project constraints especially the allocated time and the budget.

These three constraints are interdependent, and a project manager should always be aware that changing one constraint will have an effect on the others. One example: If the research phase in a Multilateral Project takes longer than expected, this entails an increase in staff costs. These excessive costs must be compensated for and deducted from other activities, which may result in a lower level of quality of the final product.

Furthermore, project managers will always strive not only for completion of set project objectives, but also for optimising the allocation and integration of the inputs necessary to meet these objectives.

Traditionally, Project management involves five groups of processes, as shown in Box 3.

Box 3: Typical project management phases



Initiation is the phase in which the project is scoped, i.e. its cornerstones are defined. These will include aims, outcomes, main activities and resources. This phase normally includes a stakeholder and a feasibility analysis.

Planning comes next and is much more detailed than scoping. It involves all project aspects and will be refined as a result of monitoring.

Executing is the phase in which the project activities are implemented.

Controlling is the part of project management in which the implementation is observed and assessed. It involves monitoring of progress towards established aims and evaluation of the quality of all aspects of the project. Problems and obstacles can be identified and corrective action taken during this phase.

Closing a project should be formal act in project management. It involves a review of achievements, reporting and formal acceptance (or rejection) of results.

A sixth phase may be added: **Starting**.

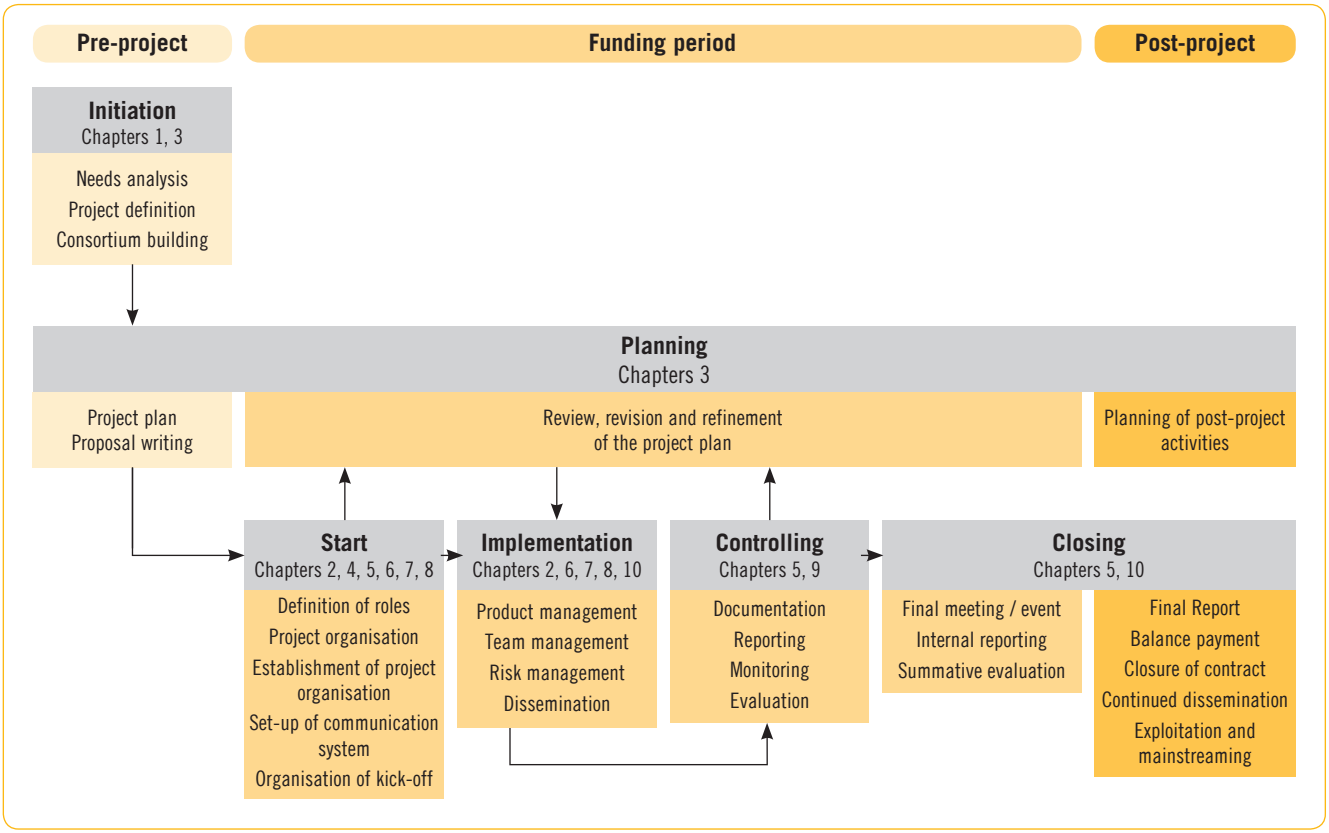
In many projects the starting phase is extremely important, as the organisational measures taken in this phase determine much of what follows in the whole project.

These typical project management phases set out in the context of a Multilateral Project in the Lifelong Learning Programme are illustrated in Box 4. The diagram also points to the respective chapters of this publication where a specific phase is particularly addressed.

3. Recent developments in project management

Traditionally, project management has put a lot of emphasis on the planning aspect. The most important planning tools like Work Breakdown Structure, Work Packages, Bar Charts, and Milestones

Box 4: Phases of the management of a Multilateral Project



go back to management pioneers such as Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856–1915), Henry Laurence Gantt (1861–1899) and Henry Fayol (1841–1925). They played a prominent role in the concept and regulations of Multilateral Projects in the Lifelong Learning Programme and are indeed crucial management tools a project co-ordinator should be able to apply effectively today. They are dealt with in detail in *Chapter 3: Planning a Multilateral Project*.

However, the traditional focus on planning has been challenged more recently by new project management schools of thought such as Agile Project Management. Originally they came from the software industry and claimed that more open, elastic and un-deterministic approaches are necessary to manage successfully complex and uncertain projects. Here the focus is not so much on planning, but on people and on flexibility.

In this perspective a project is, above all, a human organism. This implies that if a project wants to succeed, all of its functional parts must work in harmony toward specific goals. This can only be done if the people involved work well together, not only the project co-ordinator who manages the project, but also the whole project team who will execute the project.

Agile Project Management puts a great emphasis on a few fundamental principles (based on Augustine and Woodcock, 2003, Agile Project Management):

Guiding vision:

The main task of project management is to create and communicate a guiding vision and keep it alive. More effective leadership is exerted through concentrating on the overall picture than by breaking down the strategic project aims into small portions or work packages which are then strictly monitored and supervised by project managers. Visionary leadership implies continuously monitoring, learning and adapting to the environment.

Teamwork and collaboration:

All project actors must be recognised as intelligent, skilled professional workers and placing a high value on their autonomy is fundamental to all other practices. Teamwork and collaboration form the basis for rich interactions and co-operation between team members and sub-groups. Project managers should

therefore grant a large degree of freedom to project actors in order to achieve their aims instead of over regulating activities and fragmenting tasks into meaningless packages.

Few and simple rules:

If the focus on the guiding vision and on teamwork and collaboration is put into practice a few simple rules are enough to regulate the project. In general simple rules support complex team behaviour much better than over regulation.

Open information:

Open information is an organising force that allows teams to adapt and react to changing conditions in the environment. Moreover, it is a pre-condition for the development of trust. Trust is one of the strongest driving forces in successful projects.

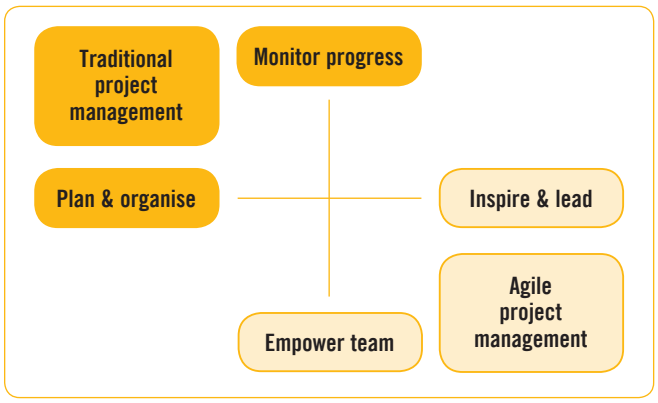
Light touch:

Multilateral Projects have a life of their own. Apart from the *official* project as it is defined in the project plan there is also a latent network of relations which emerges as a result of the autonomous interaction between actors. Often, this emerging network is at least as important to the actors as the real project. Project management has to take this in consideration. A delicate mix of imposed and emerging order is needed.

These agile principles mark a paradigm shift in project management from designing and controlling plans to motivating and empowering people as the key tasks of a project co-ordinator. Or, as agile project managers would call it, from *uninspired taskmaster* to *visionary leader*. It may be well be worth reflecting on one's own management practices in the light of these agile principles. Co-ordinators of Multilateral Projects in the Lifelong Learning Programme ought to be able position themselves in a management matrix (Box 5).

To avoid misunderstandings it is important to state that we are not claiming that one approach is right and the other wrong. Nor do we recommend following a strictly agile approach in the co-ordination of a Multilateral Project. The funding mechanism of Multilateral Projects in the Lifelong Learning Programme put in place limitations to adopting some agile management approaches. The regulations of the funding programme oblige Multilateral Projects to adhere to the original plan and allow modifications and adaptations only to a limited extent. Therefore considerable planning efforts are indispensable, and

Box 5: Traditional vs. agile project management principles



adaptations should be sparse and well justified. Even so, we do believe that co-ordinators of Multilateral Projects may learn valuable lessons from Agile Management principles:

- To involve stakeholders in all phases as intensively as possible
- To keep track of what happens in the project, but leave enough space for self-organisation and the independent work of sub-teams
- Not to forget the bigger picture by fragmenting the project into sub-units, work packages and tasks
- To ensure frequent and time-efficient communication
- To display leadership, develop a project vision and keep it alive

4. Leadership in a Multilateral Project

If you want to build a ship, don't bring men together to collect wood, to let them prepare tools and divide tasks among them, teach them the longing for the wide and endless sea.
Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

Successful leaders take responsibility for their own work but also delegate responsibilities and tasks and try to bring out the best in all members of a team. They strive to keep the balance between people and their individual needs on the one hand and the overall success of the project team on the other hand. The most important responsibility of a project leader is to make sure that the project will be finished successfully. For this, a project co-ordinator does not only have to express clear messages and formulate all tasks clearly. It is at least as important to invest in the relationship of the team on the personal level and to be able to come to terms with challenging and crisis situations.

In principle there are two different directions for leadership styles to take:

Co-operative and democratic approaches involve sharing ideas, work and responsibilities. How to reach the project goals is always the subject for team discussions and for a participative process. A major issue is to generate a sense of ownership amongst all partners and team members. However someone always needs to tie up all the loose ends, to take final responsibility and so *take the lead*.

This type of leadership approach is what partners in a Multilateral Project in the Lifelong Learning Programme are most likely to expect, although there certainly will be cultural differences (cf. *Chapter 7: Intercultural Elements in European Project Management).*

Other leadership approaches are more **authoritative and directive.** In such approaches the leader does not want to, or is not able, to share the ideas in the project team and come together with common decisions. Such leaders tend to take their own decisions without consulting others. This style might have worked in former times with rather straight forward and limited tasks to fulfil. It will hardly work well in multi-cultural, multi-dimensional and multi-tasking settings like Multilateral Projects. These projects now require a range of expertise across quite diverse fields. Leading such a team of experts with a strongly directive style would probably mean losing their motivation and thus effectiveness and quality.

Modern leadership theory asserts that there is not one preferred style to running a project. So good leaders need to be authentic, draw from a wide range of skills and approaches and adapt to the group and situation in question. This is called **situational** leadership style.

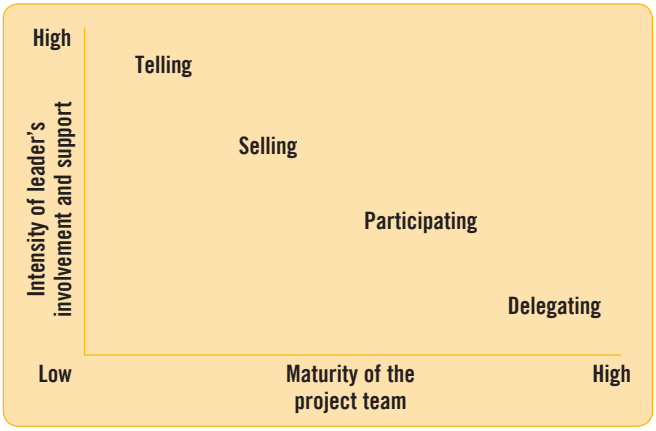
Paul Hersey and Kenneth H. Blanchard characterised leadership styles into four types of behaviour:

- ***Telling*** *– is characterised by one-way communication in which the leader defines the roles of the individual or group and provides the what, how, when, and where to do the task*
- ***Selling*** *– while the leader is still providing the direction, he or she is now using two-way communication and providing the socio-emotional support that will allow the individual or group being influenced to buy into the process*
- ***Participating*** *– this is now shared decision making about how the task is to be accomplished and the leader is providing less task-related behaviour but maintaining high relationship behaviour*
- ***Delegating*** *– the leader is still involved in decisions, however the process and responsibility has been passed to the individual or group. The leader stays involved to monitor progress*

(Quoted from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Situational_leadership_theory March 2010)

According to these situational theorists, the appropriate leadership style depends on the maturity of the group of people to be led. Box 6 illustrates this in a simplified way.

Box 6: Maturity of project group and leadership behaviour



Often project teams in Multilateral Projects will be rather mature groups so that participating and delegating leadership approaches may be adequate. In the best cases the project co-ordinator is able to make maximum use of the potential of all team members without being noticed as a leader:

If a good leader has done his job well, people will think they have all done it by themselves.
Kenneth H. Blanchard (1986), Leadership and the One Minute Manager

However project co-ordinators should also take care not to expect too much. In many projects it will be necessary to *sell*, i.e. to constantly promote the project's vision and support the team members intensively in realising the project. The maturity of Multilateral Project teams will in most cases relate to how well the partners know each other as well as their interest and motivation with regard to the project. Maturity levels are also task specific. A person might be generally skilled, confident and motivated in their normal job, but can still have a lower matu-

rity level when asked to perform an unknown task or act in an unknown organisational form, for instance a transnational project. Versatile project co-ordinators can adapt their leadership styles accordingly. As Blanchard states: *'Situational leadership is not something you do to people, but something you do with people.'* A project leader should be in a serving function, working for and together with the project team, instead of making the team work for the project *boss*!

A common trap in Multilateral Projects is the overbearing presence of the co-ordinator who is trying to be an effective leader. Despite apparent agreements at project meetings on tasks and contributions some partners repeatedly do not deliver on time or with insufficient quality. Both failures unnerve the project co-ordinator because they may eventually endanger the project's success. This kind of partner behaviour may have reasons such as a lack of commitment, overload with other work at the home institution or simply the growing inner distance towards the project after an intensive and enjoyable face-to-face meeting (out of sight, out of mind).

In such recurrent situations many co-ordinators are inclined to repeatedly push partners to fulfil their tasks. They extend deadlines, write reminders again and again and phone the partner. But in many instances this pushing is not a successful strategy, on the contrary it provokes further resistance and non-compliance. How could effective leadership avoid this often futile chasing after partners? A promising strategy could be called *leading by partner advantage*, which goes back to ideas of Robert Axelrod (The evolution of co-operation, 1984). None of us likes to be asked to do something which is inconvenient at the moment or not a top priority. We only do something readily when we see a direct advantage for us in the action. Therefore partner advantage is an effective leadership strategy that should be built upon.

Instead of putting the focus on what the project partner *should do* according to the proposal, the partner contract or other agreements, the project leader might choose instead to emphasise the advantages the Multilateral Project creates or may create for the partner. These might include new or better educational offers for their target groups, a higher reputation or access to decision-makers. Leadership in this context means to:

- Find out as much as possible about the partner's interests and advantage(s) (cf. also *Chapter 6: Effective Collaboration*)
- Be consistent in offering and giving support to realise this advantage
- Withdraw the advantage (or the co-ordinator's support to gain it) if the partner defaults, i.e. does not deliver or with unacceptable quality

5. Competences of effective co-ordinators of Multilateral Projects

To steer a Multilateral Project effectively a co-ordinator must be a good manager and leader.
Effective co-ordinators are:

- Future-oriented: They have a project vision and believe in innovations
- People-oriented: They are good at communicating, motivating, encouraging, creating sense of ownership and building teams
- Result-oriented: They consequently pursue set aims and are realistic about what can be achieved
- Task-oriented: They insist on continuous work and realisation of necessary tasks and are able to make the best possible use of the expertise of every single person in the project

The standard inventory of competences of a project manager is the IPMA Competence Baseline (ICB- IPMA Competence Baseline Version 3.0: http://www.ipma.ch/Documents/ICB_V._3.0.pdf)

The IPMA competence baseline consists of no less than 46 competence areas which are grouped in three categories:

- Technical competence elements, which deal with specific project management skills
- Behavioural competence elements, which have to do with the relationship between individuals and groups in a project
- Contextual competence elements, which focus on the interaction of the project with its environment and its permanent organisations

It would be asking too much from a project co-ordinator of a Multilateral Project to meet all these competences. Reducing these three categories to two together with a reasonable set of competences results in an adapted competence baseline in the context of Multilateral Projects, as follows:

Project management competence with regard to:

- Planning organising and monitoring project activities
- Using information and communication technologies for collaboration, learning and promotional activities
- Facilitating of (face-to-face and virtual) meetings

- Setting up and maintaining transparent administrative and financial procedures

Leadership competence with regard to:

- Inspiring and motivating people
- Communicating effectively
- Practicing intercultural sensitivity and respect for diversity
- Building performing teams
- Solving emerging conflicts in a constructive way

On top of these is solid knowledge and professional experience, but not necessarily expert status in the whole of the thematic area of the project.

When reviewing this profile or some of the other descriptions of good project managers, it becomes quite evident that co-ordination of a Multilateral Project should not be done by a single person, but by a co-ordination team. Only a team can make full use of the complementary expertise of different staff members of the co-ordinating institution with regard to project content, management, marketing and administration. Further advantages of a co-ordination team as opposed to a single co-ordinator include:

- Some back up in case of leave or unavailability
- Different perspectives on a particular situation
- Staff development: Senior managers paired with *apprentices*
- Strategic advantage: Some role division into '*good guy – bad guy*'

(cf. Bennet P. Lientz, Kathryn P. Rea (2002), Project Management for the 21st Century p. 110.)

If co-ordination is shared by a team, it is however crucial that roles and responsibilities are very clearly defined and communicated and that there is a clearly designated figurehead for the project.

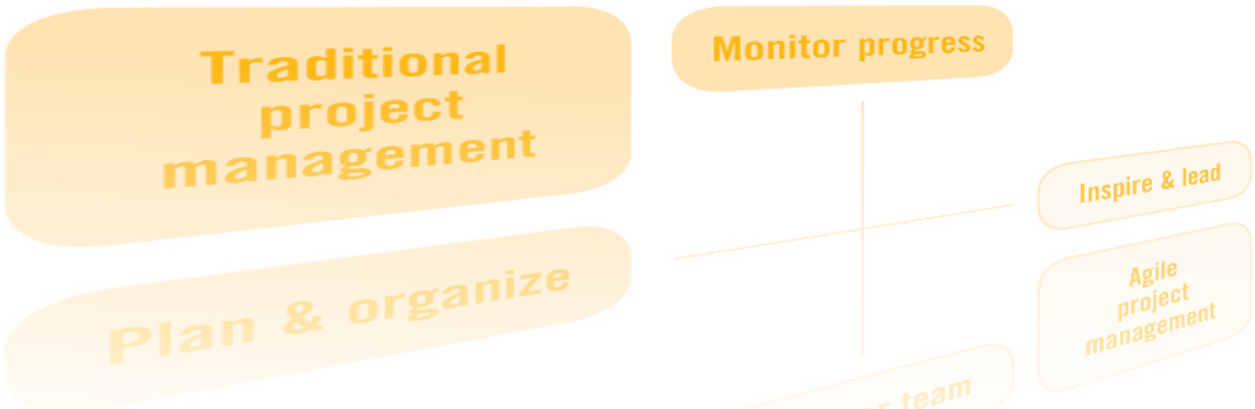
An interesting activity aimed at standardising the competences of an EU project manager is the project KEYLINKS (www.keylinks.eu), funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme. KEYLINKS made a first step towards creating a competence profile and published a curriculum and competence framework which covers the main management and leadership tasks in all phases of an EU funded project.

Box 7: The proactive project manager

The most important role of the project manager is to pay attention on an ongoing basis to the performance of the project, the partners and the project resources in general.
Every week, every day the project manager should package, reflect on the strong and weak processes going on in the project, the long-term effect of present activities – and take action if needed, take the necessary initiatives to solve problems, anticipate negative processes or complex challenges, evaluate the state of the project, compare the present situation with the project's work.
The project manager watches the project all the time, reflects on how to improve the progression and intervene when needed. This could be called a proactive project manager, evaluating, monitoring and anticipating possible problems the project must address.
The opposite would be reactive project management. This project manager basically believes that the project will implement itself and only reacts when problems occur, unsatisfied partners complain or a report must be produced to the EACEA. Neither the co-ordinating team, nor the partnership will function well if the project manager assumes the style of reactive managing.

Jan Gejel, City Learning Net Project Management Guidance:
www.sosuaarhus-international.com/CitylearningNet.htm

This chapter is concluded with a description of a European project manager found in a practice-oriented project management document from an informal European network:



Chapter 3: Planning a Multilateral Project

Planning is an essential, if not the most important part of the management of a Multilateral Project. It is necessary not only in the application phase, but at all stages of the project. This chapter gives an overview of the planning tasks involved in a Multilateral Project and then goes into more depth about the main planning steps in the pre-project phase. Basic planning tools which may be useful for Multilateral Projects are presented as well as some general remarks about writing project applications. Finally, the assessment criteria of the Lifelong Learning Programme are highlighted.

1. The role of planning in project management

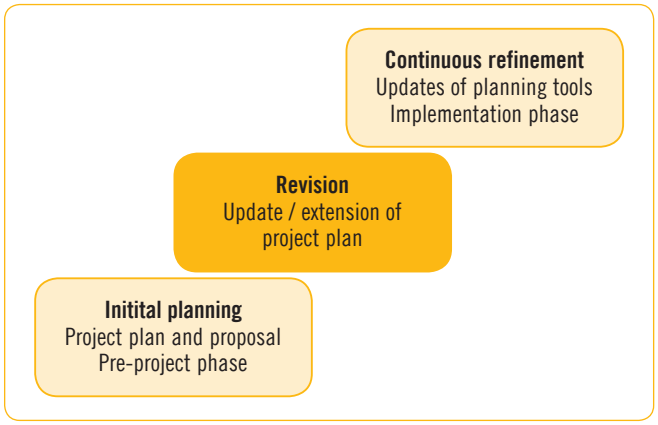
It is a common misunderstanding that project planning is something to be done exclusively in the preparation phase of a project. Some co-ordinators of Multilateral Projects in the Lifelong Learning Programme are surprised to hear that, after having developed and successfully submitted a fully-fledged project proposal even more planning is necessary once the project has been selected for funding.

However burdensome writing the application may have been, planning does not end with the selection decision, planning activities remain an essential task of project management throughout the project's lifetime, as Box 1 shows.

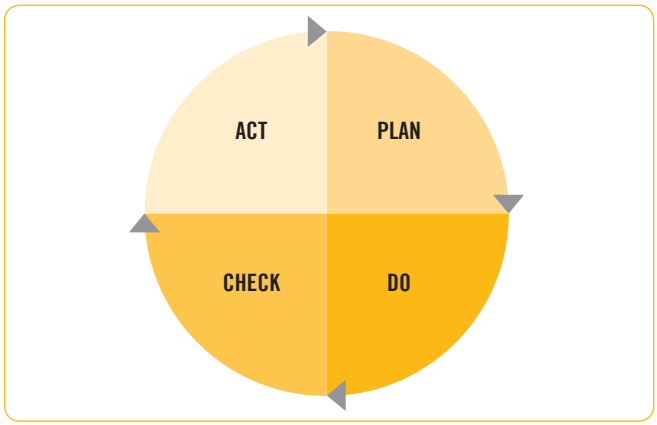
In the start up phase of the project, the initial project plan needs to be reviewed and adjusted, since much time has elapsed since it was written. The time frames and the people involved might have changed. Producing a successful application is one thing, having to implement the project plan is another thing entirely!

In the implementation phase the original plan needs to be constantly refined and adapted according to the results of monitoring project implementation. Planning in any phase is an essential element of a recurring process known as the Quality Cycle (Box 2):

Box 1: Planning at different project stages



Box 2: Quality Cycle



Traditional project management sees planning as the by far most important task of a project manager. Some references assert that project management is 80 percent planning, and only 20 percent implementation. This view of the prevalence of planning in project management has been challenged in recent years by new approaches like Agile Project Management, which shift the focus from extensive planning more to leadership and flexibility. Nevertheless the traditional view should be taken seriously; planning is essential for a successful project. Sound planning at early stages saves a lot of time in the implementation phase and early mistakes in planning will take much more time to make up for later.

The emphasis put on planning becomes more understandable when seen alongside the diverse planning aspects involved in a Multilateral Project.

Box 3: Planning aspects in Multilateral Projects

Planning aspects	Planning tasks in detail
Content	■ Defining the project aims ■ Defining outcomes and products ■ Setting quality indicators ■ Devising monitoring and evaluation strategies
Environment	■ Analysing the project environment ■ Designing marketing strategies ■ Planning dissemination activities
Organisation	■ Structuring the main activities ■ Defining roles ■ Allocating and co-ordinating tasks ■ Time planning: phases, schedule
Human interaction	■ Choosing team members and forming teams ■ Creating a project culture of shared values, standards and rules ■ Devising an internal communication system ■ Managing conflicts
Impact	■ Devising the promotion and dissemination strategy ■ Planning stakeholder involvement ■ Drafting an exploitation plan
Management system	■ Defining management roles and bodies ■ Deciding on decision making processes
Budget and administration	■ Planning costs and resources ■ Designing contractual arrangements ■ Devising reporting systems and procedures

Planning the project content:

Important questions to ask here are: What do we want to achieve? How will we know that we have achieved it? Good planning is closely connected to monitoring and evaluation. In other words it makes provision for assessing the level of achievement. Three things are essential here: to define the operational, SMART aims (cf. section 5 of this chapter), to establish quality criteria in the partnership and to devise a process to check what has been achieved.

Planning the project environment:

A project is more than just its team members and their partner institutions. The partnership itself is only the inner circle which is embedded into a wider social system that each project creates. A number of institutions and people will take an interest in the project and may influence it in a positive or negative way (social environment). Good project managers will maximise their potential support or develop mechanisms to counteract any possible negative influences. Similarly there is the factual project environment: Laws and regulations, curricula, traditions and also the resources available may also influence a project both positively and negatively. Good project managers will identify these influencing factors as early as possible and take them into account in the further development of the project.

Planning the project organisation:

The essential task with regard to planning the organisation of the project is to create a complete picture of what needs to be done to achieve the project aims and to develop the envisaged products. It is a pre-requisite to *managing* the project, i.e. to monitor and take action to ensure that all the main tasks have to be broken down, allocated and timed. There are some basic project management tools which can help to do this: Work breakdown structures, network diagrams, milestones and Gantt charts will be presented at the end of this chapter.

Planning human interaction:

The success of a Multilateral Project, as in any other project, depends to a very large extent on the people involved in the project, their development and functioning as a team, the effectiveness of communication and the quality of their collaborative work on the project products. Given the characteristics of a Multilateral Project – team members dispersed all over Europe, mainly virtual work, rare face-to-face meetings – this is not an easy task for any project manager. Even if most project managers will agree on this, few co-ordinators devote enough planning time on this essential aspect. Planning human interaction entails:

- Choosing appropriate team members
- Developing and implementing a team building strategy
- Creating a project culture of shared values, standards and rules
- Devising an internal communication plan

Planning the project impact:

A Multilateral Project in the Lifelong Learning Programme is a pilot project, i.e. it is funded by the European Commission to produce tangible and non-tangible outcomes which are of value to the educational community. A pilot project is only successful if the educational products it produces will eventually be transferred to the target groups, be used by them and thus improve the quality of education. Planning this envisaged impact is therefore a crucial planning task. It involves:

- Devising the promotion and dissemination strategy
- Planning stakeholder involvement
- Drafting an exploitation plan

Planning the management system:

To ensure smooth decision-making and to avoid conflicts in the partnership functions, the roles with regard to the management of project must be planned at an early stage. This part of the management system should be put in place as one of the first steps in the start up phase.

Planning the budget and administration:

Financial and administrative planning is conceived by many project co-ordinators as one of the most time consuming tasks in a Multilateral Project. It involves calculations and estimates, arrangements of contracts, documentation templates and reporting formats. This part of project management is, however, important not only for formal reasons, but also for efficiency and transparency.

From idea to project: the pre-project phase

Multilateral Projects do not only have an afterlife, they begin before they officially start. The success of a project is to a large extent already determined by the solidity of the original project plan. This initial phase will see the transformation from the first ideas to a fully-fledged Multilateral Project.

Box 4 gives an overview of the tasks to be accomplished:

Box 4: Tasks in the pre-project phase

2. Needs analysis and project definition

A Multilateral Project should not be, as some other projects undoubtedly are, a GEM project (Get European Money). To participate in a European project only for the sake of securing funding is clearly not in the spirit of the funding programme, although it may be understandable that some (adult) education institutions are forced to look for European grants to make up for insufficient basic funding for their regular work.

Instead, a Multilateral Project in the Lifelong Learning Programme should develop bottom-up, as an answer to a challenge in the field concerned, a challenge with regard to:

- Educational needs of specific groups of learners
- The professional development of staff in educational institutions
- The system level, e.g. financing of adult education

Needs can be identified in various ways such as desk research of studies, publications and websites or, which is clearly pref-

erable in most cases, through direct contact with the target groups, e.g. via personal interviews or questionnaires. The challenge identified should be one which requires an innovative approach to solve it, involvement of several different actors and addresses a topic of European relevance.

It is clear that the needs of similar target groups will vary in different European countries. So even if the initial needs analysis will in many cases be done only in the country of the project initiator, it is crucial that some degree of needs analysis should also be implemented in the partner countries. The earlier that core partners get involved in planning the project the more likely that the Multilateral Project will reflect the needs of all countries involved.

Once the need has been identified together with the idea of how to adequately respond to this need an initial rough planning process has to take place. This is the project definition or scoping. It should focus on the main elements of the Multilateral Project:

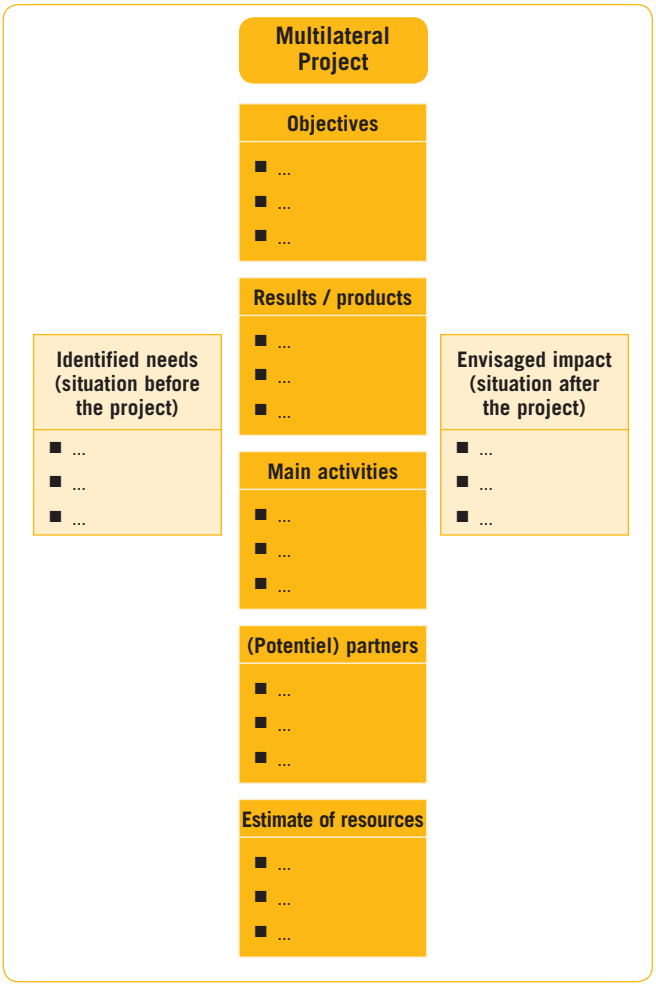
- What does the project want to achieve? (Aims and objectives)
- What is the project going to develop? (Results and products)
- How is the project going to do this? (Activities)
- What expertise is necessary to implement the project? (Partners)
- What does the project need to do this? (Rough estimate of resources such as time, money and materials)

Box 5 gives an overview of the project definition phase.

It has proved to be good practice when defining the scope of a project not only to ask about objectives, results and activities, but also to make explicit decisions about non-objectives, non-results and non-activities. For example: As a result of several conversations with trainers and some internet research a Multilateral Project team decided to develop small teaching units on health awareness issues for socio-economically disadvantaged adults (results), but not a complete training course (non-result), because it appeared easier to approach this hard-to-reach target group through training activities they attend anyway, e.g. labour-market programmes.

The result of this first planning phase is the short description known as the project concept. This is the famous one or two pages with which a project starts its life. This concept is a pre-requisite to be able to talk about the project, to convince colleagues and management of the home institution, and to start negotiating with potential partners.

Box 5: Definition of the project scope



3. Feasibility check

Project initiators should not make the mistake of investing time and energy into more detailed planning at this stage. This would be several steps too early.

Before doing that, some fundamental questions should be answered: Is this project idea realistic? Can we do it? Is there a reasonable chance of succeeding in getting EU money? In other words, a feasibility study should be carried out. This is essential as even preparing a proposal for a Multilateral Project in the Lifelong Learning Programme requires considerable time and other resources. This may range from several weeks to several months depending upon the experience of the applicant(s). In most cases for education providers with limited financial resources it will not be possible to conduct a fully-fledged, resource-intensive feasibility study, as large companies would do before engaging in a product development project.

However, as a minimum the feasibility study should include the following elements:

- Analysis of EU funding programme requirements and relevant EU policies
- Survey of the state of the art
- Personal and institutional capacity check
- Risk analysis

Analysis of EU funding programme requirements and relevant EU policies

In most cases an EU project as it is finally described in the application form is a compromise between two conflicting factors; the initial project idea and the strategic aims and formal requirements of the European funding programme.
Many project proposals remain too entangled with the original project idea, i.e. the immediate interests and aims of the applicant. What they fail to do is to split up the initial idea and identify the parts which are appropriate to implement as a European project. The policy aims of the funding programme as described in the official documents, most notably the respective Call for Proposals, must become the project's friend, not the enemy to be conquered. Successful applicants know the art of reprofiling their original idea within the words of the funding programme. Where possible they also take into account the *transversal policies* of the European Union. These are the strategic cross-sectoral policy aims such as combating xenophobia and racism and the promotion of equal opportunities.

Survey of the state of the art

A Multilateral Project in the Lifelong Learning Programme does not start from scratch. It should be aware of, profit from, and build on what has been done before by other projects and initiatives at national and European level. They should therefore demonstrate at application level that they have done a survey of the state of the art in the field concerned.
As a minimum, a project initiator should consult the compendia of projects previously funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme and the project database EVE which was established in 2009 (cf. section 4 of this chapter).
It is not negative quality of an application to concede that other projects have addressed the topic before. On the contrary related initiatives can be approached for networking, synergies, peer evaluation or dissemination. Some partners may even be invited to join the new project and bring in the know-how acquired elsewhere. There is nothing as unconvincing for an assessor of EU proposals to read the unsubstantiated claim that this project is exploring a totally new path.

Institutional capacity check

Every applicant for a Multilateral Project has to prove that they are *up to the job* they promise to do. The Lifelong Learning Programme calls this *selection criteria*, i.e. *the applicant organisation / partnership has the operational and financial capacity necessary to undertake the proposed activity.* This involves the *professional competencies and qualifications necessary for carrying out the proposed activity* (operational capacity) and *the stable and sufficient sources of funding necessary for maintaining their activity throughout the period during which the proposed project is to be carried out and for participating in its co-funding (financial capacity)* (Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) Guide 2010. Part I: General provisions, p. 25: http://ec.europa.eu/education/llp/doc848_en.htm).

Box 6: Applicant capacity

Operational capacity		Financial capacity
To be a relevant player in the field	To be able to run a project of that scale successfully	To have a sound economic base
Thematic expertise	**Management competence**	**Financial stability**
Activities in the field CVs of senior experts Publications	Previous projects Number of staff Experience of project manager	If requested: Official annual accounts or External audit reports

This capacity check is not a mere formality, but should invite potential applicant institutions to reflect carefully whether they really are (with regard to their organisational solidity and expertise) in a position to implement a European project of this scale.

Risk analysis

Risk is inherent in a Multilateral Project, as in all projects. In project management terms, *risk* refers to an uncertain event or condition that has a cause and, if it occurs, has a positive or negative effect on a project's objectives, and a consequence on project cost, schedule or quality. For example: A project needs to test a newly developed course in a seminar room with networked computers for adult learners. The risk event may be that due to large scale refurbishment works in the partner institution the

internet connection may be delayed and the seminar room not be available on the anticipated start date. This would affect the project's main objective, i.e. developing and testing computer supported training. The consequences may be to look for another facility (additional costs!) or to delay the pilot.

Any project manager is interested in maximising the probability and consequences of positive events and minimising the probability and consequences of events which may negatively affect the project objectives. A small risk analysis involving at least three steps can help:

- Identification of risks
- Risk assessment
- Development of risk response strategies

Identification of risks:

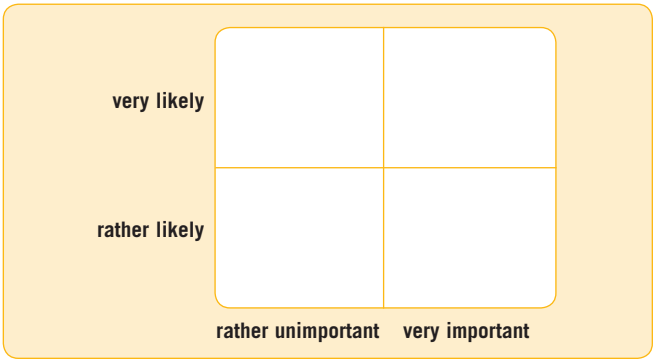
The first step is to identify the risks which are most likely to prevent the project from achieving its goals. This is normally done in a brainstorming exercise by the (extended) project preparation team, based on the experiences of the professionals involved. Common sources of risk in Multilateral Projects include:

- Project management risks, e.g. Insufficient allocation of time or resources
- Technical risks, e.g. Untested technology
- Organisational risks, e.g. Lack of support by participating home institutions
- External risks, e.g. Changing needs in the field concerned

Risk assessment:

Now the importance of the identified risks and the probability that they might materialise can be assessed. This can be done rather quickly with help of a diagram into which the previously brainstormed risks are placed:

Box 7: Assessment of potential risks



Development of risk response strategies:

It is impossible to take all possible risks into account, in particular in the pre-project phase. So at this stage projects ought to concentrate on the risks in the top right corner of Box 7. Those are the key risks, the most important and most probable ones, and answers to these risks should be found before continuing with project preparation.

4. Commitment of home institution and consortium building

The decision to engage in a Multilateral Project should be thoroughly explored, in particular if the lead role of project co-ordination, is being considered.

Box 8: Arguments in favour of and against co-ordinating a Multilateral Project

Pros	Cons
Get to know new ideas	Invest much time in preparation
Share EU state of the art	Difficult to find good partners
Develop profile of institution	Language barrier
Develop staff competences	EU programme bureaucracy
Create networks	Risk of refusal
Find funding for one's activities	Slow development pace

The decision to co-ordinate a Multilateral Project should only be taken if there is a considerable strategic interest for the institution concerned. Many EU projects struggle because they are not sufficiently backed-up by the management of the co-ordinating institution. If there is no institutional support a project will not receive the necessary resources, attention and recognition, and results are unlikely to be integrated and have any impact on the home institution.

Another absolutely critical step in the development of the project is the identification of suitable partners. The Lifelong Learning Programme, and in particular Grundtvig, the adult education strand, encourages so-called *mixed partnerships*: Innovation and mutual learning from each other is enhanced in consortia of diverse partner institutions from different countries across Europe, with different profiles, approaches and expertise.

To find potential partners from other countries is a challenge for institutions which have not yet been very involved in European co-operation. Successful partner finding strategies may make use of the following elements:

- Existing contacts and networks
- Previous projects
- Contact Seminars organised by the National Agencies of the Lifelong Learning Programme
- European training courses, funded by Grundtvig and Comenius mobility grants
- Compendia of previously funded projects, published on the website of the Executive Agency Education and Culture (http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/results_projects/project_compendia_en.php)
- Project databases, e.g. EVE (http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/eve/) and ADAM (www.adam-europe.eu)
- Partner search databases for the Lifelong Learning Programme, e.g. http://llp.teamwork.fr/partner_search/ http://llp.eupa.org.mt/partner_search.php http://www.leonardo.org.uk/partnersearch/http://www.leonardo.org.uk/psdug/
- Programme information days at national and EU level

It is advisable to select project partners not entirely on the basis of personal contacts with particular colleagues, but at least as much with regard to their institutional profiles. Very often people change their positions and project managers end up with different people in their project team than the ones with which they originally negotiated the project proposal.
The selection criteria for project partners should balance these four elements:

- Complementarity of expertise, experience and competence
- Capacity of the partner institution (record of European co-operation, innovative potential, organisational culture, reputation, know-how and financial solidity)
- Motivation and qualification of the people involved
- Sufficient command of shared working language(s)

A question often raised is whether an emerging project should rely on known partners or seek to form new partnerships. Experienced project co-ordinators will assert that both are needed. While working with *old* partners minimises the risk of failure and increases the pace of collaboration, new partners bring fresh ideas, risks and are incubators of innovation. Therefore in many cases a combination of a core group of old plus a few additional new partners is advisable.

When suitable project partners are identified intensive communication should take place. A project initiator should find out the partners' motives and interests in joining an EU project. The experience from many EU projects shows that it is vital to involve project partners as intensively as possible in the project preparation. The sense of ownership is best developed if project partners are actively involved in the planning process. Planning tasks should be shared in the partnership. If this is not the case, it is much more difficult to develop partners' identification with the project at later stages. Moreover, joint development of the project plan avoids misunderstanding and helps to build the European dimension of the project.

If possible a preparatory meeting of all partners should be arranged. The Lifelong Learning Programme funds this type of activity. Partners meet for two days and discuss and agree upon the cornerstones of the project. Such a visit ensures that the project is jointly planned and reflects the different perspectives of the partner countries.

5. Detailed planning

The Lifelong Learning Programme requires that applicants plan the envisaged Multilateral Project in great detail. While this is often perceived by project initiators to be a tedious burden, it should also be seen as a pre-requisite to project success. Project management literature agrees that thorough planning pays off at later stages in the project. Shortcomings in the initial planning normally need considerably more resources for remedial action than it would have taken in the pre-project phase.

Therefore a solid project plan should not be mixed up with the project proposal. The latter is only a bi-product of the former.

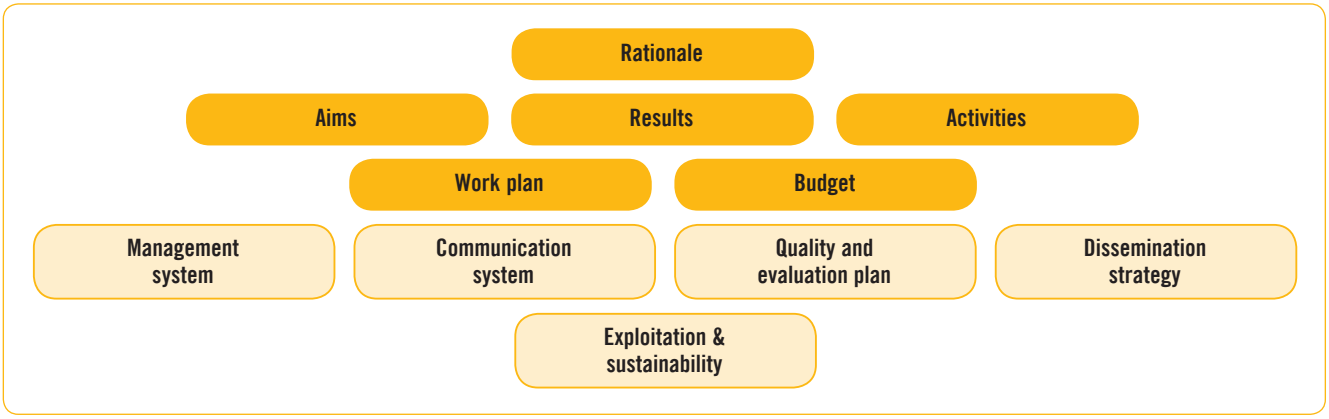
While the bottom five elements of Box 9 are discussed in the respective chapters of this publication, the top six will be briefly presented here.

Rationale of the project

If any project is a *non-routine endeavour undertaken to create a unique result* this is particularly the case with a Multilateral Project which is expected to create innovative products from which other educators or learners can benefit.

In the first instance a Multilateral Project in the Lifelong Learning Programme has to argue why the project is necessary. To prove this it is important to conduct a needs analysis at the start of the project planning process. The application has to argue that there is a substantial unsolved problem or challenge in the field concerned.

Box 9: Elements of a solid project plan



To underline this claim it might be necessary to get in touch directly with stakeholders or to gather some hard facts from reliable internet sources or research literature. Moreover, as a European project involves partners from different countries it should be clearly established that the need is comparable in several countries involved, not merely in the country of the applicant.

Secondly, a project promoter should look over their own fence and demonstrate that they have taken into account what others have done before. The European state of the art in research and previously funded projects at European, national or local level should be examined and acknowledged. It is not very credible to claim to be the first man on the moon after several decades of space missions! European projects should consciously build on prior achievements rather than ignore them. This is not only a question of academic credibility but also of cost efficiency; it cannot be in the interest of the European taxpayer to finance the reinvention of the wheel.

On the basis of such a preliminary analysis of needs, and of the state of the art a convincing project strategy can be built up. This will show how concrete aims and objectives can be a response to a properly analysed current situation.

Project aims and objectives

Project aims point out the changes that are envisaged in the chosen field with regard to the problem or challenge detected by the needs analysis. Well formulated project aims describe this envisaged change of the situation in detail. *(e.g. better educational opportunities for first-generation immigrants).*

It is, however, essential for any project to make their global project aims operational and the best way to do this is to break them down into smaller and more concrete sub-aims. This is a necessary precondition for evaluating whether the project has a chance of being successful. Such **project objectives** more specifically describe the concrete benefits for the target

Box 10: The SMART formula

Good project objectives are SMART

- **S**pecific:
  Is the project clearly focused in terms of theme and target group?
  Is there a clear distinction between the:
  - Direct users of the envisaged outputs (e.g. lecturers who read a manual)
  - Final beneficiaries (e.g. particular student groups taught by these lecturers)
- **M**easurable:
  Have the project objectives been made fully operational?
  Are some of them quantifiable?
  How will the project know that they have been successful?
- **A**chievable:
  Can this type of aim be achieved by a consortium like ours? (e.g. aims which require certain decisions by policy-makers)
  Is the partnership realistic about their resourcefulness?
- **R**elevant:
  Do the project objectives correspond with the aims of the funding programmes?
  Have these links been made explicit?
  Is there a connection to transversal EU policies?
- **T**ime-constraint:
  Can this work programme be done in two/three years?
  Has the project sufficiently taken into account that the transnational process of co-operation often takes much more time than expected?
  Has enough time been planned?

group(s) *(e.g. improved learning of the language of the host country through tailor-made learning materials).*

In this context the the SMART formula is certainly not a new or uncommon tool in (project) management theory. It can still be very useful for helping project promoters to formulate precise aims and objectives for European projects in education.

Envisaged results

A project produces tangible as well as non-tangible results. Tangible outputs are *products* such as reports, web sites or publications while non-tangible results may include new processes, insights gained, or change of attitudes or learning processes. There can be no doubt that the intangible results of a European project can be as important as the tangible products. However, most European funding programmes emphasise the importance of concrete, material products. Only tangible products can be transferred and disseminated to other potential users and thus have a lasting wider impact beyond the partnership of the pilot project. It is therefore of paramount importance for most project applications to turn their envisaged results into transferable and tangible products.

The concreteness and degree of detail of the product description is an important aspect of a product-oriented project. If at all possible a detailed description of the main project products should be given, indicating already in the application the following qualities:

- Structure
- Content (e.g. modules of a course)
- Volume
- Medium
- Language(s)
- The precise groups of direct users

There is a certain contradiction between the potential open-ended transnational process for one or two years and the need to anticipate in detail the outcomes at the application stage. This contradiction is difficult to resolve but it may be comforting for some applicants to know that justified adaptations to the original plan are possible. They do need however to be re-negotiated with the funding authority.

The paramount importance of tangible project products leads to the recommendation that experienced project managers start their planning from the end rather than at the beginning! They first decide on the final products and from there work their way backwards to the project activities and then to its aims. This has been proved to be extremely good practice.

Activities

The work plan describes the road towards the achievement of the project's aims and objectives and, in particular, to the delivery of the project's results. The actors, tasks, timing, results and resources of all project activities need to be specified. In other words, this section of the project plan should give an answer to the question:

- **WHO** is doing
- **WHAT**
- **WHEN** with
- **WHICH** (intermediate) **RESULT** using
- **WHICH RESOURCES**?

European projects should practice real co-operation. The work plan must demonstrate that tasks and responsibilities are shared between the project partners according to the respective know-how and capacity of each partner involved. Partners should also take over responsibility for parts of the work and act as leaders of some project sub-groups, and as collaborators in others. The nature and volume of each partner's contribution to each part of the project work should be precisely stated and resources allocated accordingly.

There are two different ways of splitting up the project into smaller units:

1. The chronological system which indicates **project stages** or **phases**

   Example:
   Start-up phase of the project

   Advantage:
   A clear picture of the sequence of activities

   Disadvantage:
   It tends to produce many small units, lack of overview of the whole process

2. A logical division into **work packages**

   Example:
   Development of a handbook

   Advantage:
   Gives a coherent overview of the whole project, easier for overlapping actions

   Disadvantage:
   Work packages can stretch over a very long time and become rather large

The application for Multilateral Projects in the Lifelong Learning Programme follows the work package approach, so a chronological system can only be an additional way of viewing project activities.

Budget

The last step to be taken is to allocate resources to the envisaged project activities. Four principles should be followed when writing the budget:

Adequacy

Budget cuts are a common reality in many selection rounds for European funding programmes. When writing the project budget the project promoter should bear this possibility in mind and not calculate the costs too tightly. On the other hand, the selection chances of the proposal may be endangered if the budget is artificially inflated, for this is certainly not regarded as a sign of sound planning. In addition making oneself familiar with the financial rules published in the Call for Proposals, i.e. which types of costs are eligible, can help to avoid budget cuts.

Transparency

A good project budget is transparent and accounts for all of the costs related to project activities. Cost items need to be split up into small units to allow for checks of adequacy. Evaluators are often asked by the funding authorities to detect and delete excessive expenditure in project budgets. It is therefore strongly recommended that project promoters provide additional information which justifies critical cost items, even if such information is not explicitly demanded on the application form.

Consistency

Financial information must be given in different formats and in different parts of the application. The application form for instance, asks for budget presentations for the project as a whole, for each project partner and for each work package. Inconsistencies between these different calculation modes should be avoided at all costs. Moreover, the project costs must directly correspond at first glance with the project description. It must be clearly identifiable which costs are allocated to which project activity and outcome.

Fairness

A project budget also makes a statement about the level of European dimension in the project. It would be quite difficult to maintain a participative approach and intensive transnational co-operation if the expected grant was to be distributed very unevenly among project partners. The ideal is a fairly equal grant distribution which reflects a symmetrical partnership. Gross imbalances should therefore be explicitly justified. They sometimes result from:

- Different levels of staff costs in participating countries
- The administrative tasks of the co-ordinator
- The resources needed for the completion of different tasks

The level of funding varies from programme to programme. In the Lifelong Learning Programme the maximum grant for Multilateral Projects is 75 percent of the total project costs. The remaining difference needs to be covered by matching funding.

Only few projects manage to receive co-funding from national authorities or private sponsoring. In most cases the co-funding does not consist of additional cash, but of parts of the regular salaries of staff involved in the project. The financial equivalent of their time spent on project activities is regarded as matched funding.

Although a tendency towards standardisation can be observed in the past years, financial rules tend to differ from programme to programme. Small differences in the wording can make a big difference to the budget and even experienced European project actors can be easily caught out. Reading these financial rules very carefully is therefore an absolute must.

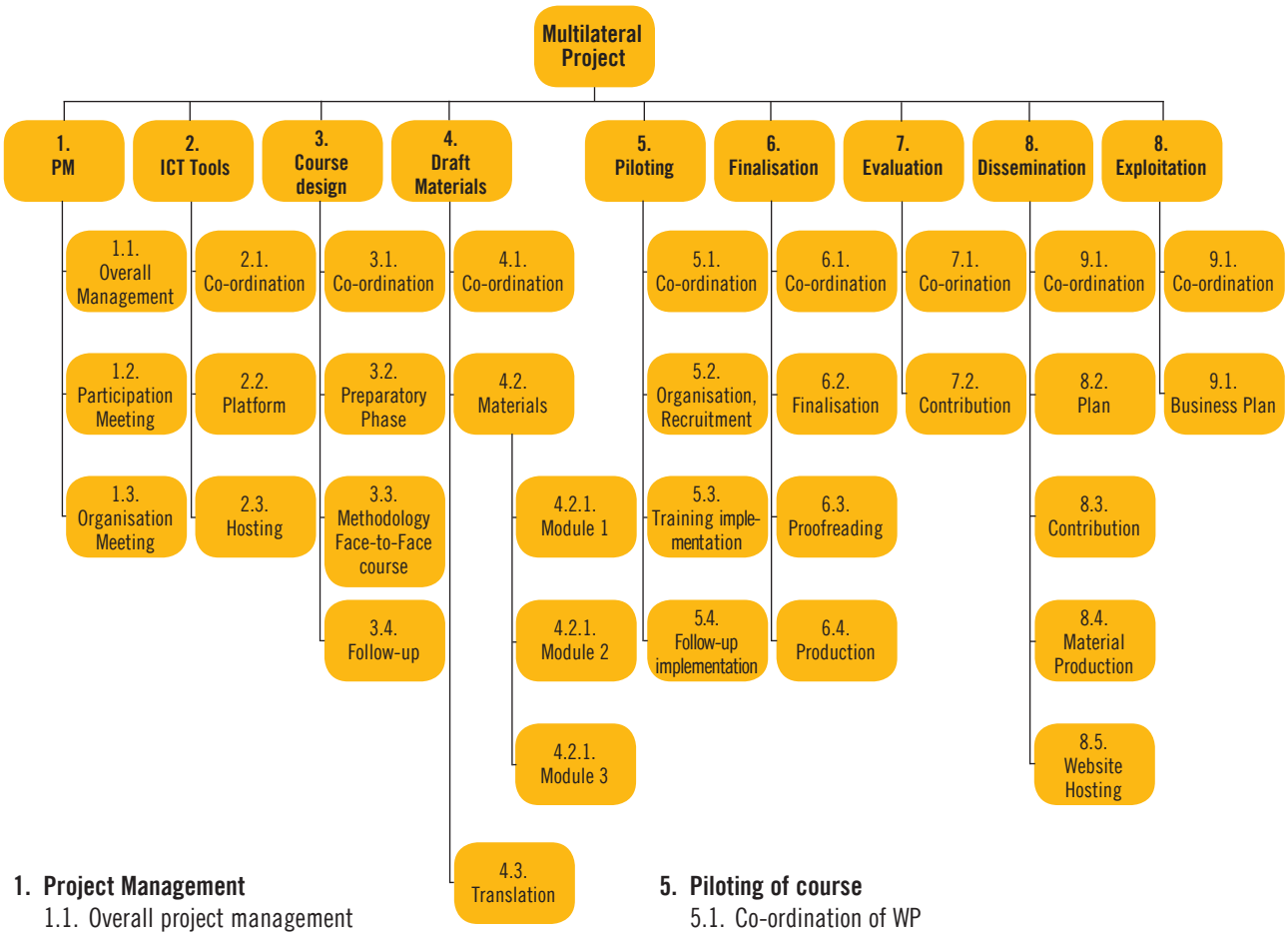
6. Basic planning tools

Four basic project management tools can help planning a Multilateral Project:

Work Breakdown Structure

The Work Breakdown Structure (WBS), or Project Structure Plan (PSP) gives a complete overview of the important elements of a project. It divides the project aims into manageable sub-units. It can be organised by products, phases or work packages, and lists all the tasks necessary to complete the particular unit chosen. It can be represented as a tree diagram or a list:

Box 11: Work Breakdown Structure as a list and as a tree diagram



1. **Project Management**
   - 1.1. Overall project management
   - 1.2. Participation partner meetings
   - 1.3. Organisation meeting
2. **ICT tools for collaboration and learning**
   - 2.1. Co-ordination of WP
   - 2.2. Adaptation of communication platform for participants
   - 2.3. Hosting/maintainance of platform
3. **Development of draft course design**
   - 3.1. Co-ordination of WP
   - 3.2. Design preparatory phase
   - 3.3. Methodology face-to-face course
   - 3.4. Design follow-up
4. **Development of draft training materials**
   - 4.1. Co-ordination of WP
   - 4.2. Development of materials
     - 4.2.1. Module 1
     - 4.2.2. Module 2
     - 4.2.3. Module 3
   - 4.3. Translation
5. **Piloting of course**
   - 5.1. Co-ordination of WP
   - 5.2. Organisation, recruitment
   - 5.3. Implementation of training
   - 5.4. Implementation of follow-up
6. **Finalisation of training material**
   - 6.1. Co-ordination of WP
   - 6.2. Finalisation of training materials
   - 6.3. Proofreading language versions
   - 6.4. Production management
7. **Evaluation**
   - 7.1. Co-ordination of WP
   - 7.2. Contribution to evaluation
8. **Dissemination**
   - 8.1. Co-ordination WP
   - 8.2. Dissemination plan
   - 8.3. Contribution to dissemination
   - 8.4. Production management of dissemination materials
   - 8.5. Hosting/maintainance of project website
9. **Exploitation**
   - 9.1. Co-ordination of WP
   - 9.2. Business plan

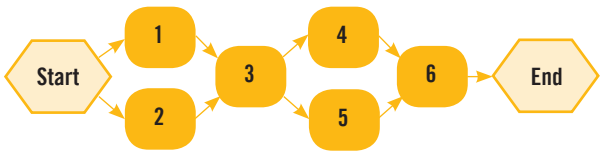
One of the most important principles of a Work Breakdown Structure is called the 100 % rule. It states that *the WBS includes 100 % of the work defined by the project's scope and captures all of the deliverables – internal, external, interim – in terms of the work to be completed, including project management.* (Project Management Institute, cited in http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Work_breakdown_structure 28.04.2009)

The project manager has to decide on the detailed breakdown for each task. There is no general rule for determining this lowest element. It should be concrete enough so that it can be clearly determined whether it has been completed, neither should it be too complex and it should not run over a very long period of time. The WBS ensures a systemic structure for the project and thus creates clarity about the things which need to be done.

Net diagram

Once the main work packages are identified it is useful to determine their sequence and dependency on each other.

Box 12: Net diagram



1 Needs analysis among learners
2 Research into best practice
3 Development draft course concept
4 Testing
5 External evaluation
6 Finalisation of products

In more complex projects net diagrams can be further developed into critical path calculations, but in most Multilateral Projects a simple network diagram will suffice. However, it is important to be aware that the network diagram only shows the logical relationship between the sub-units and not the time sequence. Planning the timing is the next step.

Gantt chart

A Gantt chart, named after the engineer and management theorist Henry Gantt (1861–1919), is a bar diagram which illustrates a project schedule where each bar indicates the start and termination of an activity. The work packages and tasks identified in the WBS can be timed with the help of this project management tool.

Gantt charts have become a very widespread project management tool and are nowadays included in most project management software (e.g. MS project) and web-based collaboration applications. A simple Gantt chart can be produced very quickly with EXCEL (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CW_wGSFavTc) or Open Office (http://www.scribd.com/doc/3153813/OpenOffice-ProjectManagement-with-GanttCharts)

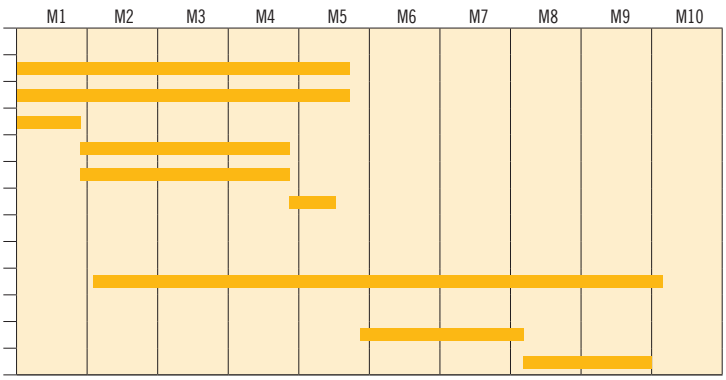
Milestones

In project management milestones are markers of the end of a work package or phase. They mark significant points of time in the project, usually the completion of interim project products (e.g. a draft of a publication), the submission of an official report, or an important event (e.g. a review meeting). When included in the time planning of a project such milestones can serve as an important tool to assess whether the project is on track. They can also indicate the need to make stop, go, or return decisions. Moreover milestones can also enhance the

Box 13: Gantt chart

4. Development of training materials
- 4.1. Co-ordination of WP 4
- 4.2. Development of materials
  - 4.2.1. Module 1
  - 4.2.1. Module 2
  - 4.2.1. Module 3
- 4.3. Translation

5. Piloting
- 5.1. Co-ordination of WP 5
- 5.2. Organisation, recruitment
- 5.3. Implementation of training
- 5.4. Implementation of follow-up



motivation of the team in that when crucial progress has been achieved, this joint success should be celebrated together.

In Multilateral Projects where the team meets only once or twice a year, milestones ought to include the transnational project meetings. On these occasions all participants are working together, so that many of the bigger, more important tasks can be discussed and planned according to this meeting schedule. Quality evaluation, decisions, amendments or changes can be discussed together and common agreement can be reached in open discussion.

7. Writing a project proposal

This publication does not aim to provide guidance on how to succeed with a proposal for a Multilateral Project in the Lifelong Learning Programme but some general remarks are presented in this section.

The project proposal is often a compromise

The project application is the tangible result of the preceding analysis and planning processes. In most cases the project as it is finally described in the application form is a compromise between two conflicting factors:

- The initial project idea
- The aims and requirements of the European funding programme

An application cannot be convincing if these two aspects have not been reconciled. Many project applications remain much too entangled in the original project idea, i.e. the immediate interests and aims of the applying institution and their partners. What they fail to do is to split up the initial idea and identify the parts which are appropriate to implement in a European project.

Successful applicants know the art of aligning their original idea with the wording of the funding programme. To support applicants and clarify the provisions in the Call for Proposals concerned the Executive Agency offers an online helpdesk service during the application period.

Another challenge lies in breaking down the project idea into the rigid structure of work packages which the application format demands. The planning tools introduced in the previous section of this chapter may help with this process.

Good applications are well readable texts

Normally an application will be assessed by several professionals: EU officials and external evaluators. Their professional backgrounds are diverse. Some of them will be experts in the field concerned, while others might have a more general background in project management or finance and administration. This is why the applicant has to perform a balancing act and write a text which:

- Explains the project with such accuracy and detail that the content experts who assess the proposal will be convinced
- Is simple and comprehensible enough to deliver the general picture to somebody without expert knowledge

Another challenge is to deal with the limitations the application form imposes. Generally a more or less strict number of words are allocated to the various parts of the project description. Therefore while enough detail and explanations need to be given and key messages ought to be strategically repeated, the text must be concise and avoid redundant prose.

Box 14: The process of writing a project application

The most important thing to keep in mind is to write the application with a clear focus on the recipient, i.e. the evaluator. Evaluators are busy people who need to read many applications under a considerable pressure of time. If the applicant tries and makes the evaluator's job easier, the latter will be likely to be disposed to take a favourable view of the application.

In general a text will be more reader-friendly if it:

- Is structured into small units
- Uses organising elements like sub-headings, summaries and cross references to other parts
- Has descriptive passages as well as bullet points
- Follows a clear red line, i.e. refers to the most important aspects from different angles
- Has a coherent usage of key words (e.g. refers to *handbook* throughout the proposal instead of using *manual*, *publication*, *guidance material* alternatively)

An applicant can sometimes get so entangled in the project in which so many thoughts have been invested that they forget the basic principle that only what was written down can be read. Critical proof-reading of the text by somebody not involved in the project and perhaps even working in an entirely different field can therefore be very useful for the stringency of arguments and the readability of the text.

Project title and summary

Several people will be involved in the selection procedure and they will communicate with each other about your project. This is why a meaningful title is important. A project application which can be easily remembered and which will not be confused with other proposals has a clear advantage. Acronyms are frequently used, but sometimes short project titles which express the core idea of the project might be even more useful.

The summary is like the project's business card, for it is sometimes used in official project compendia or similar publications. It should therefore be carefully worded and contain the most important aspects of the project:

- The reason for the project
- Concise description of the outputs, results and/or products
- The impact envisaged

Criteria for assessing Multilateral Project proposals

An applicant for a Multilateral Project should follow all the steps of the planning process bearing in mind the criteria for how the project will be assessed. These criteria are published in the *Guide for Applicants* accompanying the Calls for Proposals.

For Multilateral Projects in the LLP there are four types of criteria:

- Eligibility criteria: compliance with technical application procedures
- Exclusion criteria: integrity of applicant
- Selection criteria: cf. Box 6: Applicant capacity
- Award criteria

In particular the award criteria ought to be carefully considered. In the following paragraphs the award criteria (2010) for Grundtvig and other sub-programmes are presented (Lifelong Learning Programme: Application and Selection Procedures – Call 2010 (DG EAC41/09). Information on the Selection Procedures, Instructions for Completing the Application Form and the Financial Tables, p. 11 f.)

Relevance

'The grant application and the results foreseen are clearly positioned in the specific, operational and broader objectives of the Programme. The objectives are clear, realistic and address a relevant issue / target group. Where relevant, at least one of the priority areas of the Call for Proposals for the action concerned is addressed.'

A Multilateral Project needs to respond to the logic of the funding programme and argue its case in compliance with the published objectives and priorities of the LLP and the relevant sub-programme.

Quality of the work programme

'The organisation of the work is clear and appropriate to achieving the objectives; the work programme defines and distributes tasks / activities among the partners in such a way that the results will be achieved on time and to budget.'

The work plan gives evidence of the applicant's project management skills. When planning the work of the Multilateral Project the applicant should not be too ambitious. The working pace in most Multilateral Projects is rather slow, and things often take much longer than expected due to geographic distance and cultural differences.

Innovative character

'The project will provide innovative solutions to clearly identified needs for clearly identified target groups. It will achieve this either by adapting and transferring innovative approaches which already exist in other countries or sectors, or by developing a brand new solution not yet available in any of the countries participating in the Lifelong Learning Programme.'

Innovation does not necessarily mean to invent something completely new but can also occur when an educational methodology or approach that has proved to be good practice is adapted, modified or further developed according to the needs of:

- A different thematic field of learning
- Another educational sector
- A new target groups
- European countries where this approach has been hitherto unknown

The innovative element might also be related to the European character of the project. For instance, when a particular issue is dealt with jointly by experts from different European countries for the first time.

Quality of the consortium

'The consortium includes all the skills, recognised expertise and competences required to carry out all aspects of the work programme, and there is an appropriate distribution of tasks across the partners.'

The expertise of the partners should be complementary. All aspects of the project should be borne in mind when forming the partnership, including any non-educational know-how that will be needed such as ICT or marketing.

European added value

'The benefits of and need for European co-operation (as opposed to national, regional or local approaches) are clearly demonstrated.'

For many applicants it has proved helpful to pose the question of what is European about their project with regard to the following elements:

- The content of the project
  (a topic of common importance in several European countries, development of joint courses/learning materials etc.)
- The composition of the partnership
  (the geographical diversity, different approaches to specific problems in the north, south, east and west of Europe etc.)
- The nature of co-operation
  (making best use of the particular strengths of different education systems and traditions, balanced contributions from all partners etc.)
- The dissemination of the outputs
  (distribution of the project's results to a wider educational community in Europe etc.)

The cost-benefit ratio

'The grant application demonstrates value for money in terms of the activities planned relative to the budget foreseen.'

The project budget should reflect the activities leading to the development of the project results. Excessive budgeting, e.g. with regard to staff days or equipment, will reduce selection chances.

Impact

'The foreseeable impact on the approaches, target groups and systems concerned is clearly defined and measures are in place to ensure that the impact can be achieved. The results of the activities are likely to be significant.'

A Multilateral Project has the ultimate aim to change the situation of a specific target group for the better. This envisaged change ought to be carefully reflected.

Quality of the valorisation plan (dissemination and exploitation of results)

'The planned dissemination and exploitation activities will ensure optimal use of the results beyond the participants in the proposal, during and beyond the lifetime of the project.'

Multilateral Projects do not only develop innovative educational products but are also expected to spread them and make sure they will be used by the target group both during and after the EU funding period.

Putting all of these planning elements together helps a solid project strategy to evolve. This not only increases a proposal's selection chances but also lays the foundation for attaining what the Multilateral Project sets out to achieve.

And finally, a practical piece of advice. Many actions of the Lifelong Learning Programme have introduced an electronic application procedure. The electronic system has its advantages, but does require the applicants to make themselves familiar with the e-tool and the submission procedure. This is best done well in advance both to avoid barriers to the writing process due to technical problems and also nerve-racking last minute struggles with the technology.

Box 15: Elements of a well-reflected project strategy

Quality of the consortium
Do the partners have the necessary expertise?

Innovative character
What are the new elements of the proposed approach?

Quality of work programme
Is the project response properly planned to ensure success?

Relevance
How does the project respond to LLP objectives?

How does the project respond to identified needs of the field?

Needs of the field

What are the
- problems
- shortcomings
- challenges

of a specific target group?

Award criteria

Project rationale

Desk research & needs analysis

European Added Value
Is the transnational approach justified?

The cost-benefit ratio
Does the project offer value for money?

Impact
Will the project bring about a significant improvement?

Dissemination & Exploitation
Will the project results reach the intended users?

What existing good practices can the project build on?

State of the art

What has been done in
- research?
- European projects?
- national/local initiatives?

Chapter 4: Getting the Project Started

The starting phase of a Multilateral Project is crucial for the further course of the project. That is why a whole chapter is dedicated to it. A project co-ordinator needs to make a number of decisions in the first few months of the project regarding the initial project plan, the project organisation and the allocation of roles and responsibilities. Furthermore the project's relationship to its environment needs to be analysed and system for management and communication set up. The starting phase culminates in the kick-off-meeting, when in many cases partners come together for the first time and need to agree on the cornerstones of the Multilateral Project.

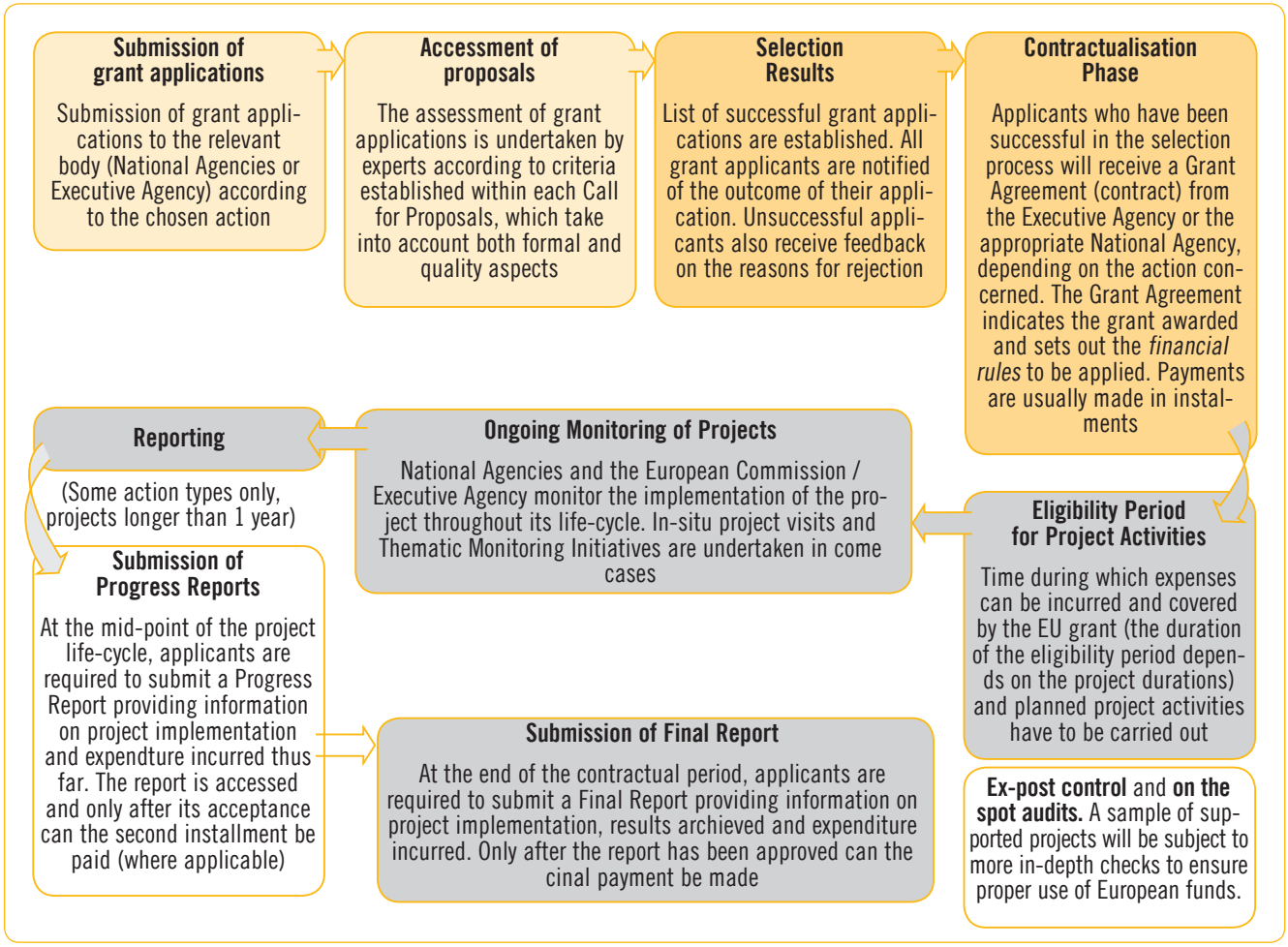
1. Tasks in the project start-up phase

Between the finalisation of the project plan, the completion of the project proposal and its submission to the funder there is a period of several months, as the upper row of the administrative cycle of Multilateral Projects in Box 1 illustrates.

Once the Multilateral Project is selected for funding the main task of the project co-ordinator is to get the project started. The starting phase is a crucial stage, as the arrangements made here determine the course of the whole project.

Projects require their own organisational format which is distinct from the organisation of the institutions involved. It is this

Box 1: Administrative cycle of Multilateral Projects in the Lifelong Learning Programme
(Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP): Guide 2009. Part 1: General Provisions, p. 14)



specific project organisation which needs to be built into the first phase of the project. Project organisation involves:

- A defined team in which each member has a clear role
- Organisational structures for communication, collaboration and decision-making
- The emergence of a project culture built on shared values, agreed rules and conduct
- A corporate design (project logo, presentation guidelines etc.)

The main project management tasks to get the project started along the right lines include the following:

- Review and refinement of project plan
- Analysis of the project environment
- Definition of roles
- Creation of sub-groups (work package plan)
- Setting-up of a communication system
- Organisation of the kick-off meeting

A short, informal checklist of the most important steps to take in the start-up phase of a Multilateral Project – developed for Erasmus, but also valid for other actions – can be found at: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/erasmus/documents/guidelines_for_llp_coordinators_project_start_up.pdf

2. Reviewing the project plan

One of the first things to do for a co-ordinator at the start of the project is to look again at the original project plan, which is now the basis of the Grant Agreement. In almost all projects the original plan needs to be reviewed, adapted and refined. This review may include the following aspects.

Project aims:

How operational were the project aims as originally formulated? Are they concrete enough to assess the level of achievement later on? Can they be measured or otherwise verified? Do the assumptions on which these aims were formulated (still) hold true?

Perhaps some of the project aims will have to be modified in the course of the project's implementation. But co-ordinators of Multilateral Projects in the Lifelong Learning Programme should be aware that modification of aims is possible only to a certain extent. The project was selected on the basis of the aims described in the project proposal. If adaptation is necessary, this may only mean clarification and refinement without altering the substance of the project.

Envisaged products:

Another refinement in planning will normally concern the project products. In the project proposal the educational products to be developed may have been described only in general terms and need now to be more detailed. Project managers should be aware that Multilateral Projects are strongly product-oriented. The range, nature, volume, or language versions of products must not be changed without prior consent of the funder.

To produce and discuss in detail at the kick-off meeting a revised list of deliverables (cf. Box 2) can be useful in ensuring that all partners have a complete and clear picture what has to be produced by the project, and when, how and by whom.

Project budget:

The budget of the overall project and the partners' share of it were fixed in the project proposal but the budget approved by the funder might well have been reduced. If this is the case the project has to re-do the whole scoping process with the reduced budget – or leave it altogether. A budget cut needs to be reflected in the internal budget allocation both between partners and between cost items. It is crucial for the development of trust in the partnership that such financial modifications are fairly shared and communicated with full transparency.

Allocation of tasks:

Very often tasks allocated to partners in the project proposal have to be revisited. Perhaps because of a budget cut as described above, or because the staff involved have changed or simply because the partners consented to a provisional division of tasks without thinking much about it. It is useful to go again through each work package as described in the proposal, discuss, confirm and if necessary re-allocate some tasks at the kick-off meeting. Project co-ordinators should show some flexibility here as task modifications can help partners to find their correct place in a project. This process therefore has an immense impact on motivation and the sense of ownership.

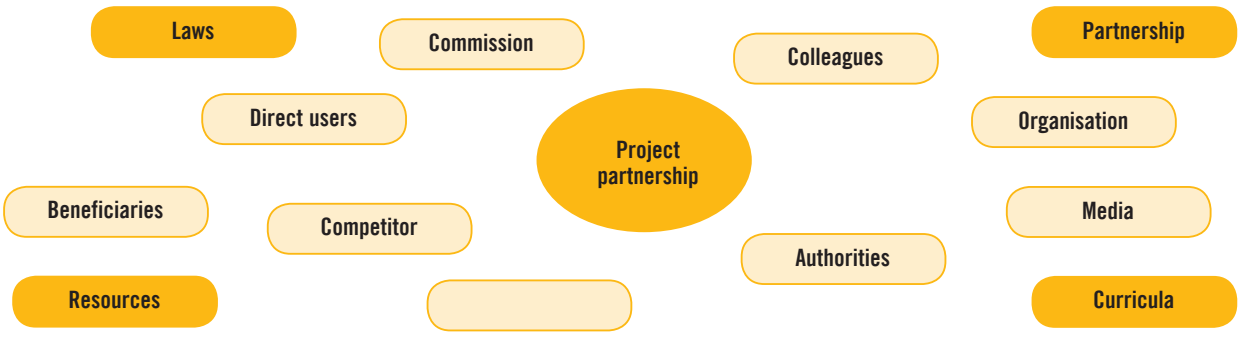
3. Analysing the project environment

A project manager might (and indeed should) have done an initial risk analysis in the pre-project phase (cf. *Chapter 3: Planning a Multilateral Project*), but few projects do a thorough analysis of the project environment before the project is

Box 2: List of deliverables

No.	Description of deliverable	WP leader	Contributors	Deadline
D1	Virtual platform for communication and learning Virtual platform to facilitate the preparatory and follow up phases of the test course and the Grundtvig training course, including a collection (links + comments) of ICT tools for networking and network management Language: EN Medium: Internet platform	Partner 1	Coordinator Partner 2 Partner 3 Partner 4	31.5.2010
D2	Course design A document for trainers which will contain the curriculum, the overall didactic approach and the methodologies to be applied in the course. It will cover all three phases. Preparatory phase, face-to-face-course and follow-up. Language: EN Medium: PDF document Volume: 30 pages	Partner 3	Coordinator Partner 1 Partner 2 Partner 4	31.3.2010 (Draft) 31.5.2010 (Final)
D3				
D4				
D5				

Box 3: First brainstorming of possible influencing factors



Box 4: Assessment of influencing factors

Influencing person / institution / factor	Type of potential influence	Character of influence ☺ 😐 ☹	Importance of the influence rated 1 – 5	Steps to be taken

selected for funding. If it has not been done before the starting phase now is the time to do it! The social as well as the factual environment needs to be analysed.

Firstly the potential social and factual factors should be collected in a brainstorming exercise.

In a second step these factors can be weighed and the most important ones selected for more detailed analysis. For the most important influences measures to make the most of positive factors and risk-reducing action for the negative factors should be devised.

Another possible and somewhat shorter alternative to this process is a SWOT analysis.

Box 5: SWOT analysis

S (strengths are internal)	W (weaknesses are internal)
O (opportunities are external)	T (threats are external)

4. Defining project roles

In most Multilateral Projects the author of the successful project proposal is identical with the project co-ordinator. But this may not be the obvious solution in all cases. Writing a project proposal is something quite different from managing a project.

In formal terms, the project co-ordinator needs to be appointed by the legal representative of the contracting organisation. In some larger institution this is a formal process of appointment which takes some time and needs preparation. To have a job profile of the co-ordinator ready can be useful. The competences to look for in a project co-ordinator have been described in *Chapter 2: Project Co-ordination: Management and Leadership.*

It is good practice, as many experienced project co-ordinators will confirm, to share the co-ordination tasks in a small management team rather than allotting multiple functions to one person. Project co-ordination in a narrow sense includes:

- Managing and leading the project team
- Steering the product development
- Monitoring and controlling
- Financial management
- Promoting the project in the (educational) public

These multiple functions can rarely be found in any one person. Moreover, to share co-ordination tasks has the advantages of:

- Substitution in times of absence
- Making use of the specific know-how in an institution
- Alleviating stress by spreading responsibility

It is important however, even if the work of co-ordination is shared by a team, that one main co-ordinator is designated who acts as the figure head and spokesperson for the project.

Project co-ordination is a vital role in a project, but of course not the only one. There are several types of roles team members can play in a project:

- **Roles with regard to the project organisation:**
  Coordinator, administrator/controller, assistant, quality manager/evaluator, steering committee member, work package leader, work package contributor
- **Roles with regard to the project tasks:**
  Content developer, teacher/trainer, researcher, ICT support, promoter/disseminator, graphic designer

- **Roles with regard to personalities:**
  Entrepreneur, Networker, Visionary, Critic, 'Labourer'
- **Roles with regard to team functions**

Meredith Belbin
(http://www.belbin.com/content/page/1971/Belbin_Team_Role_Descriptions.pdf) describes nine team roles, which are evident in successful teams. These roles can be taken up or dropped and one person can play different roles in different situations. These team roles are:

- ***The chairperson/co-ordinator*** ensures that the team members' efforts and strengths are put to good use
- ***The shaper*** makes the team look at where it is going – its objectives and priorities – and tries to keep the team activity focused
- ***The company worker/implementer*** turns the ideas and plans into practical tasks that people can actually get done
- ***The completer/finisher*** checks the details ensuring nothing is overlooked and no mistakes are made, also keeps an eye on time, deadlines and accuracy
- ***The innovator/planter*** suggests new ideas and creative solutions, identifies new opportunities and sees problems as opportunities
- ***The monitor/evaluator*** evaluates ideas objectively to see if they are realistic and profitable. Can interpret and evaluate complex issues
- ***The resource investigator*** keeps the team in touch with what is happening outside the team. Learns about ideas, information, developments in the outside world
- ***The team worker*** encourages others, helps others out and is sensitive to people's needs and feelings
- ***The specialist*** has specialist knowledge or experience to contribute to the team

The art of good project management is to be aware of the different role dimensions and to take them into consideration when putting project teams or sub-teams together. European projects are not hierarchical undertakings. In fact, the extent to which a co-ordinator can steer by command is extremely limited in such virtual and dispersed teams. Projects live or die by the motivation of their team members. So independent of one's preferred management style it is indispensable to let people have a say and allow them find their right position in a project. All project members should get a chance to find the place where they feel most comfortable and can bring in to the maximum extent their specific know-how, working styles and personalities.

Moreover, unlike in-house projects where the project leader can select the members of the project team, in most Multilateral Projects the partner institutions will simply appoint the person(s) they deem most appropriate. And this person may be somebody completely different from the person the co-ordinator was in contact with in the application phase.

Ideally a project team will combines four different types of competences:

- Expertise in the subject area
- Social competence
- Project management skills
- Decision-making authority
- User competence with regard to ICT

Expertise in the subject area: The project team as a whole needs to have the necessary professional expertise and knowledge of the field concerned as well as the methodological and technical skills required.
Social competence: The ability to work independently and in teams is crucial.
Project management skills: Not only the co-ordinator should be a good project manager, also the partners should also have basic project management skills.
Decision-making authority: It is extremely helpful to have people from the partner institutions in the project team who have decision making powers that can be used (for example) in project meetings. If this is not the case delays of the project's work may take place while decisions are made elsewhere.
ICT user competence: A reasonable understanding and positive attitude towards ICT- based communication and co-operation tools is necessary, as a large part of the work will be done virtually. It is difficult (but still not rare) to do a project with people who refuse to use anything but email.

Roles and responsibilities of the main team members should be discussed at the start of the project and at the end of the discussion written up in a role description sheet (Box 6).

Box 6: Defining roles and responsibilities

Team member	Role(s) in the project	Main Responsibilities

5. Organising the work into sub-groups

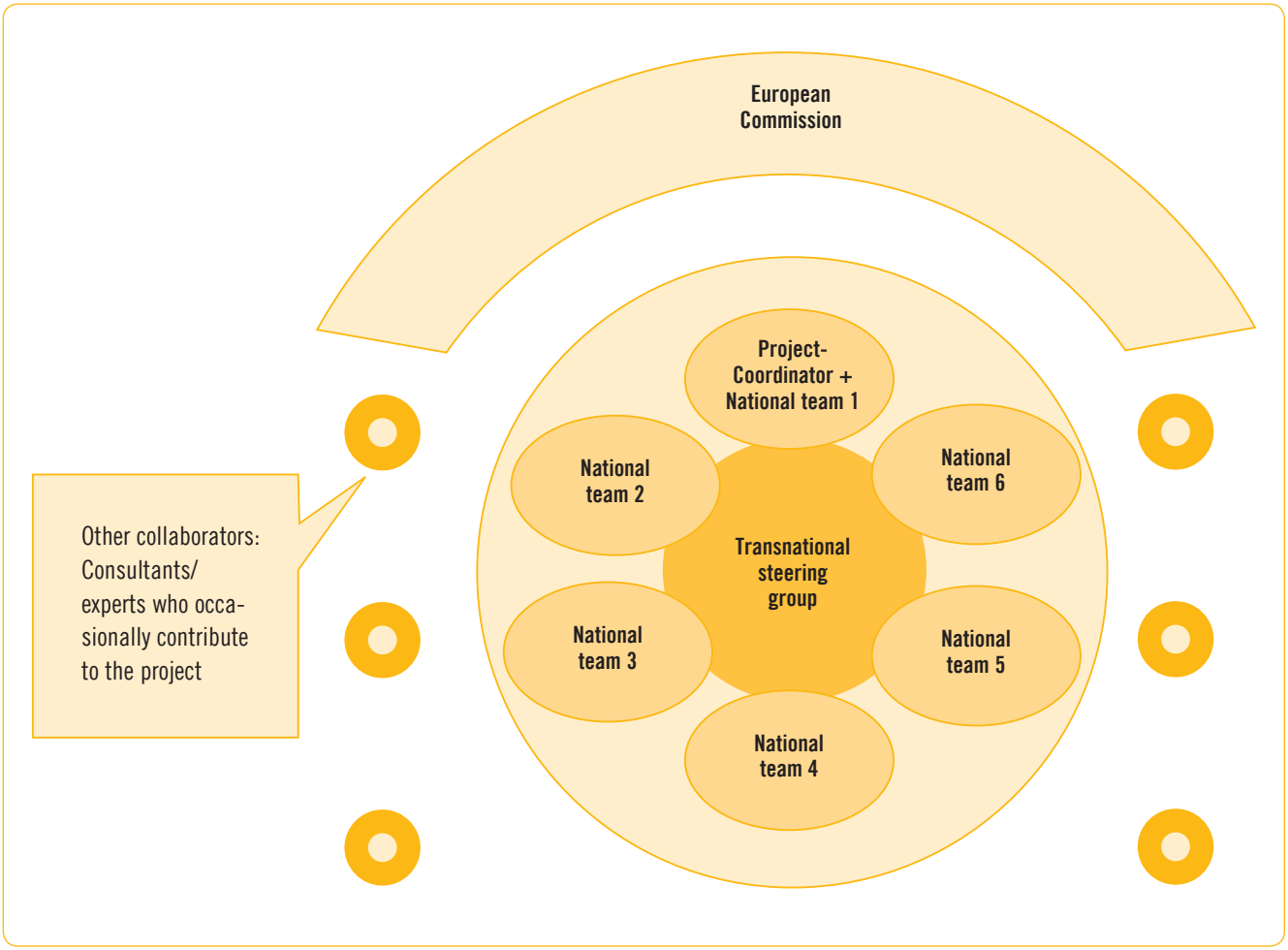
Due to reasons of effectiveness and efficiency it does not make much sense if all aspects of the Multilateral Project are done by the entire project team. Partners have different strengths, expertise and interests, and this should be reflected in the organisation of the work programme.

Sub-groups can be formed according to tasks (work packages) or thematic aspects (interest groups). In some projects it may even make sense for practical reasons to form some sub-groups according to geographical vicinity (less travel time and costs). Other projects will have the division between a steering group at European level, and attached national teams which develop or test content.

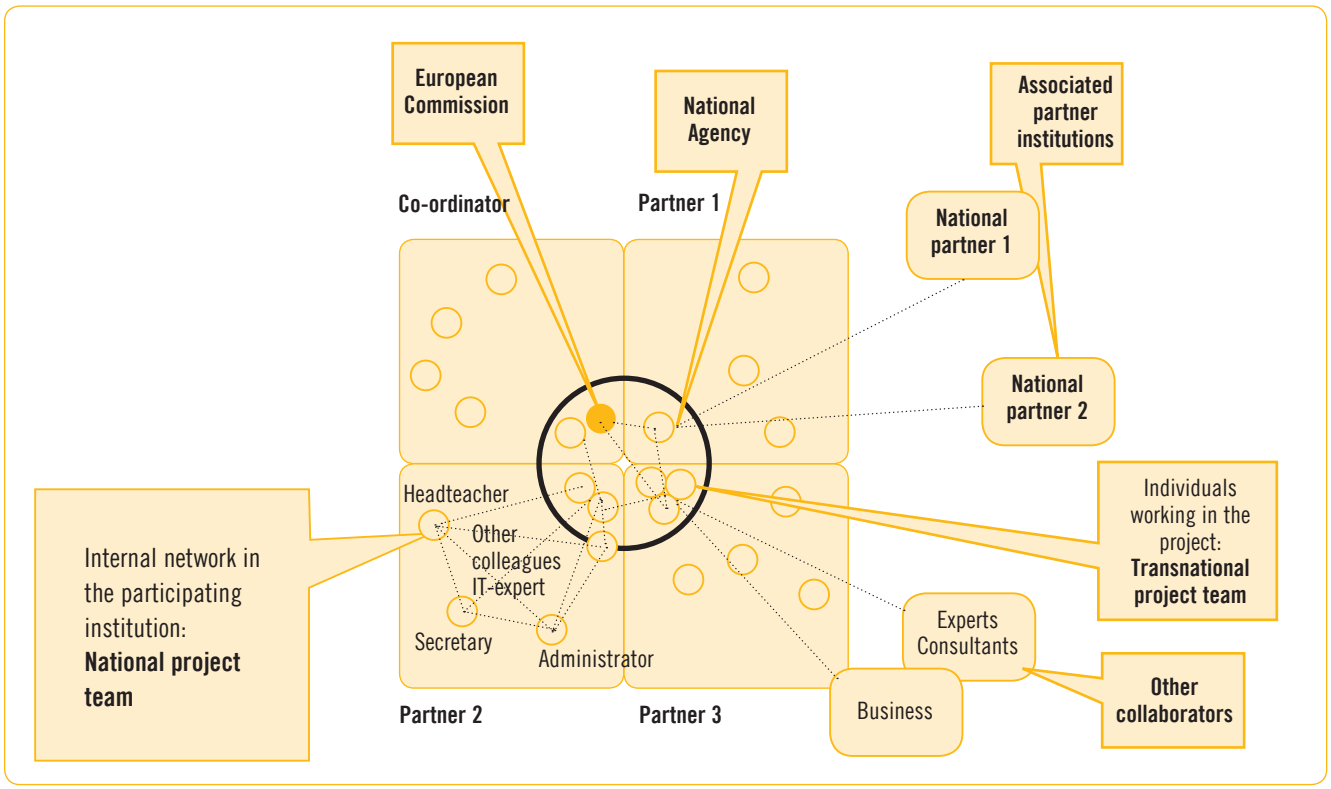
Box 8 shows the complexity of relationships in a large Multilateral Project, and their interaction with the social environment of the project. It also illustrates the need for a well established and effective communication and information system which supports the whole process and ensures that the co-ordinator (or co-ordinating team) can receive all information.

It is not always easy to staff thematic sub-groups or work package groups in a project, even though tasks and responsibilities have already been allocated at the application stage. This was many months ago, and the project co-ordinator cannot take for granted that the project partners remember what they are supposed to do, or have even read the project proposal carefully enough to appreciate what they formally consented to do in the project. This is why the definitive task allocation should be discussed in detail and, in many cases, modified at the kick-off meeting. This makes each team member aware of what is expected from them and avoids misunderstandings.
In larger Multilateral Projects, it is usual to use thematic or functional groups with national sub-groups feeding in (Box 8).

Box 7: Possible structure of a Multilateral Project (1)



Box 8: Possible structure of a Multilateral Project (2)



This task allocation should be done on the basis of the work packages as described in the project proposal. A tool which may be useful to establish clarity about tasks is a work package form which describes in some detail the most important aspects of each work package (Box 9).

These work package forms should not be filled in by the project co-ordinator but by the work package leader and, if possible, the work package team together. This is not only a more participative approach, it also provides the project co-ordinator with a clear idea of the way the project team members interpret the other planning documents. Moreover, when asking work package groups to organise themselves the co-ordinator sends a message to the partnership: Partners are invited to bring in their ideas, but also to take over responsibility for their work.

6. Setting up the management system and procedures

The two essential elements of a management system of a Multilateral Project are the project co-ordination (team) and the European steering group. The latter consists of one or two representatives of each partner institution, is mainly responsible for co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation, and further planning. Each national team has (at least) one representative in the steering group. For this the group normally meets two to three times a year. An internal evaluator or quality manager should also be part of the management system.

An optional element of a management system can be the establishment of an advisory board, this can also create added value in some projects. Such a board can give feedback, make recommendations, and play a role in dissemination.

Another task is the definition of the decision-making process:

- What does the coordinator decide?
- What does the steering group decide?
- By majority or consensus?

It is not always clear if the members of the steering group have decision-making authority and can decide things in one of their meetings. Sometimes they have to report back to their home institutions first. It is a common reality in European projects

Box 9: Work Package Planning Form

Title work package:		**Work package leader:**	
Duration:		**Work package team:**	

Aims and objectives
>
>
>
Results / deliverables
>
>
>
Relation to other work packages
>
>
>

Costs				
Staff	Travel	Equipment	Subcontracting	Other

Tasks and responsibilities			
Task	Responsible	Deadline	Comment
1.			
Task	Responsible	Deadline	Comment
2.			
Task	Responsible	Deadline	Comment
3.			
Task	Responsible	Deadline	Comment
4.			

that the team members have very different status, ranging from post-graduate students to directors of large educational institutions.

To introduce and agree on a conflict resolution process is advisable. Clear prior regulations of *What happens if…?* are much better and often more adequate than trying to decide on a course of action when the conflict arises (cf. *Chapter 6: Effective Collaboration*). In some large project and networks the appointment of a project ombudsman has also proved useful.

7. Establishing a communication system

Crucial for the success of a Multilateral Project is successful communication. Project communication has two levels:

Box 10: Example of an advisory board

In one Grundtvig project on validation of competences, for instance, the advisory board consisted of different stakeholders who had a strategic interest in the project topic. There were representatives from:

- Management of the co-ordinating institution
- The ministry of education
- One of the national umbrella organisations for adult education
- The National Agency
- A local university
- A thematically related project

The board met twice a year. In these sessions the co-ordinator gave a detailed account of the activities, achievements and challenges of the past months. After thorough discussions feedback and concrete recommendations were given by the members of the board. Their implementation was the subject of discussion at the next meeting.

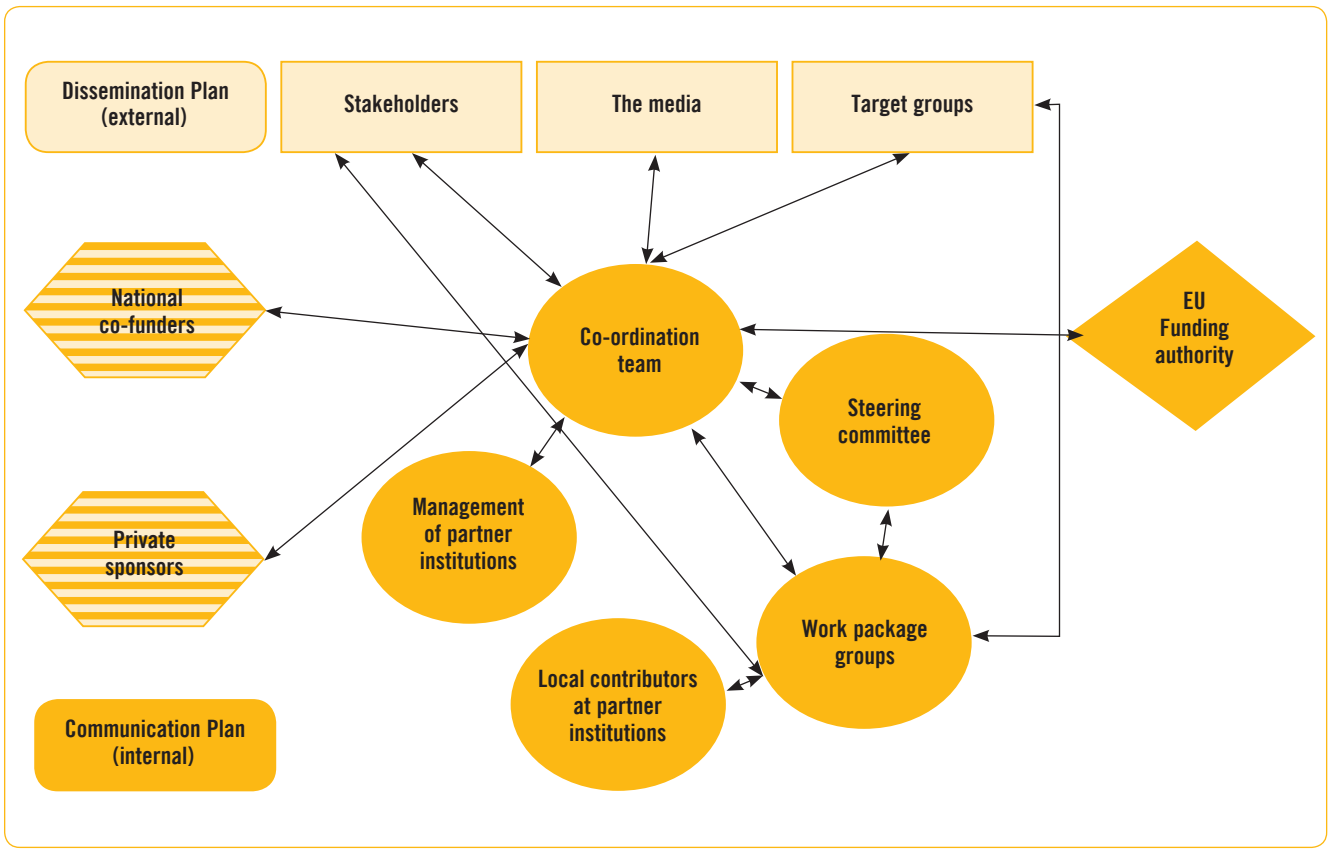
- Internal: communication between the different project actors
- External: communication with target groups, other stakeholders, and the media

External dissemination is dealt with elsewhere in this publication (cf. *Chapter 10: Dissemination and Exploitation of Results*), but is included in the diagram in Box 11 to give a complete picture of the potential communication relations in a project.

At the start of the project communication should be systematically planned.
To do so, six questions with regard to internal project communication should be carefully considered:

1. **Why communicate?** Communication is not an end in itself, but needs a clear **communication purpose**. What is the value of the communication activity in the context of the overall project? E.g. information, request for support, feedback etc.
2. **To whom?** Who exactly are the **addressees** of a communication activity? Different recipients need different communica-

Box 11: Communication relations in a project



Box 12: Internal Communication Plan

WHY? Purpose of communication	TO WHOM? Recipient of communication	WHAT? Content of communication	HOW? Media of communication	WHEN? Timing and frequency of communication	BY WHOM? Responsibility of communication

tion strategies and styles. E.g. co-ordination team, steering group, management of partner institutions etc.

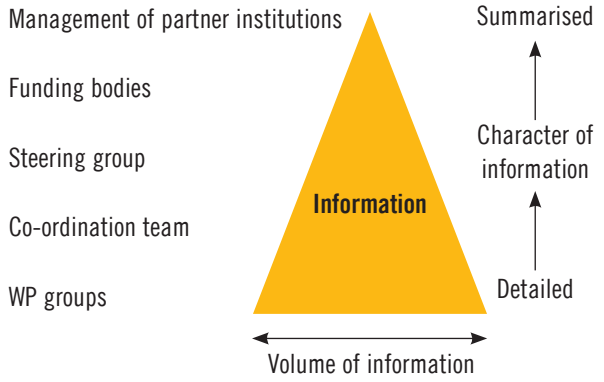
3. **What?** Project communication should not mean forwarding a bulk of information to everybody, but a **selection** of information according to the communication purpose and information needs of the addressees. E.g. Results of a meeting, draft products, invitation to event etc.
4. **How?** What are the most suitable communication **methods** for specific communications? Is face-to-face or virtual communication appropriate? Which **tools** are most suitable (cf. *Chapter 8: ICT Tools for European Project Work*)? E.g. face-to-face meetings, Skype conference, e-newsletter, minutes, etc.
5. **When?** How often and with what frequency should be communications be sent? E.g. after each transnational meeting, quarterly, at project milestones, etc.
6. **By whom?** Who has the **responsibility** to make sure that planned communication activities are implemented? E.g. project co-ordinator, work package leader, etc.

A communication plan with answers to these questions helps to keep track. It should be discussed and agreed at the kick-off meeting.

One frequent phenomenon seen in many Multilateral Projects is that too much and insufficiently filtered and prepared information is distributed. Such an overkill of information may arise from the good intention to spread knowledge liberally and be transparent. Yet it can endanger the project's success, as it tends to de-motivate project actors.

As a rough guideline the pyramid of information needs should be considered.

Box 13: Information needs in a project



8. Organising the kick-off meeting

The importance of the kick-off meeting for the further development of the project cannot be over-rated. It is of vital importance to all that follows in a project. Consequently, it should be planned with extreme care.

The kick-off meeting has multiple functions. It serves to:

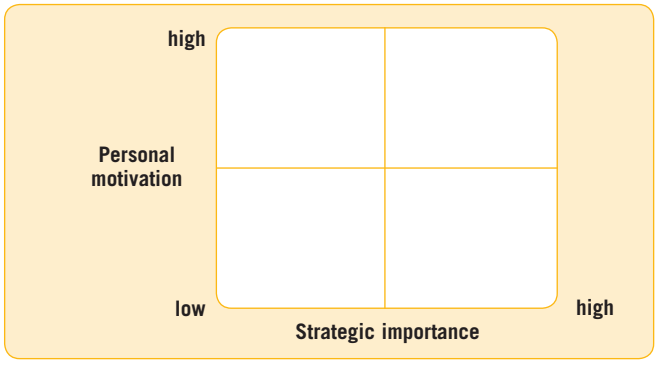
- Get to know each other as people, professionals, and institutions
- Provide full information about all aspects of the project
- Create transparency and build trust in the partnership

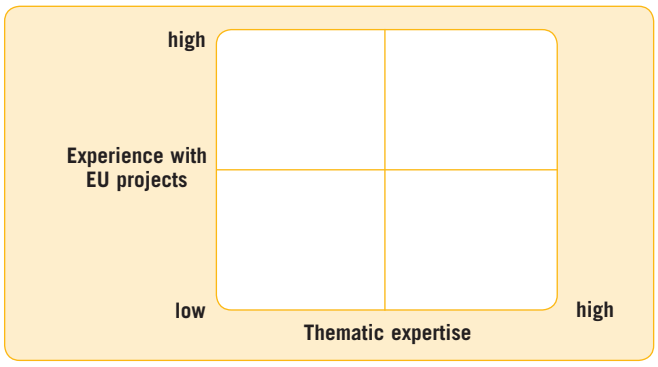
- Evoke identification with the project and a sense of ownership
- Be the first step in the team-building process
- Confirm roles and tasks
- Create clarity about financial and administrative regulations
- Plan the first project phase in detail

This is quite lot to do in a meeting which should not be longer than two or possibly three days (bearing in mind the other commitments of the partners). A balance needs to be found between warming up and team-building, thematic discussion, confirmation of planning issues and information about financial and contractual issues. Examples of the agendas of kick-of meetings can be found at www.european-project-management.eu

A good start to a kick-off meeting has proved to be two mapping exercises which allow participants to get to know each other's personal and institutional backgrounds with regard to the project. Participants are asked to position a sticky dot on two diagrams on flip charts about motivation and interests with regard to EU projects and the topic at stake. Afterwards they explain their choice. Thus quite easily, and much more interestingly than by formal PowerPoint assisted presentations of the partner institutions, a vivid picture of what partners expect from and can bring into the project will be gained (Box 14).

Box 14: Mapping exercise: partners' backgrounds





This warm-up exercise can be followed by a SWOT analysis of the project, a methodology which has been introduced as a risk analysis tool earlier in this publication (cf. *Chapter 3: Planning a Multilateral Project*). Good Practice with regard to kick-off meetings (according to experienced co-ordinators of Multilateral Projects) is also to:

Involve other partners in the programme of the kick-off meeting:

It is potentially very boring to listen to the same person for two days! Leaders of work packages should be invited to present the part of the project they are to be responsible for and facilitate discussion in the respective workshop.

Provide comprehensive project documentation:

Some project managers produce a project manual for the kick-off meeting. It contains all relevant contractual documents, planning documents, forms and templates to be used in the project.

Apply a variety of meeting formats:

Working in a plenary session for the whole meeting can become exhausting and unproductive. In an educational project it could be expected that different formats and activities will be applied – but this is still the exception rather than the rule!

Dedicate enough time on contractual issues without overdoing it:

The contract with the funder, reporting and financial eligibility regulations, the provisions of the partner agreement and all its annexes should be present and discussed in detail. It is crucial that everybody understands the formal framework of the project. But at the same time the project co-ordinator must take care not to put people off with administrative matters. In any case it is not a good idea to start a kick-off meeting with contracts and finances.

Ask explicitly for agreement on important issues:

When the terms of the partner agreement, reporting requirements, budget allocation and payment methods and the revised work

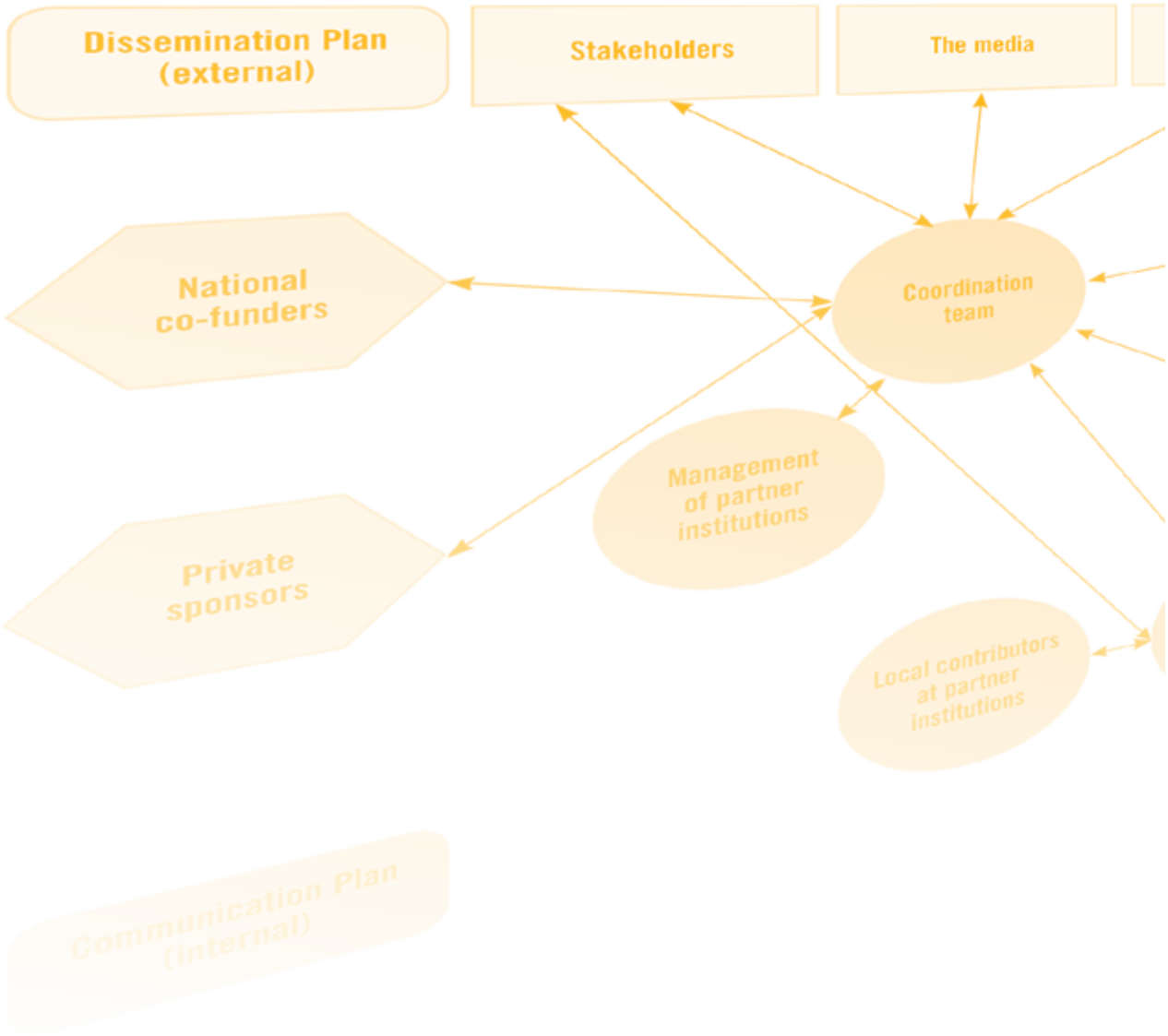
plan with roles and tasks of each partner have been sufficiently discussed, partners should be asked for their agreement. The co-ordinator should at this stage give partners time for second thoughts (perhaps one week after the meeting). If nobody disagrees after this time these cornerstones of the project are considered to be officially accepted and an integral part of the partner agreement. The meeting minutes should confirm this agreement.

Make people laugh and have a good time:

Finally a European project should be a positive contrast to daily routine. Good meals and inspiring social activities help to evoke a positive spirit in the partnership which can be a great asset in the future.

Apart from these specifics for the kick-off meeting the basic rules of good meeting management should of course be applied (cf. *Chapter 6: Effective Collaboration*).

All templates shown and described in this chapter can be downloaded at the *Survival Kit* website www.european-project-management.eu



Chapter 5: Project Administration

The administrative tasks demanded by the EU funding programme are felt to be a heavy burden by some project co-ordinators. But they can be seen in a different light when they are acknowledged as an important factor in contributing to the project's success. Tasks related to project administration mainly fall into five categories, which will be addressed in this chapter: Financial management; the management of contractual relations; documentation of activities and expenditure; monitoring and reporting.

All administrative aspects connected with the contractual relation between the funder and the project co-ordinator are dealt with in the official *Project Handbook* issued by the Executive Agency and will not therefore be repeated here. In addition to this core document, but in no way replacing it, this chapter highlights some of the implications of the programme regulations for internal project administration.

1. Overview of administrative tasks

Administration is an integral part of the management of all types of projects. Sound contractual and financial management, project documentation, monitoring and reporting are the basis for being able to steer the project in the right direction and for being in a position to account to the funder for the resources invested.

In general, the administrative workload in EU projects tends to be higher than in many other types of projects. This is also the case with Multilateral Projects in the Lifelong Learning Programme, which has a specific and detailed system of contractual and financial regulations.

Compared to the earlier generation of programmes it does need to be acknowledged that the administrative requirements have been significantly simplified, more precisely defined and more explicitly communicated. An official *Project Handbook* (*Guidelines for Administrative and Financial Management and Reporting*) is now an integral part of the Grant Agreement. It explains in detail the rules and regulations which apply in a Multilateral Project. The Grant Agreement and the Project Handbook are crucial documents for the implementation of a Multilateral Project. They set the legal basis for the project and should be read intensively and discussed during the project meetings.

The regulations described there will not be repeated in this chapter. Instead, the main administrative tasks in the management of a Multilateral Project are discussed in a more general way. This has the overall aim of supporting the project co-ordinator in the task of administrating his or her project efficiently, not only with a view to complying with EU rules, but also to gather information in a structured way so enabling the project to run smoothly and to be accountable.

A range of different tasks are involved, as Box 1 illustrates.

Box 1: Administrative tasks in project management

Financial management
- Grant allocation
- (De-)Centralised budget management
- Documentation of costs

Project documentation
- PM manual
- Document standard

Contractual management
- Grant Agreement
- Partner agreements
- Copyright agreements
- Sub-contracts
- Co-funding/sponsor agreements

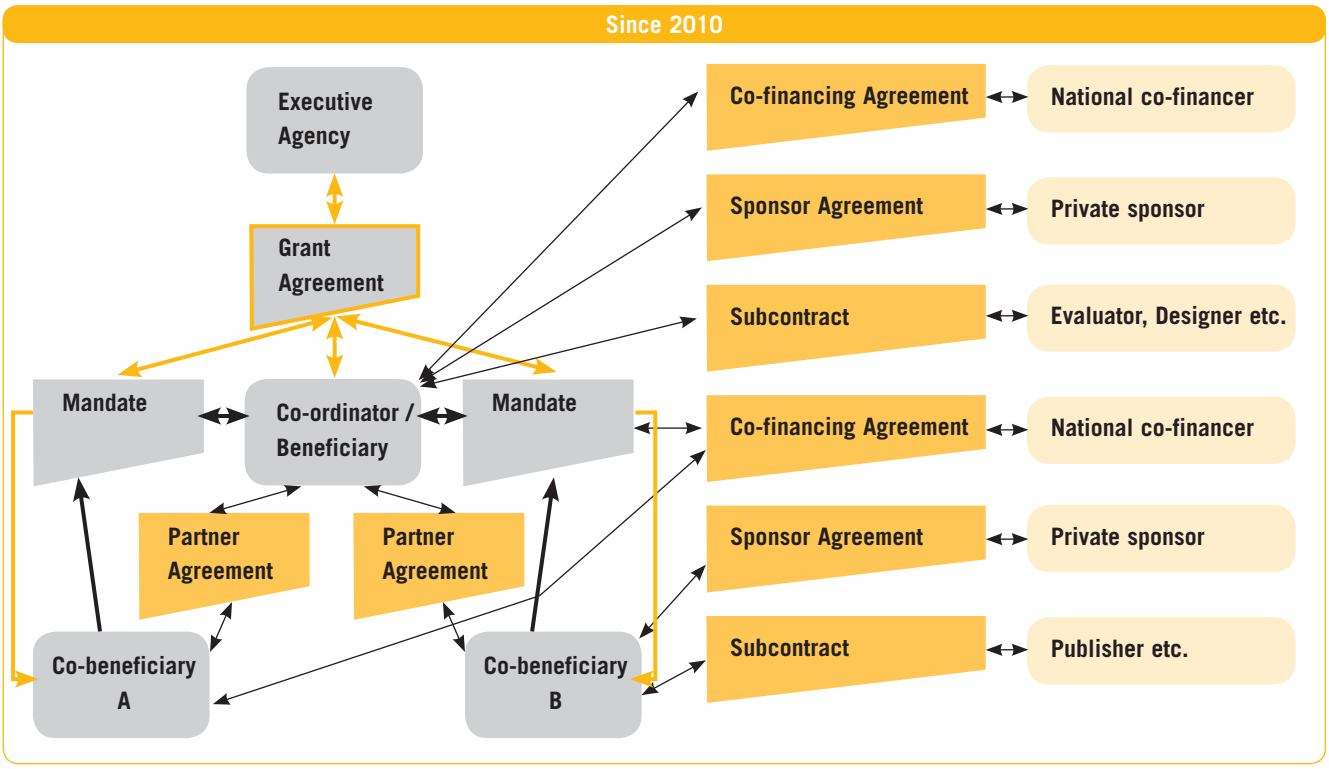
Monitoring
- Progress towards aims
- Expenditure
- Schedule

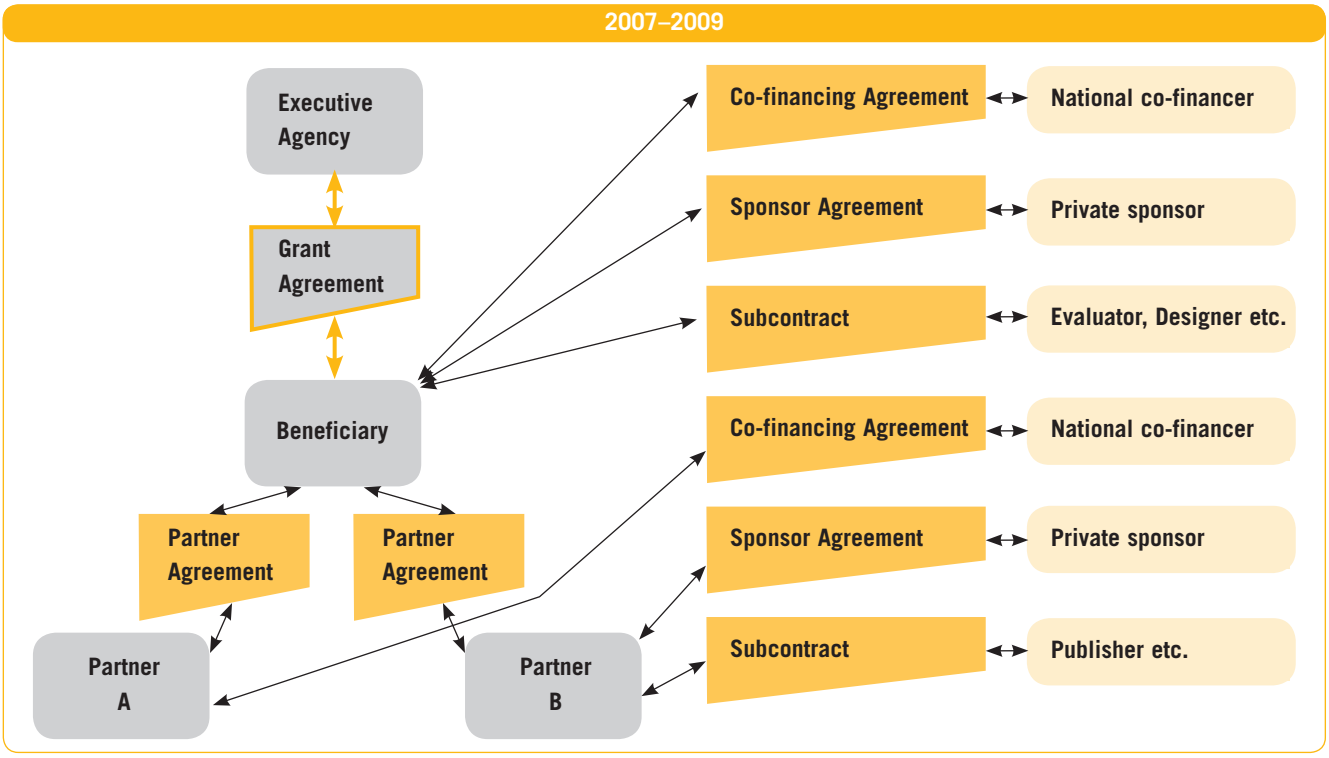
Reporting
- Internal reporting
- Reporting to the funder

2. Management of contracts

As the graphic representation of contractual relations (Box 2) demonstrates, a Multilateral Project involves a number of contractual arrangements a project coordinator has to manage.

Box 2: Contractual relations in a Multilateral Project





The Grant Agreement

Until 2009, mono-beneficiary contracts were used and the partners were not part of the contract.

As of 2010, multi-beneficiary contracts were introduced in the LLP Programme which makes the project partners co-beneficiaries. Through a mandate, they grant power of attorney to the coordinator to sign the Grant Agreement with the Executive Agency.
The coordinator remains responsible for all content and financial aspects of the Multilateral Project and is the only intermediary for all communications with the Executive Agency.

However, the Agency reserves the right to address a project partner directly for instance in case of withdrawal from the partnership, for audit or of financial dispute (recovery order).

The Grant Agreement is the core contractual document and constitutes the legal framework of a Multilateral Project.All other contractual relations, most notably those between the coordinator and the partner institutions, with third parties providing specific services ("*subcontractors*"), or with national co-financers or private sponsors have to be drafted by the project co-ordinator, following requirements specified in the Project Handbook and the Grant Agreement.

On the website **http://www.european-project-management.eu** **www.european-project-management.eu** examples of contracts and agreements used by projects can be found for information and adaptation. There is, however, not one model partner agreement officially authorized by the Agency. Multilateral Projects are required to create their own contracts.
When creating these self-made contracts it is essential to ensure that they comply with the EU regulations defined in the Grant Agreement and the *Project Handbook*.

Partner agreements

The most important contractual relations to be regulated by a project co-ordinator are those between the co-ordinating institution and the project partners. The Executive Agency highly recommends drafting partner agreements which define the rights and obligations of both the co-ordinating and the partner institutions.

The partner agreement is not only a formal requirement, it is also an indispensable precaution to minimise the financial risk for the contractor. This risk is considerable, since the contractor acts on behalf of the whole partnership, signs the financial agreement with the funder, receives the whole grant for distribution amongst the partners and, at the end of the day, is held responsible to the funder for the overall achievements of the project and the conformity to the rules of the funding programme of all activities and expenditure.

Moreover, the partner agreement has additional important functions. It establishes the formal base for co-operation in the partnership and constitutes a commitment to the project. The agreement makes the rights and obligations of both partners and contractor transparent and thus provides equal information, a sense of security, and enables the development of trust. In this way the partner agreement, although a rather dry document formulated in legal language, can also be an instrument for team building. But this potential for team building can only be realised if enough time is invested to discuss the terms of the partner agreement, to explain the underlying considerations and to reach an understanding and agreement on them.

This may need both cultural sensitivity and a patient effort. There are cultural differences with regard to formal documents (cf. *Chapter 7: Intercultural Elements in European Project Management*), and some partners may initially consider it a cold and technocratic approach at a European project meeting to talk at length about contracts. But in the end, to overcome these apprehensions and arrive at a common understanding of the necessity of a partner agreement can itself be a valuable step in the team building process.

The core elements of a partner agreement are the definitions of:
- The contributions to the project the partner commits themselves to make
- The partner's share of the budget for completing these contributions, the share of the EU grant the partner is entitled to receive, and the co-financing by the partner
- The schedule of payments of the grant to be made by the contractor
- The reporting requirements of the partner towards the contractor

When drafting the partner agreement some formalities should be observed:
- Explicit reference to the financial agreement with the funder (official agreement number) and a check on the validity of all its terms for the partner
- Complete identity of the partner institution and its legal representative
- Duration of the agreement, in accordance with the official project period

- Conditions for modification of the contract
- Clauses about liability and termination of the agreement in case of non-compliance
- Applicable law in case of conflict (usually the law of the contractor's country)

Not everything can be packed into the agreement itself. Some issues are better dealt with in annexes which are integral parts of the partner agreement. The financial agreement between funder and contractor, including all its annexes (project proposal, approved budget, project handbook, list of partners), and the bank details of the partner institution should be standard annexes in all partner agreements. Many projects have found it useful to include also the following annexes, to avoid misunderstandings and disputes:

- Revised budget breakdown
- Revised work plan
- Revised list of deliverables
- Copyright agreement (if applicable)
- Internal reporting forms
- Full contact details of contact person, an alternative contact, the legal representative and finance officer

When the partner agreement has been amended and all its parts clarified, it is signed by the legal representatives of the partner institutions. While some projects circulate one multilateral contract which all partners are requested to sign, most others find it more practical to sign bilateral agreements.

Amendments to the Grant Agreement

The terms of the Grant Agreement of a European Project cannot be modified by the project co-ordinator unilaterally. If there are substantial deviations from the application, an official request for an amendment to the Grant Agreement must be submitted to the Executive Agency. The cases in which an amendment is necessary are laid out in the *Project Handbook*.

In any case an amendment request should be made well in advance of the proposed change, not retrospectively, and no later than indicated in the Grant Agreement and Project Handbook. Wherever possible, substantial changes which need an amendment ought to be avoided, as processing an amendment request entails considerable additional work for the project co-ordinator as well as for the Executive Agency. The co-ordinator cannot anticipate that each request for the amendment will be granted. In case of significant changes to the project (objectives, nature, etc.) the Agency can decide to reject the amendment. Therefore it is advisable to contact the responsible project officer in the Agency and discuss with him/her the planned changes.

3. Project documentation

Two types of documents should be comprehensively completed and carefully retained in a European project: Proof of the activities carried out by the project and management-related documents.

As far as documentation of activities is concerned a project manager should bear in mind that a project has not achieved anything unless the achievements are documented. In the final assessment of the project the funder expects proof of the implemented activities and the impact achieved. This is a weak point in many projects. Signed participation lists, photos, agendas of meetings, conference programmes etc. add considerably to the credibility of the project and help the assessors of project reports to evaluate the project positively. From the beginning of the project documentation requirements as specified in the final report forms should be taken into account and evidence systematically collected. This saves a lot of time at reporting stage.

With regard to management-related documents it is advisable to introduce a project management manual.

In particular project managers who are in charge of several projects profit from a uniformly structured manual, which could be organised as follows:

Box 3: Possible structure of a project management manual

1. Contact details
- EU project officer at funding institution
- Project co-ordinator, administrator, financial officer
- Project partners: contact person, legal representative, financial officer
- External contributors (sub-contractors, volunteers)

2. Project proposal
- Proposal
- Letters of Intent

3. Project contracts
- Grant Agreement, incl. all annexes
- Amendments to and modifications of the Grant Agreement
- Partner agreements
- Sub-contracts
- Copyright agreement
- National co-financing and private sponsor agreements

4. Planning documents
- Updates of work plan
- List of deliverables
- Work package sheets

5. Budget
- Approved budget
- Approved budget breakdown per partner
- Financial monitoring tool (Excel list, spread sheet)
- Calculations and estimates
- Offers by deliverers

6. Reports
- Internal report forms
- Internal progress reports from partners
- External report forms
- External progress reports to funder

7. Minutes and agreements
- Minutes of face-to-face project meetings
- Minutes of virtual project meetings
- Minutes of sub-group meetings
- Important agreements with partners (email messages, memos etc.)

8. Evaluation
- Evaluation plan
- Internal evaluation reports
- External evaluation reports

9. Products, dissemination and exploitation
- Products or list of products
- Dissemination plan
- (List of) Project-related publications, articles, postings
- Dissemination products (fliers, brochure etc.
- Exploitation plan

10. Other

The project management manual is a tangible file held at the co-ordinator's workplace. To make it available as an important reference document for all partners it can also be uploaded onto the virtual project work space. In this way it serves two functions:
- Information: Everybody can look up the documents whenever needed
- Transparency: Everybody has access to essential management information

To maintain the value of the manual constant updating is necessary.

In addition to recording project activities and maintaining a project management manual the introduction of a document standard is also useful.
A standard helps to identify a document, clarify its author, status and purpose and contributes to a sense of ownership of the project amongst team members.

Box 4: Example of document standard

Project working group (if applicable):	survival kit
Author(s):	
Date:	
Status: ***Final / Draft / For approval of …***	
Related documents:	
Title of Document *(Defined font for text)*	

In all documents which may be distributed to an external audience the logo and disclaimer of the funding programme should also be added.

4. Financial management

Once the contractor has signed the financial agreement with the Executive Agency and received the first instalment of the grant financial management issues become an important part of the project work. Several tasks are involved in financial management:

- Revising the project budget (cf. *Chapter 4: Getting the Project Started*)
- Forwarding the European grant to the partners
- Ensuring an understanding of the financial rules in the partnership
- Establishing an efficient internal financial reporting system
- Monitoring the eligibility of expenditure and its congruence with the budget plan
- Ensuring that the necessary claim documents are provided by all partners
- Reporting expenditure to the funding body

The central document in all financial matters of a Multilateral Project is the official *Project Handbook* which is an annex to the Grant Agreement. The co-ordinator as well as the project partners should be well aware of these regulations. They do not need to be repeated here. Instead, the more general aspects of financial management will be discussed.

Forwarding the EU grant

In whatever way the budget has been allocated to the partners at the application stage (or adjusted after a budget cut in the selection phase), the project co-ordinator should strive for utmost transparency. All partners need to fully understand how the budget was (re-) allocated and how and when it will be paid, as this is an essential part of building up trust in the partnership.

In principle, a project co-ordinator has three different options of how to manage the EU grant in the partnership:

1. The co-ordinator pays the partners their whole share of the grant right at the beginning of the contractual period and receives financial reports at the end.
2. The co-ordinator manages the grants centrally. Partners pre-finance their project activities and have them reimbursed by the co-ordinator when costs have been incurred or at defined intervals.
3. The co-ordinator divides the individual grants into several instalments. The first payment is made immediately after the co-ordinator has received the money from the funder. Subsequent payments are made after the partners have produced (interim) results and submitted internal reports to the co-ordinator according to a set schedule.

Option 1 is only theoretical. Of course such a co-ordinator would save a lot of time, since financial accounting would only have to be dealt with once, at the end of the project. But in reality no co-ordinator in their right mind would take such an incalculable risk! In such an instance responsible management would have been replaced by the naïve belief that partners will fully comply both with their assignments and with the financial rules of the funding programme.

The centralised method of financial management (option 2) is to the advantage of the co-ordinator, as the risk of non-delivery of results or ineligible expenditure by partners is minimised. A complete overview of current expenditure is possible at any point in time and monitoring is easy. On the other hand, many partner institutions, in particular smaller ones, will find it difficult or even impossible to pre-finance all activities. Moreover, they might feel patronised, as they cannot make any financial decisions themselves.

The last option is the one which is most frequently applied in Multilateral Projects. It is regarded to be fair system by most project partners, as it links payments directly to performance and reports. Risks and responsibilities are shared between co-ordinator and partners, which normally contributes positively to the general spirit in the project. A co-ordinator, however, should be aware that this system, which involves checking reports and tracking costs, is quite time consuming. So the number of instalments and internal reports should be limited, and perhaps be harmonised with those between contractor and funder.

Documentation of costs

It is crucial that the project co-ordinator ensures that costs are sufficiently documented in all partner organisations, especially in those with decentralised systems of financial management.

All project costs need to be visible in the book keeping of the partner organisation, i.e. the project needs to have a unique account number and all costs should be clearly and unmistakably allocated to that account. Furthermore all partners are

required to have evidence of all expenditure made such as invoices, bills, tickets, etc. as well as proofs that these costs were actually paid (balance statements, receipts, etc.).
Many partner organisations insist on keeping the originals of these documents in their own finance departments. A safe way for the co-ordinator to handle this need is to ask for certified copies (note: *True copy of the original*, plus date, stamp and signature of financial officer) and to make clear to partners that they will have to keep the cost documentation for at least five years after the termination of the project. During this period the Executive Agency can do a randomly chosen audit and request to see all the financial documents.

While cost documentation is quite straight forward in most cost categories, for instance travel or production costs, staff costs are somewhat more sophisticated to handle. A time documentation system for the project needs to be introduced. It should contain for each project team member:

- A document indicating the daily or hourly staff costs
- The method by which this daily rate is calculated on the basis of a work contract
- A time sheet recording the time spent on project activities
- A copy of the work contract
- Proof that the reported salaries have been actually paid in the reporting period (pay slip)

In Box 5 is an example of a template with which staff costs can be adequately documented. A self-calculating version of this file can be downloaded from the *Survival Kit* website **www.european-project–management.eu**

Box 5: Example of a staff cost documentation file

1. Identification:

Partner institution	
Contact person	
Reporting period	

2. Costs of staff involved in the project:

Name	
Monthly salary	
Cost to employer per day	
Calculation method of daily cost	
Number of days spent on project in reporting period	
Total cost in reporting period	

3. Time sheet

Date (ddmmyy)	Work Package	Activities related to the project	No. of days
Total			

If the staff costs of a project worker are reported to be higher than the ceilings set by the funding programme for the different staff categories, the excessive part is then considered to be ineligible.

According to external experts who assess the final reports of Multilateral Projects common problems related to documentation of costs include:

- Lack of visibility of the project costs in the accountancy system
- Incomplete cost documentation
- Unclear responsibility for financial management
- Excessive deviation from planned costs and therefore ineligibility
- Insufficient correlation between expenditure and the project, missing justification
- Unclear differentiation between staff costs and sub-contracting costs
- Unjustified purchase of hardware, no direct link to project activities
- Incorrect number of travel days (a day without overnight stay = half subsistence rate!)
- Unauthorised travel to non-participating countries
- Application of incorrect currency exchange rates

5. Monitoring and reporting

Definition

Monitoring can be defined as a continuous process of assessing the progress made towards stated objectives, and identifying gaps between the original project plan and the actual achievements. It is understood to be the regular assessment of the three basic project constraints: Scope, cost and time. In other words it is a mechanism to analyse whether the planned range of products are being developed to the agreed quality, on time and within the allocated project budget.

The co-ordinator of a Multilateral Project always needs to have a clear picture of the performance of geographically dispersed team members with regard to the fulfilment of agreed tasks within the predetermined time span and allocated resources. Only with this clear picture in mind does the co-ordinator have a chance to adopt corrective action, if needed, and thus steer the project successfully.

In practice, this controlling task is done with the help of the two of the most frequently used monitoring tools:

- Internal progress (or status) reports
- Review meetings (face-to-face and virtual)

Internal progress reporting

An European project co-ordinator should insist on regular written reports from the partners in all cases. However the frequency of these reports can vary from project to project. The reporting periods may depend on several factors:

- How complex are the various strands of activities carried out by the partners?
- How important are the partners' tasks for the success of the project?
- How independently from the co-ordinator do the partners act?
- How much money is involved?
- Which type of financial management has been chosen: Are funds administrated by the partners themselves or is this done centrally by the co-ordinator?
- Does the co-ordinator know the partners from previous projects or are they co-operating for the first time?

In many cases two or three progress reports during the lifetime of the project have proved to be good practice. They give the co-ordinator sufficient information without overloading partners with reporting tasks.

It is helpful to establish in the partnership the understanding that reporting is not entirely about spreading good news and success stories. Problems, obstacles and failures are much more relevant, as it is this kind of news which requires remedial action. It is from the shortcomings in particular that the whole team can learn the most valuable lessons and improve the overall project performance. The data in the reports from each partner must be easily comparable. This is why the project co-ordinator is wise to introduce a uniform set of reporting tools which everybody is obliged to use. The set of reporting forms may even constitute an annex to the partner agreement to make sure they are noticed.

The administrative work load involved in a European project is big enough, so doubling the paperwork should be avoided. The format and frequency of internal project reporting should therefore correspond with and feed into the co-ordinator's reporting obligations towards the funder. To ensure this congruency of information, many Multilateral Projects pass on to their partners the reporting sheets the co-ordinator has to complete for their reports to the Executive Agency.

Internal reporting should not be overdone. Good reports are like a KISS: **K**eep **I**t **S**hort and **S**imple.

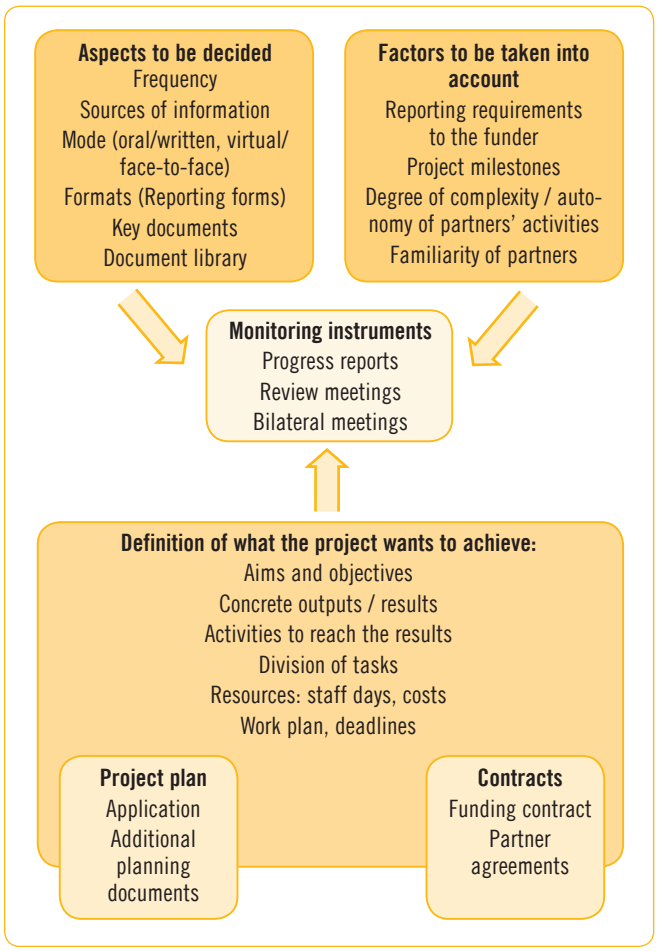
To follow this rule a concise progress reporting form needs to be used in the partnership. An example can be found on www.european-project-management.eu

Review meetings

In principle review meetings can be done virtually. Collaborative tools, telephone, Skype or online conferences can be used to compare and discuss achievements and shortcomings.
It is very effective to time progress reports along with face-to-face meetings of the transnational project team or steering group. The average number of two or three meetings per year coincides with the recommended frequency of reports.

Irrespective of whether review meetings are done virtually or face-to-face, to be successful they should:

Box 6: Monitoring framework



- Focus clearly on the aspects to be monitored
- Be based on organised information, i.e. the afore-mentioned reports
- Be clear about the key documents and sources of information to be used
- Reflect critical points in the project cycle (milestones)

A framework for monitoring

When these main issues have been taken into consideration a clear-cut monitoring framework emerges. It should be communicated to all project partners to ensure the same level of understanding (Box 6).

Reporting to the funder

All the tasks related to project administration in a Multilateral Project culminate in the reports of the contractor to the funder, the Executive Agency. Reports are due in two stages: The Progress Report (for projects with a duration of two or three years) and the Final Report after the end of the funding period. The reports need to be submitted using the official reporting forms published on the *Beneficiary Space* for the funding year concerned on the EACEA website http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/index_en.php

Each report has two parts with different purposes:

The **Confidential Part** serves as a basis for the Executive Agency to assess whether the project has achieved what was promised in the application. Since European taxpayers' money has been spent, Multilateral Projects must account for the proper spending of this money according to the financial regulations set out by the funding programme. Further payments to the contractor or claims to pay money back depend on the assessment of the report. If the information delivered is insufficient, further documentation may be requested.

The second, **Public Part** of the report has a dissemination function. It is a narrative in which experiences made by the project are to be shared with the wider educational community. This part of the report may be published on the EACEA website.

These two purposes should be clearly distinguished from each other and written accordingly. Therefore cutting and pasting between the two parts ought to be avoided. Detailed instructions on how to construct these reports can be found in the *Project Handbook*.

These two functions of the reports require two different reporting strategies for the confidential and the public parts of the report. But these are only two reasons to dedicate sufficient time to reporting. Another EU management publication lists no less than *Ten good reasons for producing a good report*, as shown in Box 7.

Assuming a little less enthusiasm about reporting than may be evident in this document the most profane argument, but probably the most convincing one for many project co-ordinators is the third one: A well-written report is a prerequisite to a project's positive assessment by the funder, who will ultimately decide whether the project will receive the full grant, only a part, or even have to pay some money back.

Some basic rules should be observed when compiling the report to the funder:

1. Make sure you receive the necessary contributions from the partners on time

Partners should be made aware of the importance, requirements, and deadlines for reporting and reminded in due course. The deadline for partners' reports should be at least four weeks before the deadline of the co-ordinator's report to the funder.

Box 7: Ten good reasons for producing a good report
(From: T-Kit 9: Funding and Financial Management (2004), p. 67)

1. Contractual
For most funders, reporting is part of the signed agreement on the grant. Reporting requirements and dates when reports are due are specified.

2. Builds analytical skills
Reports are excellent internal documents that teach everyone in your organisation … to review, synthesise and analyse an enormous amount of information and report back on key points. The ability to be concise is a valuable professional skill. Being analytical is another. Report-writing can help staff develop them. …. Think about the famous George Bernard Shaw's remark: *'I'm so sorry to write a long letter, I did not have the time to write a short one.'*

3. Builds teamwork capacity
Reports encourage staff and volunteers from all sides of an organisation – programme and financial/accounting – to work together. And building internal relationships makes good institutional sense. It builds capability.

4. Secures current financing
Some funders make multi-annual grants, with the 2nd or 3rd payments dependent on submission of a narrative and financial report. For this type of grant agreement, getting a report in to a funder makes good financial sense.

5. Improves future fund-raising
A good report delivered on time shows that you are concerned about good communication with the funder. Remember that if you have been successful once with a funder, you might be successful again, provided that you meet their requirements on reporting.

6. Creates documents for other external or internal purposes
Another advantage of writing a report is that it can be put to other uses. Clearly, one use would be reporting to other funders. But a report is also a model of good, clear, concise language that is then available for reporting to senior management or the board of directors, or even for the annual report.

7. Gives you a competitive edge
In the competitive grants environment, filing a good report on time gives a non-profit making organisation an edge over those who file reports late.

8. Shows professional skill
A well-written, punctual report shows the funder your command of the programme, the finances, the letter of agreement with the funder, and even internal filing systems.

9. Demonstrates institutional belief in transparency and accountability
A good report submitted on time shows that a non-profit making organisation's staff and board of directors place a high value on transparency and accountability.

10. Builds relationships and open communication
Working with funders is primarily about relationships – and relationships depend on open communication, trust, respect and courtesy.

2. Provide complete and accurate information, including all products developed

It is not realistic to hope to get away with only a part of the required input. On the contrary, it is likely that one request from the funder to supply supplementary information might well involve others on the same occasion.

3. Be structured, clear, and understandable

As one evaluator of final reports put it: '*We are only human beings.*' And most human beings will appreciate it if information is provided in a reader-friendly way. A well written report is likely to evoke a positive attitude towards the project being assessed. This probable effect is worth making an effort to achieve.

4. Be honest

It is not recommended to produce fake success stories. They are easy to detect. If there have been problems it is better to demonstrate that the project has overcome the challenges and learned from them rather to try and hide them. After all, a pilot project is a laboratory where not everything is expected to work out according to plan.

5. Do not postpone serious problems to the final report

If it is evident that some of the requirements of the Grant Agreement cannot be met by the project it is advisable to be pro-active and communicate with the funder at an early stage. Only then a solution might be found, e.g. an amendment to the contract.

6. Make explicit reference to the project proposal and previous assessments

The project proposal is the basis of the funding contract and, at the end of the day the project will be assessed on the background of what was promised there. The report should explicitly take up the main elements of the proposal and explain and justify deviations. If the evaluation experts of the funder have made recommendations at proposal or progress report assessment stages, demonstrate that the project has taken them into consideration.

7. Do not copy and paste from the proposal

A report is meant to describe what has been done, not what has been promised. Evaluators normally react negatively towards information copied from the proposal, as this reveals a careless attitude toward the reporting requirements. Correspondingly, project websites should be adapted in a way so that they reflect the fact that the project is finished.

8. Demonstrate the European dimension

The report should give evidence that all the partners have contributed to the project and so added value was created compared to a national approach at the topic in question. This can only be done if the project activities were well documented and this documentation was systematically collected by the co-ordinator.

9. Dedicate enough time to the report

Although mostly taking place after the funding period reporting is an essential part of the project. A good report normally takes several weeks to complete.

Ideally reporting is part of a co-ordinator's mindset. The reporting requirements should be kept in mind from the beginning of a Multilateral Project and determine both the implementation and the documentation of the project.

Chapter 6: Effective Collaboration

Bringing together a group of people does not necessarily mean that they will work effectively as a team or that their project will be successful. In addition to planning the project technicalities, focusing on the people involved is crucial, in fact it is one of the core issues in Multilateral Projects. In the end it is the people who make the project happen. That is why effective collaboration is included here as a separate chapter. Effective collaboration helps to ensure a successful project.

This chapter gives an overview of effective collaboration and offers perspectives on how to create it. Each part of the chapter focuses on giving practical examples and tools to facilitate effective collaboration. The topics of leadership and agile project management discussed earlier in this publication might also be a helpful complement to this chapter.

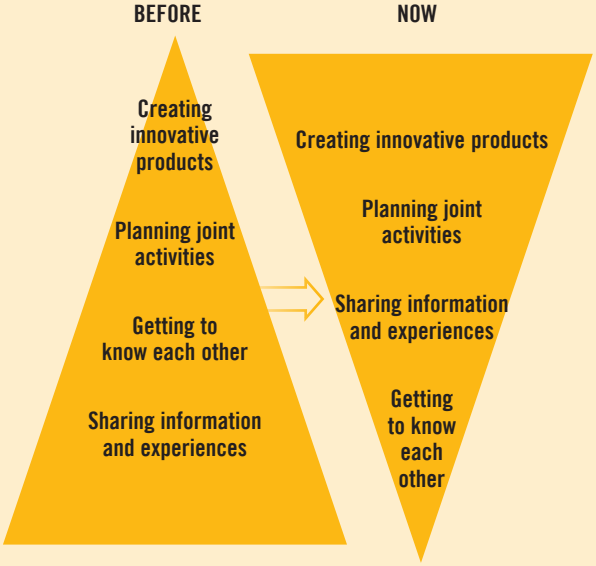
1. The changing nature of European co-operation

In the Lifelong Learning Programme the focus of the projects is on the joint collaborative effort of the project partners to develop and spread an education concept, service or tangible product. This focus has become stronger since the early days of European co-operation in education. A long-standing project co-ordinator summarises this as follows:

'When we started to get involved in EU projects ten years ago things were quite different. Project meetings often took several days or even a whole week, with lots of time spent on presenting and discussing the differences in the partners' education systems, with lots of visits to institutions and cultural tours. Sometimes it was like cultural tourism, very interesting and enriching. Today most meetings are short, with little or no time for cultural activities and excursions. It is all about planning and developing products like handbooks or CDs.'

Box 1 illustrates this change of focus from exploration and exchange of information to planning and joint production.

Box 1: Change of collaborative activities in EU projects over the years



There are several reasons for this growing focus on project products:

- The funding programmes' emphasis on tangible results of high quality, as a direct consequence of the need to justify why European taxpayers' money is spent on transnational co-operation in education
- The diversification of the funding mechanisms: large scale Multilateral Projects (with their focus on innovative products) versus small-scale partnerships (which focus on sharing experience and learning from each other for the sake of the partner institutions and their staff)
- The increasing complexity of life in general, and, as a consequence, educational challenges which can only be properly addressed by multi-player teams from different countries
- The emergence of easy to use, and interactive internet technologies (Web 2.0), which made it possible to work intensively together on joint tasks over large distances

In the end, technologies can only support the process of collaboration. It is the people in the project who need to carry them

out. To motivate the team members throughout the project, to form them into a high performing team, to facilitate effective communication and to deal constructively with emerging conflicts: These are some of the greatest challenges the project co-ordinator of a Multilateral Project will face.

2. From a diverse group of people to an effective project team

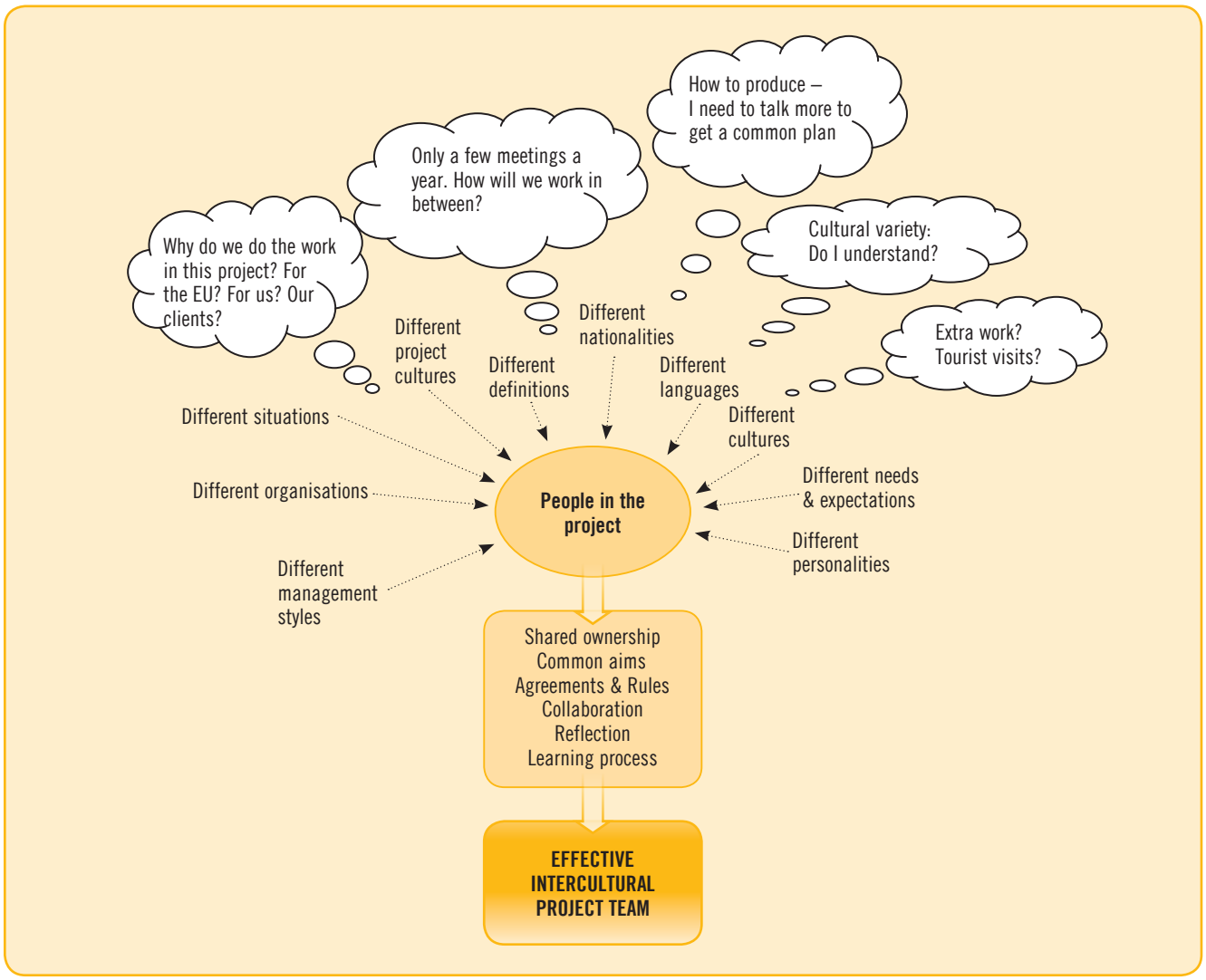
Heterogeneity and diversity as starting point

In most cases the people participating in a Multilateral Project have not worked together before in this specific combination. They might not even have chosen to be in the project, but were perhaps appointed by their institutions. It is therefore very likely that a Multilateral Project starts with a rather heterogeneous situation where people involved in the project have many questions in their minds, as Box 2 illustrates.

There are many obstacles to achieving effective collaboration. Multilateral Projects show great diversity at different levels: different people who come from different cultures using different languages working in different institutional contexts and bringing along different expertise and experience.

An experienced project evaluator illustrated the different levels of diversity to be found in a transnational project:

Box 2: The starting point of European project groups



'An organisation in one country may be working with others in different countries – it is clear that there will need to be some understanding already of different cultural approaches – and this is after accepting the potential for language difficulties. Polite conversation is one thing, but, for example, to reach a common interpretation of the depreciation rules or intellectual property rights, can be much more demanding. Add to this that one partner is a university and another a school, a third may be an NGO, a fourth is an SME and a fifth is a network organisation – there is now another level of co-operation to be achieved.
Next can be added the work plan of the project itself – different partners will be more active than others at different times in the project lifetime – does this work plan reflect the realities of the academic year for the university and the school? Does it allow for the SME's busiest time of the year in terms of profits? Does it acknowledge the own contribution *of the paid workers in four of the partner institutions whilst allowing for the fact that a significant numbers of workers at the NGO are voluntary and therefore their time cannot be counted?*
Add to this the fact that some partners may be experienced in EU projects whilst others are not and may have strict internal rules on managing project funding that do not sit easily with the Lifelong Learning Programme rules.'
(Gareth Long, External evaluator of *Survival Kit)*

One of the most relevant aspects of this diversity in Multilateral Projects, the intercultural aspect, is discussed in *Chapter 7: Intercultural Elements in European Project Management.*

Characteristics of effective teams

In the light of the diversity likely to be encountered it is clear that a project co-ordinator needs to make a deliberate effort to develop the random group of people and institutions at the start of the project into an effectively collaborating team.

Characteristics of effective teams are listed in Box 3.

Effective collaboration is, above all, about dialogue and interaction in a context where team members are valued and respected.

Development of the team

It takes time for people to get to know each other and become comfortable working together. Teams in Multilateral Projects are no exception to this rule. Fortunately the process can be accelerated by understanding the development process that a team normally has to go through.

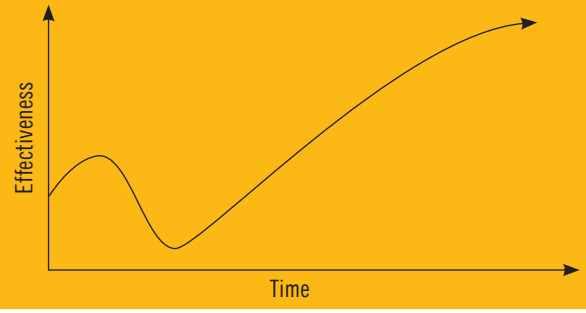
Box 3: Characteristics of effective teams

Effective teams…

- Have clear and common / shared goals
- Share responsibility for those goals among team members
- Have allocated appropriate responsibilities, roles and tasks to each member
- Produce a collective output which achieves the set goals
- Measure their progress towards the goals
- Are fairly small
- Have the necessary blend of skills and roles (technical, problem solving and interpersonal)
- Have the resources needed to do the job
- Get support from their superiors
- Have agreed on basic rules for working together
- Have developed and agreed on practices and processes to get things done
- Apply positive communication in their team work, e.g. they support each other by listening and respond in a constructively and helpful manner
- Balance inquiry and advocacy
- Cultivate trust and dialogue
- Recognise individual and team success
- Handle conflicts constructively and openly
- Spend enough time to get to know the members in the team
- Appreciate cultural diversity
- Reflect frequently on their performance taking into account the above-mentioned actors

The traditional way (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993) of describing the development of a team is the 'dead valley' before the growth of real effectiveness:

Box 4: Team development: the dead valley



Box 5: Phases of team development

Phase 1: Forming: When a team is first formed members take tentative steps to find out more about each other. They may treat each other politely, some people may say a lot and seem enthusiastic, and others may say almost nothing. It is a transitional phase from individual to team member status.

Phase 2: Storming: Members of the team start testing out each other more vigorously, finding out strengths and weaknesses. They begin to realise that the task is different and more difficult than they imagined. Team members dare to express their own different points of views. Some members can become *testy or prickly*, blaming others in the team for minor errors. Some may assert their past experiences, resisting any need for collaboration with other team members. Conflicts start to appear.

Phase 3: Norming: The team realises that they can complete the task and achieve their goals. Team members find that they can accept the other team members, there are fewer conflicts and the basic rules are seen as important and realistic. Team cohesion develops and people feel that they belong to the team. Real co-operation starts.

Phase 4: Performing: The energy of the team is now targeted to working. The team has really settled down to the task. In the end, the team knows how to exploit strengths and compensate for weaknesses. Team members are supportive of each other and they use different roles for different situations. Diversity becomes their strength.

Phase 5: Mourning: When a project or task has been completed it is time to celebrate what the team has achieved and prepare to move on to new challenges. The team may experience feelings of sadness at breaking up, but it is time to tie up loose ends and prepare to join new teams.

When a project team starts working people are very interested and feel enthusiastic because of new challenging tasks and the new group of colleagues to work with. But the enthusiastic start is often followed by a phase in which the team feels confused and acts in an unfocused, scattered manner because there is no real collaboration or concentration of effort. The only solution is to start reflecting openly about the tasks, ways of working and tensions within the team. Later, after succeeding and spending enough time on working and reflecting, the team can grow to be effective so finding real common aims and shared

Box 6: Undesirable stages of team development in a Multilateral Project

Phase 1: ***Diplomacy***
We represent our country. Nice and exciting to get to know you. Red carpet and great visits. We have polite discussions and surface understanding but not real understanding… It is a new team and you want to be polite. You are unsure about the different cultures and you feel like a diplomat. You say *yes* and don't react if you disagree. You feel the misunderstanding but you don't dare to ask. You don't want to delay the others and look a little stupid.
'What nice dinners and such nice people, in the end we are the same – do we need a common map?'

Phase 2: ***Endless talks***
What are we really looking for? What do we mean by these words? Sometimes the conflict is hard to solve. There is no courage to open up the conflict again and again. You have to return to the starting point even though you have now delivered the first results. They were not what you expected from each other. Sometimes there are many hidden objectives. The co-ordinator is expecting one thing, the funder (EU) is expecting something else which is not necessary the same for each partner. Additionally each person, although a team member, has their own personal goals. Quite often we do not ask (or say) what are our personal drivers to work in that particular project.
'What did you mean by your definition? A map is not same as territory.'

Phase 3: ***Cheap consensus***
Expectations are too high. When we wrote the proposal we promised many things, always too much. We have so few resources. We want to keep our word and try to please financial authorities and sometimes our real clients too. Then, what happens in this phase is that we lower the aims. We do only

what we can. We have *wasted* already one third of the time and resources. Everyone wants to have a role and a clear task. It is time to produce some results.
'Now I know what to do – this is my plan and it fits to our map.'

Phase 4: *Rushing towards delivery*
Finally there is a big need to get the project done in a short time – with poor or rich results, it does not matter. It helps if conflicts are either solved or kept under the table. Sometimes the results are false or artificial. There are so many publications and CDs that nobody is interested in. Often these are easy outcomes and then we don't have to face any conflict. There might be no clear agreement on what are really results and how we value different kind of results. The project co-ordinator is worried about concrete deliveries while the others are probably satisfied with interesting dialogues, contacts, networking and the impact of the work on their personal and organisational life as a project result.
'Which is more important: the final reward or the path we walked together?'

responsibility. This leads to high quality performance and support for each other to grow both individually and together.

Another, similar way of describing team development is by a sequence of five stages (Tuckmann, 1965, Box 5).

For a Multilateral Project team to achieve a high level of performance means a really big step forward. Because of the diversity of most teams referred to earlier it is easy to be just polite and avoid deeper, open conversations and some critical evaluation of the work done. But this is a trap and rarely leads to effective team performance. In such projects the five phases might look like the following rather satirical version of the five team developmental phases. It may serve as a warning!

To avoid this trap requires a great deal of encouragement, trust and discretion. Team development can be described in many ways and is complex and dynamic as these two models presented here help us to understand. However both of these models can be very useful when reflecting upon team processes and illustrate that team development requires a degree of learning throughout the project.

3. Team building factors

Team building is a key issue for achieving the project objectives. The success of the team building process depends on how well the ground is prepared for teamwork to take place. This means using the team's diversity as a positive resource for rich and innovative project work, understanding the meaning of trust and exploring the basic steps of team development. Moreover, motivation and the sense of shared ownership should also be considered in Multilateral Projects.

Appreciation of diversity in a team

For effective collaboration diversity is both an opportunity and a challenge. Diversity has been positively linked to creativity, effectiveness, productivity and problem solving. Diversity can enhance team effectiveness – especially diversity in thinking which has the capacity to incubate innovation and thus to contribute to the development of quality results.

Diversity increases complexity and ambiguity. If the team is not aware of this factor and does not use diversity as a strength, it can also lead to communication problems and cause mistrust and a lack of cohesion in the team. Partners need to find an adequate place in a Multilateral Project, where they can bring in their specific expertise and interest at a personal and at an institutional level.

Box 7: Different behavioural styles

INNOVATOR Focuses on new ideas and developing new ways of doing things	**PRAGMATIST** Focuses on practice and utilises previous experiences
THEORIST Focuses on models and sees the big picture	**REFLECTOR** Focuses on understanding and considers what's going on

This exercise is based on Kolb's model of experiential learning that has been used to describe the differences in the way people learn and behave.

The aim is to understand what kind of strengths there are in the team and how these strengths can be best utilised during the project.

Cards with the four types are placed on the floor and briefly described. Then each person walks to the card with the role they feel most comfortable with. They explain their choice.

Finally, the team discusses how these preferences can be best used in the project.

If their expertise is utilised and appreciated, people are motivated to participate and contribute to the project. To explore in more depth team members' particular areas of expertise and strengths an exercise based on Kolb's behavioural styles can be helpful (Box 7).

Other personality models, for example the Enneagram, Carl Jung's four functional types or Myers Briggs personality theory may also be adapted for similar purposes. Such exercises can be door-openers for fruitful project related discussions.

Motivation and benefits

The success of team work depends on the motivation of the people involved, and their motivation depends on the benefits each partner expects for themselves, their institution, and their target groups. We only do something readily when we see a direct advantage for us in this process. As simple as this insight may sound it has a huge potential for building the team in a Multilateral Project. From the start a project co-ordinator should try to find out what are the driving forces of the partners. This can be quite easily done by encouraging team discussion around the questions like:

- What is interesting in this project on a professional level?
- What is interesting in this project on a personal level?
- What kind of benefits does the project provide for each team member?
- What kind of benefits does the project provide for the organisations involved?

Box 8: Partners' advantages to be gained from the project and the partnership

Institutional advantage(s)		
Personal advantage(s)		
	Project advantage(s) (i.e. advantage(s) to be created by project activities)	**Partnership advantage(s)** (i.e. advantage(s) by spin-offs, side-effects of partnership)

To develop these questions the warm-up exercise for a kick-off meeting introduced in *Chapter 4: Getting the Project Started* may be useful.

A more systematic approach at working with each partners' expectations can start even before the kick-off meeting. The co-ordinator gets in touch with each partner to find out:

What advantages does the project create for you?
How can we support you in realising these advantages?
How can we help you to be successful in our project?
Which opportunities may the partnership create for you (beyond the project)?

This dialogue can be done in a personal conversation or be supported by the grid in Box 8.

If the identified (potential) advantages of the partners are regularly revisited the co-ordinator and the other partners can make efforts to support each other in realising them. This process can be a strong driving force for a team.

Trust

In Multilateral Projects as in teams in general, cultivating trust is a key issue. Without trust, it is hard, if not impossible to cooperate with other people. In Multilateral Projects the issue of building trust becomes a challenge because of:

- The likely high degree of diversity in any partnership
- The dispersed nature of project work
- The relatively loose interconnectedness of the partners scattered all over Europe
- The time limitation of the collaboration in a two or three year project

Trust may only be on the surface or at a much deeper level.
It is natural that in the beginning of every project, trust is at a relatively low level. Team members behave rationally towards each other trying to create superficial harmony and members are afraid or find it difficult to give critical feedback. Trust is then based on exchange: '*If you do this, I will do that.*' Surface level trust can be also described as diplomacy.

However, if the team does not want to end up with a development as described in Box 6, but wants to really benefit from the team's diversity it is important to deepen the trust. When team members have gained a deeper level of trust, they are not only rationally but also emotionally involved with each

other. They show empathy, respect and appreciation towards each other and can handle difficult issues constructively. That means that there is space even for critical comments and team members feel comfortable in receiving and giving more critical feedback. Sometimes dealing with a difficult issue can actually raise the trust level. Team members also believe that diversity brings something good to the group. In other words, they do not immediately expect something in return but trust that every one is doing their best: '*I don't get frustrated that he's not so accurate on details as I am, on the contrary he brings a lot to this project by looking all the time at the bigger picture.*'

How to move from trust on the surface only to a deeper level of trust in Multilateral Projects? First of all, getting to know each other personally creates more trust. In the first meeting it is important to really find time for the other team members and to have one to one conversations with each other. Addressing some these questions may help to create a more open and personal atmosphere in which trust can evolve:

- How different or similar are we? What are the important things to me/us? What are my/our strengths/weaknesses?
- How do we give and receive constructive feedback?
- How do we explain and discuss our feelings? How do we bring up difficult discussions? How do we solve conflicts?
- What does the concept of trust mean in our culture and in this project? How deep is the level of trust currently in our project? At what level are we? How can we strengthen it?

But personal conversations alone may not suffice if the attitude shown there is not followed by action. Transparency about project processes, decision-making, budget etc, full access to all relevant information, clear and fair contractual arrangements, and reliability with regard to keeping promises and deadlines, as well as financial accuracy are crucial for the development of trust in a team. Adequate measures of these types are described in *Chapter 5: Project Administration*.

A final remark about developing trust in a transnational project team: Trust needs a long-term perspective. The quality of team spirit will grow if partners can envisage forms of co-operation beyond the end of the funding period of the Multilateral Project. If staff exchanges, creation of follow-up projects, joint events etc are planned for the time after the project, partners will invest much more in developing a trusting relationship than they will normally do if they know that the period of co-operation will soon be over.

Shared ownership of the project

Multilateral Projects are funded through the Lifelong Learning Programme. Does the fact that public money is invested mean that the funder, the European Commission or its Executive Agency owns the project? Certainly the funder wants to reach specific educational goals by funding the project, and the project team should be well aware of their aims. On the other hand the team members invest their human capacity and the institutions behind them invest their resources in the project.

Ownership should be an important topic discussed during the first meeting. When we talk about teams and motivation for teamwork participants should be aware that in the first place they act as individuals and not only as representatives of their institutions or countries. Therefore the owners of the project are first of all the individuals who have been involved in creating and implementing the project. After a good job the team members should be able to say: '*We did it! It's our work and I was a part of it.*'

The worst mistake the co-ordinator can make is to create the impression that the project is owned by the coordinating institution. This is particularly likely to occur if the project application has been developed by the co-ordinator alone, rather than in a shared process. For a variety of reasons many Multilateral Projects are initiated in this way. If this was the case, it is important to dedicate time to establish shared ownership at the beginning of the project. Here are some helpful questions to get started:

- Who will own the products?
- For whom is the project being done?
- How will the products be used?
- How will the project be developed in the future?

But shared ownership goes beyond participation in creating the products of a Multilateral Project. At a deeper level it is the complete identification of partners with the project as a whole. Partners will develop sense of shared ownership of a project if they:

- Are fully informed what is going on (information and transparency)
- Can contribute to all the important project aspects (involvement)
- Have a say (participative decision-making)
- Are encouraged and supported to create benefits for themselves and their institution (acceptance of individual motives)

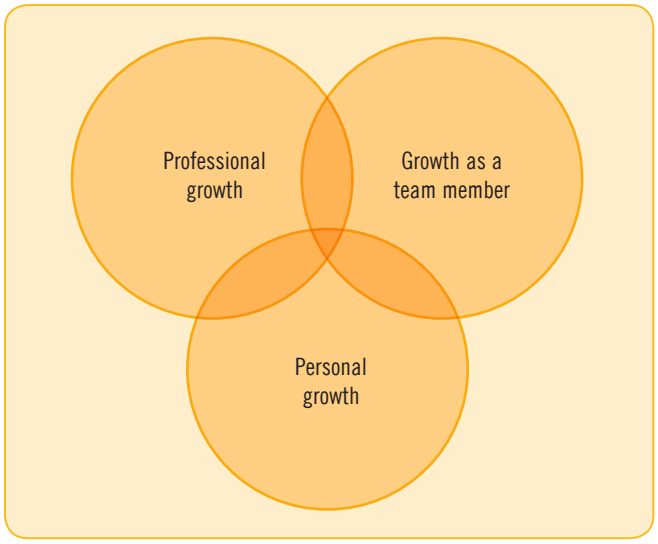
- Get a chance to feel themselves as part of a successful team (experience of team achievement)
- Are allowed to go public with the project's achievements (increase of image and reputation)

There are many ways to put these principles into practice in a Multilateral Project, and a good co-ordinator should constantly watch out for such opportunities.

Team development as learning

Project teams build and develop when their members learn together. People in the project can learn and therefore grow on three levels: professionally, personally and as a team member. Learning should happen on all of these three levels. Learning only professionally does not create benefits for the people involved if there is no learning at the other levels.

Box 9: Dimensions of growth



When we work together with other people we are learning and teaching new things, we are both giving and receiving. Learning on a professional level might mean new insights into the substance of the project, learning about European project management and the cultural and professional backgrounds of the others. However learning teamwork is about much more than just professional development.

Learning together also means growth as a co-worker through new or improved skills such as interacting, finding the right role, giving and receiving constructive feedback, creating a supportive environment etc. Learning might include new discoveries: '*How do I interact in this team'* and '*How do I help my team members to succeed*?' These social skills are particularly enhanced in Multilateral Projects.

Since Multilateral Projects tend to be rather intense processes members of a good team get to know each other well and can also act as a mirror to each other enabling some reflection on personal growth. A team member can learn about themselves: '*What are my strengths and areas for development*', '*How do I differ from the others'* and '*What are my assumptions that make me react the way I do*?'

All three types of growth rely very much on feedback from the other team members. Also reflective working time must be provided. These issues are discussed later on in the communication part of this chapter.

Team building through working and through social events

Probably the most effective team building method is the real work of the project. Meetings should not just be used for planning new tasks to be carried out at home and for evaluating work already completed. Achieving results together or finding a common solution to a problem enables the team to reward itself through joint work. During the meetings participants can also progress their shared tasks and so can support each other. Working methods should always vary from time to time according to the task, but subdividing the big team into smaller mixed groups is often very efficient.

During the meetings there is usually plenty of time to get to know each other, not only during work sessions, but also through social events. Social events may be visits, meals, nights out, cultural events, surprises, speeches during dinner, special guests, organised team exercises, etc. Team members may offer a variety of different talents such as singing, acting, telling jokes, story-telling and dancing. Sharing these talents can be small but significant bricks in building the team.

Multilateral Projects, which last for two or three years, should have clearly defined milestones. They have already been discussed from a project management point of view in *Chapter 3: Planning a Multilateral Project*. But they are also important with regard to team building.

Certain achievements, such as completing the first draft of a handbook, need to be rewarded. The reward may be a verbal

acknowledgement or a cup of coffee or a big celebration. The type of reward does not really matter, the important thing is that the team is together and, with justification, shares a sense of satisfaction with the results. Helpful questions are: *What are the milestones in the project? How does the team celebrate them? How does the team celebrate milestones virtually?*

Ground rules and norms of the team

Norms are inevitable in team processes. They set the limits for what is appropriate and what is inappropriate behaviour. There are conscious norms which are agreed rules. Creating ground rules for teamwork and collaboration is necessary since it helps to put team members on the same map. When creating ground rules one must be sensitive and take intercultural differences and personal attitudes into account. Ground rules must be appreciative to the team itself in order to support team building and teamwork.

Unconscious norms may also emerge. For example coming late to the meeting might slowly become a norm in the team. If these unconscious norms disturb the efficiency of the teamwork it needs an intervention by the co-ordinator or by another team member. The intervention should lead the team to some open reflective work and result in a new common rule and a cleared atmosphere.

In Multilateral Projects there can be two types of ground rules: technical rules and values. Technical rules refer to how the meetings and work processes are to be carried out. Values refer to the same issues but more from an ethical point of view. Values are usually more general than technical rules which are often quite specific.

Critical areas of Multilateral Projects where defining ground rules can be helpful (with some examples):

- Team meetings: agenda development, appreciating contributions, ensuring active participation, use of mobile phones, punctuality, use of the working language
- Virtual communication: Acknowledgement of e-mails, participation in virtual meetings, response times
- Decision making and conflicts: Involvement of partners, co-ordinator decisions, a strategy to avoid escalation of conflicts
- Quality of partner contributions: Respect of deadlines, self-management

Box 11: Example of ground rules

- *Respect your team members*
- *Be on time, and let the others know if you're late*
- *Send the agenda one week before the meeting*
- *Handle conflicts in a constructive manner*
- *Ask when you don't understand*
- *Be helpful and supportive to your team*
- *Ask for help, don't struggle alone*
- *Follow the deadlines*
- *Don't be too strict, listen and try to understand*
- *Give everyone a chance to try out different roles and responsibilities in meetings*

It is important that ground rules are developed and agreed on by the whole project team. The process of defining them can start with a brainstorming session. Everyone writes ideas on

Box 10: Defining the milestones and how to celebrate when they are achieved

Milestones:	Celebration:

a paper by themselves or in pairs. All the suggested rules are put on board so that everyone can see them. The next step is to prioritise: *What is the most important one? Which comes second? (and so on …)*

It is advisable not to fix too many rules, as this makes it easier to refer to them frequently and make sure that they are respected. Form time to time, a review of the rules might be useful. The ground rules should be visible and present to the team, e.g. as a poster at meetings or stored at prominent place in the document library of the project's virtual workspace. And it should go without saying that the project co-ordinator ought to act as a role model for these ground rules!

4. Good project meetings

Meetings are an extremely important element of Multilateral Project work. They provide the best opportunity to get to know everybody in the project. During meetings it is possible to clarify misunderstandings, to ask questions and discuss issues until consensus is reached. In this section the focus is mainly on face-to-face meetings. Virtual meetings are discussed in *Chapter 8: ICT Tools for European Project Work.*

Multilateral project partners may meet each other only a couple of times during the project. Therefore meetings should be productive and efficient, build relationships and generate energy.

Agenda

The time in a transnational project meeting is precious so each meeting should have a well-prepared agenda including:

- Time and location, and how to get there
- Explicit aims and objectives of the meeting, which allow an assessment (during and after the meeting) of whether have been achieved
- Responsibility for each session (who facilitates and who presents?)
- Supporting documents for each of the working sessions

All the partners should be involved in defining the agenda. It is good practice to circulate a draft agenda well in advance to allow partners to contribute and prepare for the meeting.

Having stated at the beginning of this chapter that the times when project meetings gave excessive opportunities for social and cultural activities are long over (if they ever existed) it needs to be stressed that an accompanying social programme is very important from a team building point of view. It is through joint leisure time that project partners can get to know each other and do effective networking. Shared meals are important in this regard, but should not be the only type of socialising. Doing something together, it may be sightseeing, visiting a concert or going on a walk can break the ice and facilitate informal networking which can contribute to the project's success or create unplanned spin-offs.

A balance between working time and social activities must be found, taking into account that transnational project meetings are meant for working in the first place and that many people will be tired after long and intensive work sessions conducted in a foreign language. It should also be made clear that participating in the social programme is optional and preferring to relax alone after a long day is totally acceptable.

Dynamic meetings

Meetings can be very dynamic and this concept introduces new means of organisation. Meeting roles may be changed in every meeting or even during the meeting. Implementing a meeting requires several tasks which are better shared between several people:

- Facilitator/chairperson (takes care of the flow of the meeting)
- Expert presenter (presents certain content aspects of the project)
- Minute taker (documents decisions and writes minutes)
- Visualizer (draws accompanying flip charts to support verbal discussions)
- Evaluator (takes care of the evaluation process of the meeting)
- Host (takes care of practical arrangements like rooms, equipment, catering, social programme etc)
- Language inspector (an optional role, makes sure that there is no inequality because of language barriers)

A good rule of thumb is to involve as many partners as possible in the preparation of the meeting and in the meeting itself. It might be helpful to make partners prepare and host different workshops and working sessions. This way the team members can become responsible of the project and moreover feel important and appreciated.

Dynamic meetings also mean that there are different rhythms and that the pace of the meeting changes frequently. So time is divided between speaking and listening, reflection and action, whole group discussions and small group work. It is important to remember to have short breaks between the periods of active

working. Face-to-face meetings usually mean long days, so it is good to insist on breaks at least every hour.

Everyone's participation and contribution is important. Getting people involved means also facilitating communication. Group discussions can be effective only if everyone participates. However, due to cultural or personal differences in some meetings it may be the case that only a few individuals speak and think aloud while others sit silently. That is why sometimes it is fruitful to put people in smaller teams or pairs to work on specific tasks and this way ensure everyone's participation.

Visualisation

Visualisation is an important element in multicultural project settings. Partners have different backgrounds and speak differ- and interpretations misunderstandings are very common in project meetings. To use visualisation techniques can support the process of shared understanding and reduce imbalances with regard to competence in the working language. Making issues visual can mean to simply write down important points on a flip chart or to create more elaborate graphs, pictures, drawings or mind maps, depending on the visualisation competence of the partners involved.

Photographic records of meetings have also proved very useful. This means to take photos of visuals created during the meeting (usually on flip chart paper) and include them in the minutes or collect them in a separate document. The photos can help to recall afterwards the discussion process during the meeting. Visualisation can also help to make the whole project process visible, which furthermore can encourages shared thinking.

Box 12: To-do list

Date:			
Meeting location:			
Participants:			
Action to be taken (WHAT)	**Responsible / contributors (WHO)**	**Deadline (WHEN)**	✓

Minutes

Each transnational partner meeting should be documented by minutes, written by a minute taker designated before the meeting. Draft minutes should be circulated shortly after the meeting, with a time span explicitly allocated (e.g. one week) for comments and modifications by all partners and after which they become officially agreed.

What needs to be reported and how? The format and content of meeting minutes varies from project to project. It is easier to find the important information in minutes if they are always done in the same format and contain clearly distinguishable standard elements.

- Location and time
- Participants (name/institution)
- Minute taker
- Aims of the meeting
- Issues discussed
- Decisions made
- To-do list
- Next meeting

It is particularly important to see at first glance the decisions made and the action to be taken, including responsibility and timing. Otherwise there is a great danger that not all partners have really taken notice of the really important issues which concern them directly. What has not been written down in such to-do lists will normally not be done.

The to-do list and a template for minutes of project meetings can be downloaded at www.european-project-management.eu

Box 13: Conflict situations in Multilateral Projects

Type of Conflict	Example
General misunderstanding	Partner does not dare (or does not care enough) to show disagreement or ask further questions but instead tries to be polite and silent in order to preserve harmony and easy decisions.
Linguistic misunderstanding	Partner does not correctly understand a key term in the project's working language or assigns a different meaning to it.
Cultural misunderstanding	Partner interprets the behaviour of another team member based on the background of his/her own national / cultural / organisation value.
Non-compliance with deadlines	Partner does not respect agreed deadlines or replies unacceptably late to queries.
Poor performance level	Partner makes contributions to the content of products at an unacceptable level of quality.
Non-performance, violation of contractual obligation	Partner does not deliver crucial parts of his contractually agreed contribution.
Violation of contractual regulations	Partner does not respect financial rules or does not comply with reporting obligations.

5. Dealing with conflicts

Types and sources of conflicts in Multilateral Projects

Bringing different experiences and ways of thinking together creates uncertainty and the risk of conflicts. An important part of the human dimension of European project management is therefore to deal constructively with conflicts when they arise in the team and use the energy of conflicts to enrich and develop collaboration.

Conflicts in Multilateral Project teams can arise from many different sources. Typical conflicts develop from a disrespect for set deadlines, different views about the quality of contributions, non-participation in agreed face-to-face or virtual meetings, or long response times to messages.

The reasons behind conflicts are as diverse as the conflicts themselves. Some conflicts may have a cultural background (*Chapter 7: Intercultural Elements in European Project Management*), others have to do with the personalities involved, with different priorities or are simply the result of misunderstandings.

An example of a typical conflict situation in a Multilateral Project, showing various levels, is described in Box 14.

Box 14: A typical conflict in a Multilateral Project

The project team of SustEdu is jointly developing modular training materials for a course on education for sustainability which will soon be piloted with the target group.
All the partners are very busy to make sure that the draft materials will be ready on time. Except partner Francesco from a small Southern Italian NGO, who repeatedly ignores the agreed deadlines and hasn't delivered any acceptable materials yet, apart from a few rather sketchy pages which roughly describe handouts which have not yet been produced. The project co-ordinator and the other partners are furious about Francesco's non-delivery.

Possible explanations:

- Francesco has severe family problems and is not up to his best professional performance at the moment (personal level)
- As a Southern Italian he interprets deadlines as mere suggestions. To deliver four weeks later is totally acceptable for him (cultural level, but may be a stereotype!)
- The NGO is chronically underfinanced and is currently struggling for survival. Francesco's energies are directed towards two large-scale national projects, which have a much higher budget than the smaller Multilateral Project (level of priorities)
- Francesco is an experienced trainer and relies in his pedagogical practice on interaction with the learners. Well elaborated and detailed training materials are not a big issue for him (level of quality)
- When the partners talked about *training resources* he thought they would produce a description of pedagogic interventions, not tangible handouts (level of misunderstanding)
- At the last partner meeting there were stormy discussions about the performance of the partnership. Francesco feels offended that the Dutch co-ordinator repeatedly criticised him in from of he whole team (level of atmosphere)

This list of possible reasons for Francesco's behaviour illustrates that there are no easy, ready-made solutions to conflicts in a Multilateral Project. Different kinds of conflicts require different kinds of interventions. In any case it is helpful if a project co-ordinator makes an effort to see the conflict from more than one perspective and tries to find the reason behind it instead of acting rashly on the basis of a first assumption (*Francesco simply doesn't care!*).

Even better would be to make provisions from the start which may avoid some the sources of conflict described in the example:

- If the project co-ordinator and the partners make an effort to get to know each other not only as professionals, but also as people, personal circumstances of a team member which make a certain contribution impossible at certain time can be detected early. Then there is the chance to re-allocate or re-schedule tasks accordingly
- A project co-ordinator should acquire basic knowledge about intercultural differences and be prepared to deal with them in a sensitive manner
- If time is spent to find out more about the priorities and interests of the partner institutions they can be used for motivation. In our example Francesco might be persuaded to make an effort to produce a high quality publication which could add to the NGO's image and thus be a door-opener to national funders
- When a multi-actor product is to be developed the team should define and agree on clear quality criteria in advance. This makes it much easier to talk in an objective way about a partner's level of performance
- As important is a detailed definition and format of the product to be developed. This includes a common working terminology which must be defined in the team. Due to different linguistic, national, cultural, organisational or theoretical contexts basic educational terms like *learning resource*, *curriculum* or *adult education centre* can have quite different meanings
- A discussion and agreement on project ground rules as described above helps to finalise a shared attitude towards agreements and deadlines

Principles of handling conflict

It is well known that everybody perceives the world with their own senses and in ways that are different from other people and so creates an individual map in their mind. This is the cause of many misunderstandings:

It is not relevant
what someone says,
but how it is meant,
and how it will be understood!

Said is not heard!
Heard is not understood!
Understood is not accepted!
Accepted is not done!
Done is not natural!

On the basis of this general insight there are strategies to approach conflicts with a positive attitude and to avoid their destructive potential. One precondition for constructive conflict management is to understand that **communication takes place at three levels at the same time:**

Box 15: Levels of communication

Rational level	*Emotional level*	*Structural level*
Rational aspects: contents, themes, topics Direct communication tools: words, numbers and graphics	Emotional aspects: relationship between the people who are communicating Indirect communication tools: forms of body language like facial expressions, gestures, posture, movements and intonation	The framework around the communication such as the situation, time available, location, social situation, personal feelings, work pressure and the norms, standards and values of that workplace Room, seating arrangements, competence, clothes etc

As a rule, it is always helpful to tackle conflicts on a rational level and to continue to express appreciation of the person involved in a conflict (emotional level). A project co-ordinator should strive to reach a common understanding of the problem and to create a win-win situation at the emotional level. If a team member feels to be the loser in a conflict this might result in the loss of his/her motivation to work in the team.

Another important principle is to adopt a positive view of the nature of conflict. To avoid conflicts is not possible and not useful. Conflicts are natural and not failures. They have important functions:

- They show differences and can help to create a new level of common understanding
- They make complexity and variety possible but also help to establish common interests
- They make change possible but also help to preserve what already exists

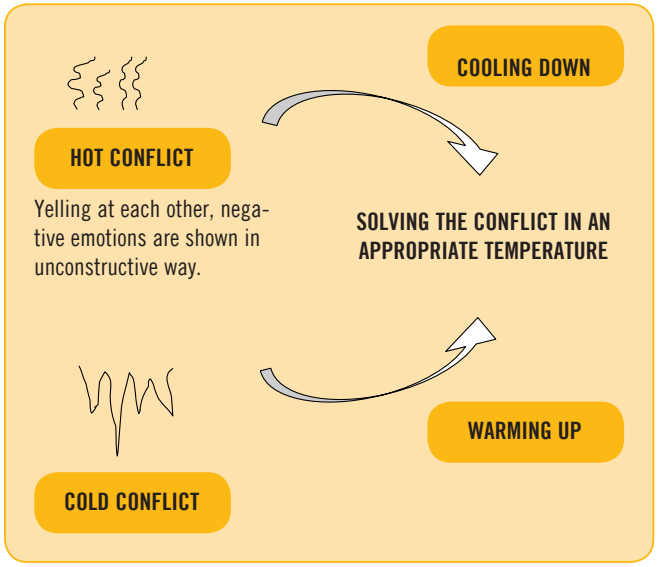
Handling conflicts requires also a change in the mindset, and this change can happen when a conflict is sufficiently discussed in the team and lessons are explicitly learnt from it.

Managing hot and cold conflicts

There can be so-called hot conflicts and cold conflicts. Hot conflicts are easily detectable; everyone can see them. In a hot conflict situation partners are rather direct in showing their emotions, they may even use verbal insults to express their frustration.

Cold conflicts, on the contrary, are difficult to discover. Silence can be an indicator, or maybe only one or two partners can feel the ice in the atmosphere.

Box 16: Hot and cold conflicts



Communication in the team might need warming up or cooling down in order to solve the conflict, as presented in the Box 16 above. If the conflict stays too hot or too cold it keeps on creating negative energy. The appropriate temperature to handle the conflict is the one where team members are able to discuss the reasons of the conflict in a constructive manner and are committed to solving it. The following questions and start-up phrases can help partners to bring the complex issues on the table.

As is apparent in the examples, starting the discussion and *putting it on the table* are probably the most essential skills in conflict management. This sometimes requires some bravery and adequate communication skills.

Box 17: Approaching hot and cold conflicts

APPROACHING HOT CONFLICTS

First, agree on the principles:

'We have a rather difficult topic. Could we first discuss on how we should handle this? What can we do?'

When you need to confront another person:

'There's one thing I would like to talk about with you. Could we reserve some time for a discussion?'

Handling emotions:

'I see this issue has been irritating you. Could you tell what irritates you?'

APPROACHING COLD CONFLICTS

Starting the discussion:

'This is a difficult topic but I believe handling this is useful.'

Checking up something you're not sure about:

'I would like to check, I'm not quite sure, but have I understood right?'

'I have sensed this, what are you thinking about it?'

Creating a conflict management strategy

The development and agreement on a strategy of how to handle conflicts should form an important part of a project culture. A project team ought to agree about an open and positive attitude towards conflicts in general and agree on procedures to handle such situations.

A positive attitude towards conflicts can be created in a project team by a discussion of possible conflicts in the partnership and on the nature of conflicts in general. This discussion may lead to a small set of agreed statements about conflicts, similar to or as part of the ground rules discussed earlier in this chapter, for example:

- Conflicts are natural
- There is not one single party to blame for the conflict
- Everyone is a participant in the conflict – also those who were just following the situation
- The whole team should participate in solving the conflict
- The goal is to learn from and to understand different perspectives
- Handled in such a way, conflicts can be useful for the project

The second step towards a project conflict management strategy is more practical and systematic. It should focus on four crucial aspects:

- What do we consider to be conflicts in the project? The potential conflict situations in a Multilateral Project listed in Box 13 could be used as a starting point
- Who is dealing with the conflict: The co-ordinator? An appointed mediator or ombudsperson? The whole team? A small sub-team for conflict resolution?
- How is the conflict dealt with: In a group discussion? In a bilateral conversation? By a formal complaint procedure?
- How is the conflict eventually solved: By a decision of the co-ordinator? By a majority vote? By consensus?

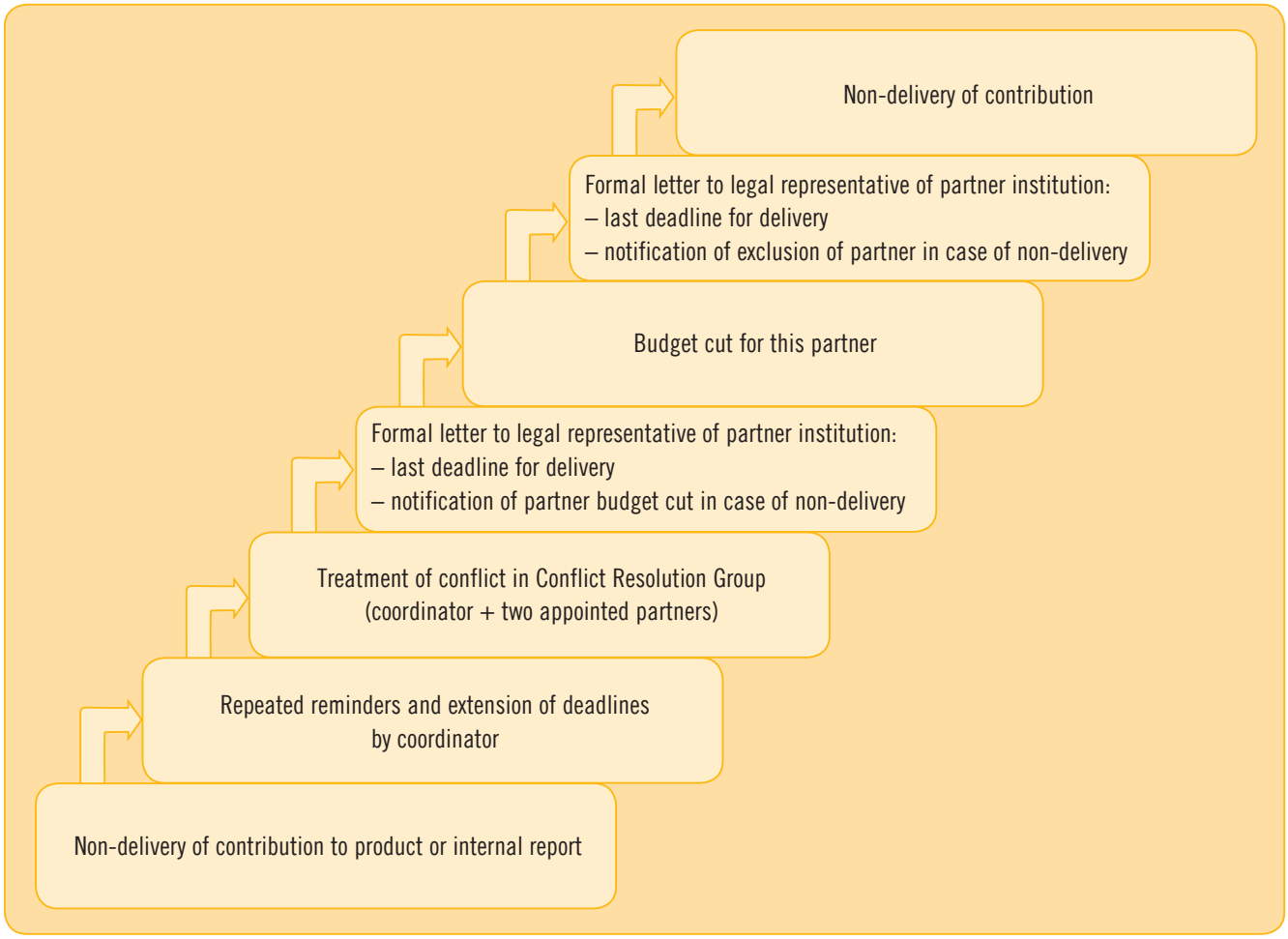
In most Multilateral Projects it will be appropriate to adopt a participative approach to conflict resolution rather than opting for the single-handed decisions of the co-ordinator.

There are some Multilateral Projects in which the conflict cannot be solved and eliminating a project partner from the Multilateral Project appears to be the only way out. This happens in particular if one partner does not deliver crucial contributions to project products and thus endangers the success of the whole project. If repeated extensions of deadlines, email reminders, bilateral talks and group discussions will not improve the situation, formal action might be required. If it comes to the worst, this may lead to a reduction of this partner's grant or even exclusion from the partnership.

Although this can only be the last resort, a project co-ordinator should be prepared for such a situation and develop with the project team a strategy to deal with such an escalation. An escalation strategy showing increasingly severe interventions and the stages at which they need to be implemented is shown in Box 18.

An escalation strategy is not only needed to ensure fair and objective treatment of partners. The exclusion of a partner affects the basis of the Grant Agreement with the Executive Agency. For such a drastic step an official request for an amendment to the Grant Agreement must be submitted, and the co-ordinator must be able to document that everything has been done to solve the conflict consensually. The existence of an escalation strategy and documented communication help significantly to argue the case. Of course, a letter, dated and signed by the legal representative of the withdrawing partner should also be provided.

Box 18: Example of an escalation strategy

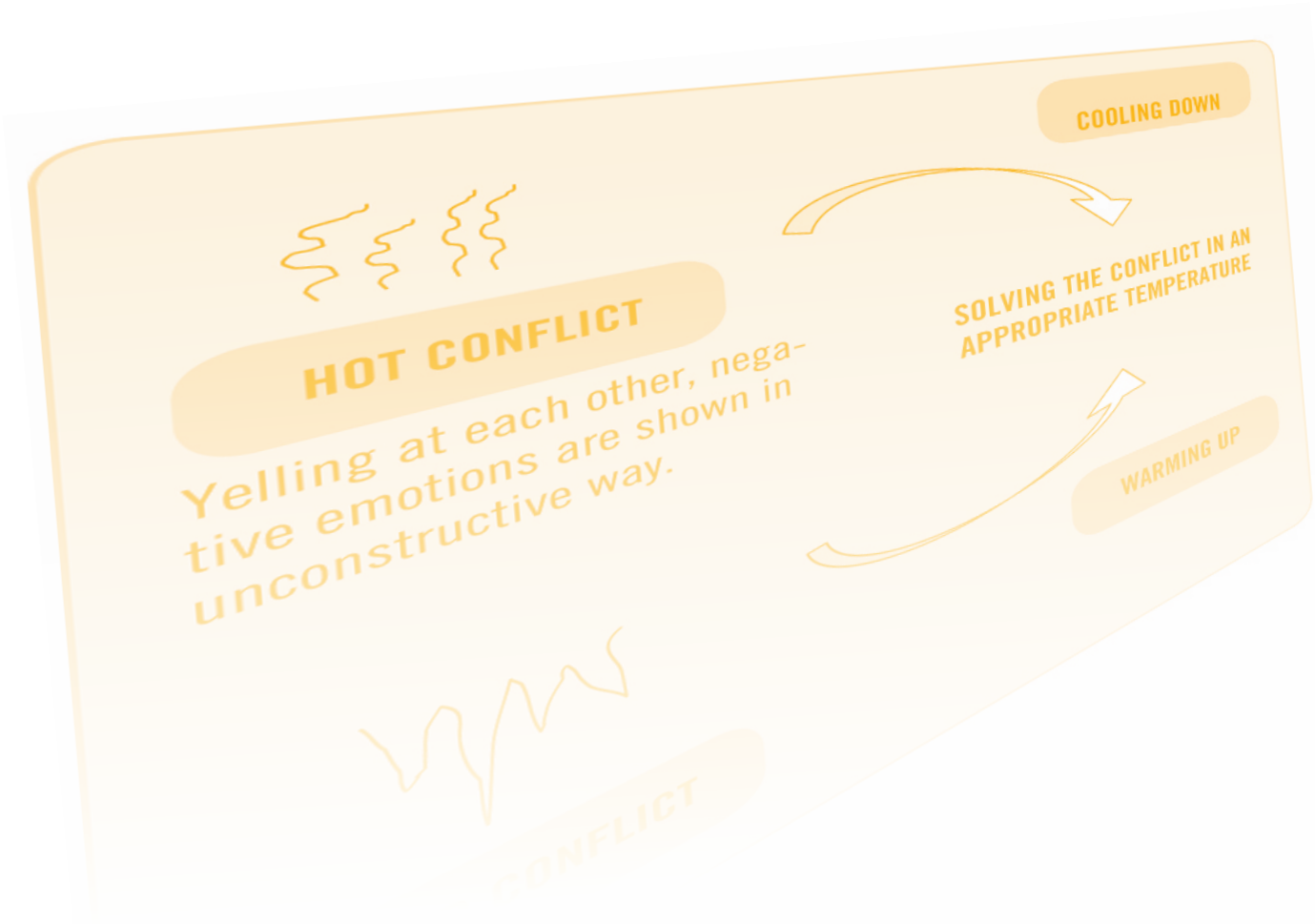


Most conflicts in a Multilateral Project are solved without such escalation. In general modern conflict management theory offers five types of approaches at solving conflicts. They are presented in Box 19 using for a last time the partner Francesco and his non-delivery as an example.

Clearly, the last strategy to collaborate with the conflicting partner as long as necessary to find a mutually satisfactory solution is the most desirable approach. It offers the best long-term perspective for successful co-operation. But sometimes other solutions seem more appropriate or time-efficient. Whichever strategy is eventually followed by a co-ordinator in a specific situation, it should not be that of avoiding the conflict. Unresolved conflicts have the tendency to multiply, particularly over the distance of a transnational partnership, while a positively resolved conflict adds to the growth of the project team.

Box 19: Five conflict management strategies

Strategy	Example	Risk
Forcing Using formal authority to satisfy your concerns.	Co-ordinator analyses the situation and finally decides to reduce partner's grant and re-allocate task to another partner.	Sanctioned partner is de-motivated, further conflicts likely.
Accommodating Allowing the other party to satisfy their concerns while neglecting your own.	Co-ordinator gives in and takes over partner's work in order *not to waste more time and energy* by insisting on delivery.	Partner is likely not to deliver next time, too, other partners may follow the example.
Avoiding Not paying attention to the conflict and not taking any action to resolve it.	Co-ordinator ignores non-delivery of contribution and repeated ignoring of deadlines.	Problems of non-delivery likely to multiply in the project, co-ordinator looses credibility.
Compromising Trying to identify a solution that is partially satisfactory to both parties.	Co-ordinator reduces the volume of partner contribution.	Lose-lose situation, product quality falls and partner still has to do the task they are not able (or willing) to perform at the moment.
Collaborating Cooperating with conflicting party with the aim to understand their concerns and finding a win-win solution.	Co-ordinator explores the reason for non-delivery and convinces partner that the European project can help to secure national funding.	Time-consuming; a mutually satisfactory solution cannot always be found.



Chapter 7: Intercultural Elements in European Project Management

Multilateral Projects are not just like any other project. One of most crucial differences is the diversity of cultural backgrounds to be found in most Multilateral Project teams. While the team building aspect has already been discussed in the previous chapter this part of the publication helps users to understand the ways cultural differences impact on the work in Multilateral Projects. It introduces key concepts of intercultural communication and reflects some common intercultural communication challenges a co-ordinator is often faced with.

Finally it offers useful suggestions and examples of tools for dealing with these challenges plus strategies for effective intercultural project management.

1. The cultural background of project team diversity

As already discussed in *Chapter 6: Effective Collaboration* a team involved in a European project consists of people coming from different countries, with different views on various issues, differences in their perception of priorities, different preferences for specific approaches, different attitudes towards others and different behaviour patterns. These differences are manifested during their involvement in European projects and are related to:

- Personal characteristics and personal history of each individual
- The organisational environment in which they work
- The cultural environment in which they live

Imagine two situations concerning the first meeting of a Multilateral Project:

Box 1: Different approaches at the kick-off-meeting of a Multilateral Project

A. The meeting date was announced by the co-ordinator, who will also be the host of the kick-off meeting, one month in advance. Then, silence…
Ten days before the meeting, a large number of messages were sent to team members by the co-ordinator, with details about their travel, accommodation, and meals. An agenda followed on shortly, mentioning some local officials as guests, several presentations by local experts in the first half day, with a guided visit to the city, and less than half of the time dedicated to the work on the project. A representative of the host organisation was waiting for all participants at the airport and took them to the hotel. In the room, all guests found a short welcome note in English and in the local language and a traditional local candy.

B. The co-ordinator suggested two dates for the kick-off meeting soon after the confirmation of the project approval has been received, more than three months in advance. Each team member is asked to vote for one option and the date with most votes is designated as date of the meeting. An agenda is proposed, including an overview of the project, a time slot for financial and administrative issues; the rest of the agenda is divided between the work packages mentioned in the project plan for the first phase. One month before the meeting, team members received details about the hotel and instructions about how to get there from the airport or train station. Two weeks before the meeting participants were requested to send final confirmation and details about travel. A few days before, a short email provided the exact meeting time and place. No further contact is made. Participants are expected to find their way to the hotel and to the meeting place.

In both cases there might be team members who find the situation normal and feel comfortable with it, while others might be surprised and even frustrated. Some enjoy time for visits and informal interactions, others prefer to focus on obtaining effective outcomes. Of course, not only the preparation, but also the way the meeting is managed can be very different. Some will make it very formal, with microphones and separate interventions of each participant, others prefer an informal atmosphere, with open and flexible discussions and division into subgroups for part of the time. Some participants bring presents for the co-ordinator or for the host of the meeting. Some bring traditional sweets to share with all colleagues, while others think it is just a working meeting and feel embarrassed that they did not bring anything. The timing of the agenda could also be a source of frustration: in some countries lunch break is at noon, while in others it is common to have lunch at 14h00; dinner times also vary widely, as well as the finishing time of meetings or the availability of late evening activities.

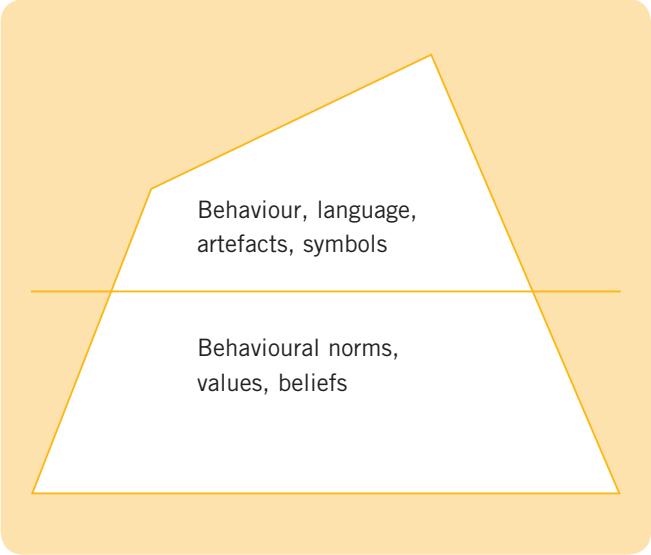
All these differences reveal not only personal options or preferences, but also differences in **cultural practices**, of which we might or might not be aware. Culture can be understood in many ways and the fact that it is a multifaceted concept is often itself a source of misunderstandings. Among the many definitions given to culture, the following is chosen for this context:

> *Culture is a fuzzy set of attitudes, beliefs, behavioural norms, basic assumptions and values that are shared by a group of people, and that influence each member's behaviour and his/her interpretations of the* meaning *of other people's behaviour.*
> Spencer-Oatey (2000), Culturally Speaking: Managing Rapport Through Talk Across Cultures

The *iceberg model* of culture emphasises that there are visible expressions of culture but that there is also a much more extended set of hidden elements that influence people but are not explicit and are often unconscious.

When speaking about the cultural background of participants in European Multilateral projects one can refer to major regions (e.g. northern, southern, western, eastern, central Europe), to national cultures, to cultures of specific ethnic groups or to religious, linguistic or regional groups from within countries. The option suggested here is to speak about *cultural background*, regardless of its specific intra- or trans-national determinants. Moreover, one will not infer that a person living in a certain country, or region, or belonging to a specific ethnic or religious group, must necessarily correspond to the pattern of beliefs and behaviours usually associated with these groups. The possibility for multiple cultural affiliations is also left open.

Box 2: Iceberg model of culture



It is often very difficult to distinguish through the behaviour of a person the influences of the personal, organisational or cultural difference and it is important to **avoid labelling and stereotyping** based on any of these categories. However, while its impact is real on the way members of a team communicate and cooperate for the implementation of the project, the cultural diversity of the team may generate difficulties and frustration or, on the contrary, may enhance the quality of the project outputs.

The ideal situation is when both the project co-ordinator and the team members have a high level of *intercultural competence*, that is, abilities and attitudes necessary to obtain positive outcomes from encounters with people having a different cultural background. Intercultural competence is usually high in persons who have experienced a large number of intercultural interactions and have managed to learn from these experiences, whether consciously, or unconsciously. However, anyone can develop some intercultural competence by becoming aware of the influences culture has on our own behaviour and on the behaviour of others, as well as by paying special attention to interaction situations taking place in an intercultural setting.

2. Understanding cultural differences in project teams

What are, more precisely, these cultural differences? One approach to answering such a question is to use one of the models developed around the concept of *cultural dimension*. Cultural dimensions serve, in general, for describing differences between national cultures. However, for the reasons described above, they will be used here to describe differences between individuals (members of European project teams), without making a connection with the cultural groups to which those individuals belong.

The first system of cultural dimensions is the one proposed by Geert Hofstede in the 1980s. In its current version it includes five dimensions:

1. **Low / High Power Distance**: The extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.

In a Multilateral Project team, some members might expect equality and a balanced distribution of power, while others might expect the co-ordinator and possibly some other team members (e.g. those having higher position, more experienced, older, or from prestigious institutions) to have a stronger influence on decisions taken and to legitimately give instructions or evaluate the work of the others.

2. **Individualism / collectivism**: From an individualistic perspective people are expected to stand up for themselves and to choose their own affiliations. They are presumed able to make their own decisions and take care of themselves, while bearing the responsibility for the decisions made. A collectivistic view sees individuals predominantly as members of a life-long group or organisation which will provide security and protection but will demand loyalty and compliance with internal norms.

Opposition can manifest itself in various ways in a European project: Persons with a collectivistic background might insist on building cohesion between members of the team and will look for opportunities to achieve this, while team members with an individualistic view might manifest resistance to such attempts and keep distance. Collectivistic – minded people might also insist on members providing mutual support to each other, while individualists will insist on a clear division of tasks and responsibilities.

3. **Masculinity / femininity**: This refers to the values associated in most societies with gender roles. So called ‚masculine' cultures value competition, assertiveness, ambition, and the accumulation of wealth and material possessions, whereas feminine cultures place more value on care for others, positive relationships and quality of life. Feminine cultures also consider that there should be little difference between the social roles of men and women.

Some team members might be focused on producing good quality outputs, advancing through the milestones of the project plan as effectively as possibly, and on obtaining a positive external evaluation, while others could consider more important the project meetings, seen as opportunities to build relationships and to enjoy a good time together. When they host a meeting, the latter will aim at making guests feel welcome, will include cultural activities, visits of the city, invite everyone to their home or to go for a drink in the evening.

4. **Uncertainty avoidance**: This reflects the extent to which people attempt to cope with anxiety by minimizing uncertainty. High levels of uncertainty avoidance means favouring structured circumstances and importance is given to norms in various areas of social life, from religion, to food, strict planning of activities and belief in the existence of a single and absolute truth. On the contrary, uncertainty acceptance is associated with more tolerance of different opinions, with preference for as few rules as possible, and with a relativist position, allowing for the coexistence of different beliefs and religions, side by side. If people with a background in uncertainty avoidance cultures tend to be more passionate and express emotions in public, the ones living in cultures with high uncertainty acceptance tend to be more phlegmatic and contemplative, and not expected in their own environment to express emotions.

Differences may appear within a European project team between individuals wanting to define precise rules and plans for project activities, and others who prefer to leave things to evolve and adapt on the way. The first ones will insist on making a clear decision whenever there is disagreement among team members or when there are different options for the following activities, while the latter will think the best option will reveal itself at the right moment and that decisions should be made only when this cannot be avoided.

5. **Long-term / short-term orientation**: This describes a society's time horizon, or the importance attached to the future versus the past and present. Values associated with long-term orientation are thrift and perseverance while values associated with short-term orientation are respect for tradition, fulfilling social obligations and protecting one's 'face'.

In a project meeting there can be people focused more on the past than on the current situation, reviewing progress done, celebrating success, and thinking about the current tasks to be completed. Others have their focus on the future, concentrated on making plans on a longer term, thinking, for example, about how to disseminate the outputs of the project, while it is not yet clear what they will look like.

Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner have more recently developed a model of culture with seven dimensions. According to this model, five orientations concern the ways in which human beings deal with each other, the sixth refers to the perception of time, while the seventh is related to the attitude towards the environment:

1. Universalism / particularism (What is more important, rules or relationships?)
2. Individualism / collectivism (Do we function in a group or as individuals?)
3. Neutral / emotional (Do we display our emotions?)
4. Specific / diffuse (Is responsibility specifically assigned or diffusely accepted?)
5. Achievement / ascription (Is recognition given based on deeds or associated with social status?)
6. Sequential time / synchronic time (Do we do things one at a time or several things at once?)
7. Internal control / external control (Do we control our environment or are we controlled by it?)

Box 3: Activity on cultural dimensions

These cultural dimensions can be used for a small activity at a project meeting.

1. Write the two poles of each dimension on cards and put them on the floor.
2. Think about concrete examples of project situations where people involved were or may be situated in different positions on each of the dimensions described above.
3. Ask the team members to chose a position and explain their choice.
4. Discuss the results in the group.

This activity will make members of the project team more aware of cultural differences and reduce risks of misunderstandings. It is a *safe* way of acting out culturally determined conflicts.

In a similar way as described above, members of a Multilateral Project team might be at various positions on each of these dimensions and they could be used to only interacting with people sharing similar positions.

3. Challenges at intercultural encounters

Language, terminology and non-verbal behaviour

One common challenge appearing in Multilateral Projects, as in many intercultural encounters, is language. In a Multilateral Project team there are people from different countries, speaking a common language, which is not the first language for most of them. Sometimes, several members of the team might share a common language and are not aware of that.

It may create added value to ask the project team members during or even before the kick-off meeting to list all the languages they understand or in which they can read, speak or write. Results should be put together in a table (this can be downloaded at www.european-project-management.eu) and subject to joint analysis and discussion in the team. This could be useful for sub-group organisation and division of tasks, distribution of responsibilities for surveys, for the organisation of public events, such as courses or conferences or for project dissemination.

In the context of a European project, an element facilitating communication is in most cases the shared specialised language, resulting from work on a common topic. However, language competencies may vary widely within a project team and this is an element which should be taken into account when distributing tasks, when organising smaller groups with specific tasks or when planning the content and the organisation of face-to-face and virtual meetings. The diversity of language competencies could also represent an important asset for the project and should be made explicit during the initial phases of the project.

Box 4: Finding a common terminology

Besides, in many cases, similar or identical words might have behind them different understandings and interpretations. Agreeing on a common terminology therefore plays a bigger role in intercultural settings than in less diverse settings. That is why it is important to take time to define a shared meaning of the core concepts the team will use in its work and to point out what concepts need discussion in order to make different definitions visible.

The tool in Box 4 can help identify and clarify the main concepts used in a Multilateral Project: What are the main terms everybody needs to understand? How are they defined?

Of course, language is not a neutral code for communication, but is culturally charged, and the use of language reveals often elements of the cultural background of the speaker. It is important not only what you say but also how you say it. The way language is used in an intercultural setting can have an impact on reciprocal attitudes, behaviours and relationships.

Besides, the largest part of exchanging information, at least in a face-to-face situation, is transmitted at a non-verbal level. Some researchers have judged the percentage to be as high as 85 %. Body language is generally more honest than verbal language because it is mostly unconscious and harder to control. Non-verbal gestures also follow a cultural code.

Many examples of different meanings associated with non-verbal behaviour can be given. Perhaps one of the most obvious ones is how we signal approval. Imagine a meeting with people from various European countries and the co-ordinator asks if they have understood what has been presented or if they agree with was has been said. Most of them will move their head up and down, but some will move it left to right. In Bulgaria, for example, this gesture of moving the head left to right, interpreted in most European countries as negation, means *yes*. The situation can become even more confusing if some Bulgarians will share the same non-verbal behaviour with the participants from other countries. They can do it because they disagree, or they can do it because they know that the one who asked is using a different cultural code and they want to adapt to it.

Attitudes towards cultural differences

The attitudes people have towards cultural differences play an important role in the way interactions between people with different cultural background develop. How can we explain the fact that some participants in a Multilateral Project feel more comfortable than others when meeting people with a different cultural background? A useful model for understanding the processes taking place in intercultural encounters is the *developmental model of intercultural sensitivity*, proposed by Milton Bennett in 1994, which suggests that attitudes towards cultural diversity can evolve through six stages: three ethnocentric stages (denial, defence and minimising) and three ethnorelative stages (acceptance, adaptation and integration).

Engaging in intercultural encounters is often a complex experience and might sometimes generate increased levels of anxiety

Box 5: Ethno-centric vs. ethno-relative stages

Ethno-centric stages		Ethno-relative stages	
Denial	Differences are denied, usually associated with lack of direct contact with people having different cultural background.	Acceptance	Cultural differences are acknowledged and respected; culture is seem as a dynamic construct; individuals permanently redefine their cultural reality.
Defence	Difference is perceived negatively as it represents a threat to one's own vision of the world; those who display an apparent openness towards other cultures and devalue their own culture are also in this stage.	Adaptation	While recognising differences, individuals in this stage are able to adapt their thinking and behaviour in an intercultural encounter; they have high empathy and the capacity to switch between different world views.
Minimizing	Importance and significance of diversity are not recognised, similarities among cultures are emphasized; tendency to impose one's own cultural reference framework, considering it universally valid, while claiming to promote intercultural understanding.	Integration	The new cultural reference framework is internalised; capacity to evaluate cultural characteristics, accepting cultural identity as a dynamic process; capacity to make choices taking into account the cultural environment. This stage is not necessarily better than adaptation.

and uncertainty. Thus, according to Gudykunst (2004) there are mainly four types of fears that might appear:

- Fear of negative consequences for our self-concepts
- Fear of negative behavioural consequences
- Fear of negative evaluations by strangers
- Fear of negative evaluations by members of the groups we belong to

Individuals having a high level of intercultural sensitivity (situated in the ethno-relative stages described above) have better chances to overcome these fears and establish positive and effective interactions. Those with reduced intercultural sensitivity (situated in ethnocentric stages) might have various behavioural reactions. These include avoiding contact or a tendency to minimise the duration of contact, as well as cognitive strategies such as the focus on elements confirming the stereotype of the group to which the other belongs, while ignoring behaviours which contradict the stereotype.

It might be worthwhile for a co-ordinator to take a few minutes, evaluate where he or she stands on Bennett's scale, reflect on that position, think of examples of situations and behaviours confirming this choice. Other useful questions for reflections may be:

- Have you been in a different position in the past?
- If yes, when have things changed and how?
- What can you do to favour the positioning of your colleagues in the project team in ethno-relative stages and overcome the fears mentioned above?

Stereotypes and prejudices

Stereotypes and Prejudices are indeed key concepts to be taken into account when aiming at understanding intercultural encounters, such as the ones taking place in Multilateral Projects.

Stereotypes are representations (*pictures in our heads*) that are associated with members of a specific group. They describe characteristics, attributes, and behaviours of members of various groups and are shared by most members of a society and integrated in cultural representations. Although some characteristics rely on *a kernel of truth*, stereotypes are abusive generalisations that simplify the way we describe and understand diversity in society. Some groups have predominantly positive stereotypes, while others are associated with very negative stereotypes.

Prejudices are attitudes directed toward people because they are members of a specific social group. It includes evaluations of the members of the group as well as emotions felt when thinking about or interacting with members of that group. Prejudices can also be positive or mixed but in many cases they are negative. Racism is also a prejudice.

Research in social psychology has proved that stereotypes are used by our minds to simplify reality and facilitate our understanding in a very complex world. They are often activated in our heads automatically, when we interact with persons perceived as members of a group. We can be aware of this process and make conscious decisions to get beyond the stereotype and interact with the individual we have in front of us and not with the abstract, and often false, image that the stereotype is projecting. It has been established that people with high levels of prejudice are the ones relying very much in their interactions, perceptions and judgements on stereotypes. Thus, becoming aware of our prejudices and making efforts to overcome stereotypes are the essential preconditions of a positive intercultural encounter.

4. Towards effective intercultural communication in the project team

Intercultural communication competencies

The challenges of communication in a project team have been outlined in *Chapter 6: Effective Collaboration*. In the following parts of this chapter some aspects of communication which are connected with cultural differences will be examined. Communication is the permanent process of receiving a message, interpreting it and reacting to it. All this often happens on an unconscious level. This usually does not imply major problems when people engaged in communication have the same cultural background. However, in an **intercultural setting** this becomes very important, because the ideas about which message is really important, the background knowledge of the persons involved and the rules on which communication is based can vary from culture to culture.

Box 6: Exercise which can be done during the kick-off meeting

Stereotypes:

Phase 1: Participants are grouped by country at different tables and are encouraged to use their national language. Each group will first discuss the stereotypes associated with each of the countries of their partners, as well as with their own country, looking both at negative and positive features.

Phase 2: Seated in a circle, participants are requested to describe in maximum one minute three things about themselves that they think will surprise the others.

Phase 3: Back in country groups, participants discuss (1) what elements of the stereotypes have been contradicted by the presentations of their partners and (2) how can they behave during project meetings and project activities in general, to contradict the negative features of the stereotypes of their country.

Discussions in groups remain confidential. No general conclusions should be formulated.

If communication is defined as *a process involving the exchange of messages and the creation of meaning* (Barnlund, 1962), **communication is effective** to the extent that the person interpreting the message attaches a **meaning** to the message that is **relatively similar** to what was intended by the person transmitting it. Stated differently, *communication is effective to the extent that we are able to* ***maximise understandings*** (Gudykunst, 2004). If the ones engaged in communication have different cultural reference backgrounds we can speak about **intercultural communication**. In most cases, we have tendency to interpret the messages received during an intercultural communication process on the basis of our own reference framework. An additional challenge in intercultural communication is the fact that the people involved might even not realise that there are differences between the initial message and the interpretation we have given it. Therefore, the capacity to identify and correct wrong interpretations in an intercultural communication setting is an important intercultural competence.

During an intercultural encounter, individuals generate explicit or implicit strategies for making themselves and the others aware of their interpretations of reality and of their reactions to a certain situation, with their cultural determinants. This *negotiation of reality* (Friedman & Berthoin Antal, 2005) involves also the ability to expand the usual range of reactions and identify those that are most appropriate to the specific situation. Everyone can develop such abilities through training and experience.

Effective management of intercultural communications therefore requires special attention and a set of **specific intercultural skills and competencies**, including:

Mindfulness: This competence means focusing on a broader system of categorisation. When interacting with a person with a different cultural background think about the wide range of possible categories: age, social relationships, studies or train-

ings, sex, work experiences, hobbies, skills, etc. and not just the membership in a specific cultural group. Mindfulness also means acknowledgment of both similarities and differences among persons, openness to new information and respect for the rules and values which are important to 'others' in one's own behaviour.

Empathy: Empathy is the skill to 'put yourself into the shoes' of the 'other' and understand his or her perspective. The development of this important competence is easier when we have an attitude based on respect for the views and values of others. Empathic communication involves active listening, ability to perceive non-verbal signs and mirroring.

Change of Perspective / Decentration: To become interculturally competent you also need to develop your ability to change perspectives. Learning to recognise one's own perspective and that of the communication partner is important to avoid misunderstandings and also solutions acceptable to both sides can be found more easily. This means that you need to develop awareness of your own perspective, as well as of the perspective of the other, while having the ability to contextualise the interpretation of the other's behaviour.

All these competencies can be developed through exercises and self-reflection. After an intercultural encounter think how they have been reflected in your behaviour and identify possible areas where you could improve. Usually, it is easier to see the lack of intercultural competences in others rather than yourself. Avoid this trap and focus on your own behaviour!

Box 7: Case Study: meeting arrangements

A project meeting:

The co-ordinator is preparing the organisation of the last transnational meeting of a Multilateral Project. There are two local partners, one situated in the capital city, the other in a small town one hour away from the capital by car. After an agreement on the date is reached, the co-ordinator suggests an agenda and makes online reservations for the whole group in a hotel located in the capital city, not far from the partner institution. The local partner is just asked to provide a meeting room. Shortly after, the co-ordinator receives a phone call from the partner in the small town: he is unhappy with the decisions, he thinks the meeting should take place in their town, not in the capital, and particularly disagrees with the hotel chosen by the co-ordinator. He suggests he takes over all aspects of local organisation, including airport transfer, accommodation, meals, meeting rooms and local travel.

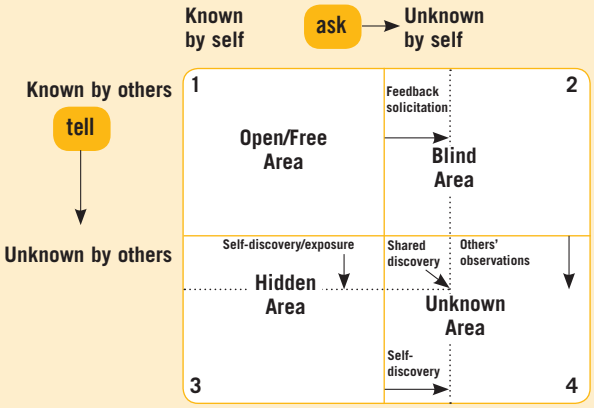
Suggestions for improving intercultural communication

Apparently, there is a conflict between two options. In fact, if the reasons, needs and priorities of each party are made explicit, a win-win solution can be found:

- The co-ordinator prefers to stay in the capital in order to avoid loosing time and money with additional travel, and has chosen the hotel suitable for the budget remaining available. She prefers not to ask too much from local partners and allow them to focus on finalising the deliverables due to be discussed during the meeting and which have accumulated due to a small delay.
- The local partners consider it their duty to show all hospitality possible and make the guests feel welcome in their country, as tradition requires. As hospitality is more important for them than the other issues, they are ready to make additional efforts, plan all the logistical details of the meeting and even provide local funding to compensate for additional costs for travel. They also consider it important to arrange a visit to a historic site located near their town.

When this is made clear, an agreement can be reached that the local team takes the responsibilities for organising the meeting in the small town, with one day spent in the capital, while keeping the expenses within the limits of the available budget.

Box 8: Johari Window



Box 9: Virtual Intercultural Team Tool (VITT)

Three tools and a step by step process:

1. **The team registers on the VITT:** the co-ordinator creates a project account and invites team members to join.
2. **Kick-off questionnaire:** all team members fill-in a questionnaire aimed at revealing various elements of team diversity. The questionnaire takes about 20 minutes to complete and has six sections:
   a. Language
   b. Technical issues
   c. Learning styles
   d. Personal differences
   e. Culture of the organisation
   f. Expectations
3. **Kick-off discussion:** the team members discuss the results of the questionnaire and formulate proposals for ground rules.
4. **Defining ground rules:** the co-ordinator summarises discussions and drafts ground rules. Members comment and validate the ground rules.
5. **Planning monitoring:** monitoring sessions can be planned in advance on a regular basis or requested by any team member when a problem is encountered.
6. **Monitoring questionnaire:** team members fill-in a questionnaire about various aspects of team work and review the effectiveness of the ground rules.
7. **Monitoring discussion and agreement on what to change:** based on the discussion of the results from the monitoring questionnaire, the team agrees on what changes are needed to improve team performance and what needs to be maintained.
8. **Evaluation questionnaire:** at the end of the project, the questionnaire helps the team to reflect on its performance from the perspective of intercultural communication.
9. **Evaluation discussion:** the team members discuss the results of the evaluation questionnaire and draw-up lessons learned in terms of working as a multicultural team.

Outcomes: increased effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction of team members.

Time: The use of the tools does not require more than a few hours. Team members can fill-in questionnaire and participate in online discussions at their own convenience. A reasonable amount of time is needed to discuss these issues during face-to-face or virtual meetings but this will save time during the project implementation.

A simple model used in classical psychology, called the *Johari Window* can help define more precisely what strategies can be used to enhance the effectiveness of intercultural communication in a project team. As shown in Box 8, each of us has elements known to us and also displayed to others, elements known to us but not displayed to others, elements that others see about us but of which we are not aware and finally elements of which we are not aware and which are also not visible to others.

In a situation involving communication where participants share a common cultural background the open/free area is bigger. In an intercultural situation also involving communication the open/free area is smaller. A greater number of elements which we know about us will not be visible or understandable to others, while many things they see about us and interpret with their own cultural references will also remain unknown to us.

Therefore, obtaining effective intercultural communication means first of all **making communication more explicit**. It means making the effort to explain and provide details about issues which appear obvious in a mono-cultural setting, as well as making sure that what is being perceived by others is interpreted in an appropriate way. That means insisting in a conscious way on processes of **self-exposure**, **feedback solicitation** and **shared discovery**. Indeed, by doing so we will not only enhance the quality and effectiveness of communication, but we will also contribute to the development of positive relationships within the team and we will learn new things about ourselves.

If the members of a Multilateral Project team become aware of these challenges and make personal efforts towards effective intercultural communication, the risks of misunderstandings will decrease and chances of obtaining good results and of using team diversity as an asset will be higher. However, this approach becomes much more effective if, from the beginning of the project, the **whole team is made aware** of the challenges associated with diversity and intercultural communication, if everyone in the team is asked to pay attention to this and if team members are encouraged and supported to engage in culturally sensitive self-exposure, feedback solicitation and shared discovery.

A useful tool for including such processes into project management strategies is the **Virtual Intercultural Team Tool (VITT)**, developed by the InterTool project (www.intertool.eu).

It supports European project teams to improve intercultural communication and build on their cultural diversity for a more effective implementation of their projects.

Politeness, names, schedules, and power in your project team

Most participants coming into a Multilateral Project team bring with them the expectation of joint work in a positive and psychologically rewarding environment. Consequently, being polite with others and feeling respected in the team are important elements. However, the **meaning of politeness** can vary widely within a team. Some people might consider it important to be addressed and to address the others by the family or full name, specifying titles like Professor or Doctor (sometimes regardless of the fact that this may or may not correspond to a real title), using (in most European languages) a formal plural, or dressing formally. Others consider that this is not important and that politeness is manifested in behaviour: not speaking about the others, not taking too much time to speak, expressing ideas as personal opinions, not as absolute truth ('*I think that*…', instead of '*The reality is*…'), or simply being punctual.

Some people find it normal to treat with more politeness team members with a greater age or hierarchical position, while others think that this is unacceptable and that all team members should be treated in the same manner. Complications may appear when you have several people from the same organisation or city, used to addressing each others in a formal way, then joining a team where everyone is using their first names. In Turkey first name preceded by Mr or Mrs is a show of respect: for example, to address in a respectful way someone named Halil Atalay, you would be expected to say Mr Halil, not Mr Atalay.

To avoid embarrassing situations it is preferable to clarify this issue during the first project meeting. It is common nowadays to use just first names during the interactions associated with European project work.

Names can also be a source of misunderstanding and frustration, if the diversity of traditions in different parts of Europe represented in the project team is not made explicit. First, the spelling of the name could be an issue: many European languages have specific rules and some may decide to ignore them, some may insist on writing them exactly as in their language, while others may opt for spelling in English in a way that will make the name read in English in a similar way to the original language. In such cases, but particularly when differ-

ent alphabets are used, as in the case of Greece or Bulgaria, it is always good practice to use the spelling in the working language decided by each team member for her/his name.

Secondly, there are various differences regarding the structure of the names and specific issues on given names and on family names. The simple situation of the type 'John Smith' (one first name, followed by one family name) is not as common as it might appear.

In some countries, people might have multiple given names, but still only one is commonly used. For example, in Romania, somebody could be named officially Oana Maria but still want to be called just Oana. However, someone called Jean-Pierre, in a French speaking country, will probably not like to be called just Jean. Also, consider that Laurence, from Belgium, is probably a woman, while Laurence from Ireland is probably a man.

In Hungary, the family name is put first, not only in official papers, but also in informal interaction. Therefore, if someone introduces himself to you at a European meeting as Andras Peter, it's better to ask which the first name is.

In several Slavic language countries, like Bulgaria, the Czech Republic or Slovakia, family names are different for men and women. So, if a young member of your team called Maria Bogdanova is introducing her father to you, do not call him Mr Bogdanova, his name is Bogdanov. This is not the case in Poland or Slovenia. A mix marriage where husband is of Bulgarian origin and the wife from a country where family names do not change for women may also result in names like Irina Petrov.

Additional clarifications might be needed when multiple family names are used. One common situation is that of women having both the maiden name and the name of the husband but actually using only one of them. The long names (multiple given names and/or multiple family names) have also practical implications: usually, when making reservations for travel, and sometimes even for accommodation, only one given name and one family name are allowed. It could be important to make sure that you do not put two given names and no family name and that the right family name is used. The most complex situation is the one found in Spain and Portugal.

Box 10: Example: different naming customs

A typical **Portuguese name** is composed of one or two given names, and two family names. The last surname is the father's family surname; the first surname is the mother's family surname. Note that this order is the reverse of Spanish surnames. Usually, only the last surname is used in formal greetings or in scientific papers indexing, but in a list of persons, the first given name, not the surname, is used for alpha sorting. Married women may add their husband's last surname to the end of their own name or even replace her surname to husband's last surname, but this is not mandatory. The same may happen with men, though this is extremely rare. It is not uncommon for people to have up to four surnames (two from each parent). **José Manuel Durão Barroso** is the son of Luís António Saraiva Barroso and his wife Maria Elisabete de Freitas Durão.

Spanish naming customs denote the two-surname personal appellation practiced in Spain, a name (simple or composite) and two surnames – the first, is the father's first surname, the second, is the mother's first surname – the traditional order, but reversible in respect to current gender equality law. Hence, when informally referring to, or addressing, a person, the practice is using his or her name, and the paternal (first) surname. The full name (name and surnames) is used in legal, formal, and documentary matters. **Francisco Javier Solana de Madariaga** is the son of Luis Solana San Martín and of Obdulia Madariaga Pérez.

Power is another key element influencing intercultural interactions in a Multilateral Project team. There might be various attitudes towards power distribution within the team, influenced by the cultural and organisational background of team members, but power relations also manifest themselves in ways those involved are not aware of and in direct interactions such as those taking place during project meetings.

In a project team, the co-ordinator has usually more power than the other partners, but has also additional responsibilities. However, other team members may have a higher power, due to their experience or professional recognition. Therefore, in order to avoid putting team members in the situation of choosing between competing opinions of people in the team having higher status and also to avoid decisions made by partners mainly because of conformism, several strategies can be used, including:

- Defining explicitly decision-making procedures from the beginning of the project, by emphasising preference for consensus and for a participatory and democratic leadership style

- Delegating responsibility to each partner to lead at least one work-package, while the co-ordinator will maintain a mainly supportive role

In this way power based on status in the team is diluted and more evenly distributed among participants. Therefore the risk of competition amongst partners, or for some partners to feel uncomfortable in expressing their opinions because of cultural habit of not challenging the opinions of people with higher status, will be reduced.

To summarise, a project co-ordinator might want to use the following checklist regarding various aspects on the intercultural dimension in the management of a Multilateral Project:

Box 11: Checklist on the intercultural dimension of a Multilateral Project

During the kick-off phase of the project:

Emphasise explicitly to all partners (during the kick-off meeting or before it through written communication) that the team will have to take into account and manage in a positive way its diversity (based on personal, organisational or cultural backgrounds).

Reflect on the influences your own cultural and organisational background has on your preferences, attitudes and behaviours. Position yourself on the various cultural dimensions and on the cultural sensitivity scale.

Provide opportunities to assess various elements of team diversity (by using the Kick-off Tool of the Virtual Intercultural Team Tool, discussion, email, etc).

Agree with your team on some common ground rules regarding:

- Communication in the partnership, including use of names and politeness
- Decision-making process
- Organisation of meetings
- How to manage challenging situations and deadlines
- Other issues related to co-operation in the project

Distribute tasks and responsibilities taking into account the diversity of team members.

Ask each partner to present how they see the key concepts related to the project and agree on a common understanding (for the purpose of the project, at least) of these concepts. Do not ignore disagreements and opposing perspectives but ask those concerned to find common ground for co-operation.

During the implementation of the project:

Make sure that when you interact with a colleague from the team you take into account his/her personal characteristics and not the stereotype associated with the group your colleague belongs to.

When receiving a message, think that the organisational and cultural background of your colleague might play a role in shaping attitudes, behaviours, communication styles or choices made. Reveal reasons for your proposals and choices, ask for feedback and ask team members to reveal their reasons and explain their opinions and ideas.

Stimulate team members to take advantage of their skills and specific preferences, (such as language skills, or interest in a specific topic) for the benefit of the whole team.

Make sure you comply with the ground rules defined at the beginning of the project and provide explicit public appreciation to colleagues who comply with these rules as well.

Allow all partners to reflect every few months on the way these ground rules are implemented and stimulate them to suggest revision of these rules, if needed.

Provide opportunities to monitor, not only progress in delivery of the project outputs, but also the satisfaction of participants in terms of team work, management and communication with due attention to the way team diversity is reflected.

Set-up and implement a transparent mechanism for dealing with power traps and for managing conflicts and challenging situations.

During the closing phase of the project:

Take into account cultural elements when organising dissemination, exploitation and valorisation activities.

Acknowledge the contribution of each team member and each partner institution to the project, by taking into account organisational and cultural requirements (e.g. address letters to the legal representative, send certificate, etc.).

Provide opportunities for team members to reflect and share opinions on how the diversity of the team has influenced their work and on what lessons they can draw for the future in this respect.

Chapter 8: ICT Tools for European Project Work

This chapter aims to help European project partnerships to be successful virtual teams. Teams involved in Multilateral Projects fit very well into the following definition of a virtual team: *a group of people who work interdependently with a shared purpose across space, time, and organisational boundaries, using technology* (Lipnack & Stamps (2000), p. 18).

Nowadays *information and communication technologies* (ICT) are part of the usual landscape in Multilateral Projects. Thus, it is not an objective here to promote the use of ICT by describing its benefits nor to describe in detail the way various tools function. Instead this chapter aims to enhance the effective use of ICT in project work by analysing the way it fits in with various project activities. This approach may facilitate the choice of appropriate tools by each project team and show how ICT can support key processes like leadership, management, communication and co-operation within European project teams.

1. ICT for specific project activities

If we leave aside the specific case of Multilateral Projects focused on the production of ICT tools, all projects, regardless of their topic and approach, can benefit from using new technologies. Only a few years ago, the use of ICT in projects was limited almost exclusively to the use of email and static websites. The situation has now changed and a wide range of options are available to project teams. These tools are easy to get and their use does not require special technical training, anyone with basic computer skills can use them successfully. Moreover, all these tools exist in both commercial and free, open source versions, some of them are also available in multiple languages.

The table in Box 1 presents a summary of the types of tools available and their relation to the main activities of a Multilateral Project. At www.european–project-management.eu an extended version of this list with examples of ICT tools available can be downloaded.

Besides these tools, Multilateral Projects might need other types of ICT support for the delivery of their expected outputs, such as statistical data processing software, graphic design software and video editing software.

Box 1: Project activities and supporting ICT tools which can support them

Nr	Project activity	Functions of ICT	Types of tools
1	Setting-up a partnership	Source of information Communication	Databases with contacts, organisation websites, search engines Forums, networking platforms
2	Project management	Task organisation Joint access to documents Team support	Project management software Project virtual work space Virtual support systems
3	Planning work time and meetings	Time management	Calendar (dedicated or included in project virtual workspace) Meeting planning tools
4	Project meetings	Visual and audio support to presentations Online broadcasts	Slides presentation software Video/audio playing software Online broadcast platforms
5	Communication between partners	Synchronous or asynchronous communication	Email, discussion board, forum, translation software, chat, instant messaging, VoIP software, audio and video conferencing software

Nr	Project activity	Functions of ICT	Types of tools
6	Research	Access to public information Access to specialised information Inquiry support	Websites (general and specialised) Search engines, databases Online questionnaires, software for the management of online questionnaires, data processing software
7	Developing and testing outputs	Collaborative work Training Translation	Project virtual space, wikis, blogs, e-learning platforms, virtual learning environments, learning management systems translation software, multi-user editor
8	Dissemination	Display and communicate information Community building Networking	Websites, email, electronic newsletters, RSS feeds, virtual communities, virtual worlds, social networking websites, podcasts, web radio/TV, online journals, virtual conferences, webinars
9	Evaluation	Get feedback from users Follow data on website use	Online feedback forms Website access statistics tools

2. ICT for communication and collaboration

As demonstrated above, communication and collaboration are essential functions of ICT in a Multilateral Project. Virtual teams have four general options to organise communication and collaboration. They are displayed in Box 2, with examples of technologies for each category:

Box 2: Space-time categories for ICT tools

	Same time	Different time
	Synchronous communication	**Asynchronous communication**
Same place	Slides presentation software (during face-to-face meeting)	Forum, Wiki, Message board, file-sharing system
Co-located communication		
Different place	Virtual meeting or conference (using text, audio or audiovisual)	Email
Distance communication		

There are a range of tools intended for communication in virtual teams. They are usually called *groupware*. Groupware can be defined as software, systems, and services for computer-supported cooperative work. All of these platforms focus on **three main functions**, essential for the work of a project team relying, at least in part, on ICT support:

- **Communication:** exchanging messages between team members
- **Collaboration:** sharing and co-editing documents and other project files
- **Co-ordination.** distributing and tracking given project tasks

Six main categories of groupware tools can be identified, including both synchronous and asynchronous tools:

1. File storage and sharing systems
2. Message boards
3. E-mail groups
4. Instant messaging
5. Web conferencing
6. Integrated tools

There has been a trend for some time towards the use of integrated platforms which include various types of tools. Actually, all the first five types of tools mentioned above have gradually evolved towards integrated tools, by including new functions: for instance, message boards were added to file sharing systems, email groups became more complex, including file sharing and other facilities, instant messaging tools now allow for audio or video conferencing, file transfers and sharing photo albums, while systems initially designed for VoIP audio communication, now include, besides audio and video communication, instant messaging, and file transfers, while more sophisticated integrated platforms include all the functions of the other types, together with new ones, such as polls, calendars, or desktop sharing.

3. Selecting tools for a Multilateral Project

Almost every organisation has its own tools and virtual culture, whether stated explicitly, or implicit. Work in a multilateral partnership implies a number of shared choices, one of them being the ICT tools to be used for the various project activities. Some of these choices are easy, such as the ones referring to the common format of the documents (of course, it is recom-

Box 3: Examples of ICT support in Multilateral Projects

Project A	Project B
The co-ordinator has set-up **an email group**, using a free well-known platform. Thus, partners receive in their email inbox the same messages regarding the project. They can also connect directly to the **email group platform**, where all messages are stored and can be accessed only by members, but from any place. Important project files are also stored there. The platform also has a **calendar** function, where face-to-face and virtual meetings can be set-up. For **virtual meetings** of the whole team they use Skype but team members having common tasks occasionally interact also by using the instant messaging system associated with the email group platform. **Advantages**: ■ Free and easy to set-up the system ■ Several of the members might already be familiar with this type of system and they can support the others ■ Relatively easy to add new users **Disadvantages**: ■ Some of the members had to create new email accounts and they are using them only for the project ■ Virtual meetings of the team are done only with voice, without audio, as the system allows only a small number of partners to connect with video ■ All messages have the logo of the e-group platform and their advertisement at the end ■ The space for storing files is limited ■ The functioning is predefined, project partners have to adapt to what is being offered ■ The project still needs a classic website for the public presentation of the project and the finished products	One of the partner organisations is experienced with ICT and has taken up the task to facilitate virtual communication within the partnership. There are two main tools used for this purpose: 1. An **integrated platform**, which the team calls *project virtual workspace*, having two areas: – A **public area**, with basic information about the project but also with information about the work done and about the products of the project, that any partner can post. – A **restricted area**, accessible only to members, based on individual passwords, and including file-sharing, public and private messages and comments, and a calendar. All posts here are also communicated by email to partners, if they have checked this option. 2. A **virtual conferencing platform** for which the *ICT partner* has the licence, with the option to hold video conferences with all partners, with a screen that everyone can access simultaneously to take notes, post written messages, show files, or share their desktop and demonstrate a procedure. These meetings can be recorded and posted on the virtual workspace. **Advantages**: ■ Uses of the most advanced features ICT can offer ■ Ensures good quality virtual interactions ■ Gives the possibility for all partners to contribute directly to the public area of the project website, without passing through a computer specialist **Disadvantages**: ■ Setting-up the system is done by a specialist and incurs costs for setting-up, licence and hosting ■ Some partners may be less familiar in its use than others (resistances based on lack of familiarity and motivation can reflect the same barriers learners can face) ■ Usually a special virtual meeting and some written documents are needed to instruct all partners in the use of the tools.

mended to choose a format accessible to all partners, regardless of the operating system, type or version of software they are using). Other choices such as the definition of the tools for communication and co-operation are sometimes more difficult to make. Box 3 illustrates examples of how two Multilateral Projects have managed the use of ICT for these purposes.

For any choice, there will be advantages and disadvantages. Each team has to make the choice based on its specific situation, priorities and resources. There are various criteria to be taken into account, including:

- Accessibility of the tools and their availability in the working language of the project

- Familiarity of team members with specific tools
- The actual needs of the project and the tasks planned
- The resources planned in the budget for ICT support

Some years ago such a decision would have been strongly affected by factors like the access to high-speed internet connections, the availability of specific hardware or software, or the computer skills of team members. Today these are no longer relevant as everyone involved in a Multilateral Project can and should have high-speed internet access, most tools are available in all major operating systems, many of them are free or have free versions, and their use is only dependent on basic computer skills which can be taken for granted with most project actors. However, the attitude towards technology and familiarity with some tools are still important influencing factors.

The choice of the tools can be based on two main questions:

- Considering the activities planned in the project and the ground rules agreed (for instance on how to interact between face-to-face meetings): What are the functions for which ICT support is needed?
- For each function: Which are the tools with the best cost / benefit ratio?

When looking at the costs for a tool, partners should consider not only the cost to pay for having access to that tool (if any), but also the costs related to the setting-up and use of the tool, as well as for training team members on using that tool. The analysis of the benefits provided by the choice of a specific tool should take into account the added value brought by the tool for the accomplishment of the planned tasks, not necessarily on a short-term level, but throughout the whole project life (and, if appropriate, even beyond it), but also two other types of benefits:

- How can the tool contribute to building a positive team climate, allow for a democratic and effective management, and favour the balanced use of the competences of all team members?
- If the tool is new for some team members, will learning its use be seen as a benefit at a personal level?

Sometimes, it is worth investing more resources (funding, staff, time, administrative procedures, etc.) in a more complex set of tools. This might be the case if the choice will bring significant benefits for the project over a long time as well as positive impact for project management, team co-operation, project visibility and if that will be acknowledged as a positive learning experience by team members. On the contrary, it does not pay off to invest in a sophisticated set of tools (even if the budget allows for it) to deliver tasks that can be accomplished very well with simpler, but free and easy to access tools. It is useful to request advice from computer experts but the discussion should always start from what the Multilateral Project team needs to do and not from what technology has to offer, otherwise there is a risk of choosing too many tools or tools that look interesting but in fact are not suitable for the actual work of the project.

In some projects, the same tools can be used both for communication and collaboration among partners and for the delivery of the project outputs. For example, in a project that develops an online training course or an online support system for a specific target group, at least some of the features of the system developed can also serve for communication and collaboration among partners. This has several advantages:

- The products can be tested in a real situations
- Project partners can get a feeling of what the learners will experience
- Such an option could be more effective, making better use of time and resources

In this situation, the choice of ICT tools should, of course, take into account, not only the need for communication and collaboration within the project team, but also the needs of the learners that will use the products of the project and also the need to maintain their use after the end of the project.

Ownership of the tools being used might also be a sensitive issue. If a partner is paying a licence to have access to specific tools that can be made available to all team members, or if there are hosting costs, this should be properly evaluated and taken into account in the project costs. If new tools are being produced or adapted for a project, the ownership of these tools after the end of the project should also be discussed and agreed within the partnership. It should also be remembered that the Lifelong Learning Programme is not funding large-scale software or hardware development or purchase. Over-budgeting for equipment that has no clear vital role in a project, or for equipment that a consortium consisting of schools, colleges and universities would reasonably be expected to already have, is likely to be cut by the assessors of a project proposal or report.

Although some main decisions regarding the use of ICT in the project should have been made already in the preparatory phase and referred to in the project application, the decision

on what specific tools to use is better taken when the project has actually started, during the kick-off meeting. This way, not only can the opinions of each partner be taken into account, but in the time (of almost a year) from when the project has been designed to the start to its implementation, new tools or new features may become available.

Box 4: Selection process for ICT tools in a Multilateral Project

Step 1: Inventory of tools
All of the members of the team are requested to suggest specific ICT tools which they are currently using or which they would like to use in the project. For each tool a link and a brief description will be provided.

Step 2: Individual assessment
Each member of the project team answers the following questions for each of the tools in the list:

	Yes	No
a. Are you familiar with the way the tool functions (you have used it, seen others use it, read about its use)?	☐	☐
b. Would you be ready to learn how to use the tool?	☐	☐
c. Do you like the tool, would you feel comfortable using it in the project?	☐	☐
d. Do you think that the tool has useful functions for the project?	☐	☐
e. Looking at the overall potential benefits of using the tool (considering the tasks in the work plan, but also teamwork) and comparing with the costs associated with the tool (cost to obtain it, maintenance, training and support, time to set it up), would you consider the cost/benefit ratio for this tool adequate?	☐	☐

Step 3: Categorising tools
Based on the answers obtained, tools may be categorised by using the table below:

	Non relevant tools	Relevant tools
Poor cost/benefit ratio		
Good cost/benefit ratio		

Step 4: Selecting the tools
From the tools that have a good cost/benefit ratio and are relevant for the project, the tools which will actually be used will be chosen. It may happen that several tools with similar functions fall into this category. The selection can be done at this stage through a discussion, during the kick-off meeting.

The choice of ICT tools for a Multilateral Project team can be done in a democratic way through a four steps process, as described in Box 4.

4. ICT for internal team use

A virtual team is one whose members are separated by distance and therefore perhaps time, culture, organisational and international boundaries but share a common purpose or goal (in our case, co-operation in a Multilateral Project). They work interdependently, relying, totally or in part, on ICT.

In a virtual team just as in any other management is an essential element that can strongly impact both on the effectiveness of the tasks assumed by the team and the satisfaction of members regarding their participation in the team.

One of the foundations for the success of a virtual team is to build trust (cf. *Chapter 6: Effective Collaboration*). This requires a conscious and planned effort to compensate for the fact that team members do not have the same opportunities to build effective relationships as do traditional teams. Therefore, effective virtual leadership, whether at project or at sub-group level, should take into account:

- The need to make initial key decisions regarding ICT tools to use, common procedures for communication, the use of tools, the delivery of expected outputs and providing feedback
- The importance of agreeing on a common vision for the project, regarding the expected outputs, the process of reaching them and the relationships within the team
- The distribution of tasks by taking into account the use of the strengths, competences and preferences of each team member, ensuring everyone's participation but defining back-up options for unexpected situations
- Planning of the implementation of each work package taking into account the connection between them and the resources available, defining milestones, planning for monitoring procedures and evaluation
- Providing support, coaching and training to team members where needed
- Paying attention to motivational aspects and building trust within the team
- Ensuring that any tool or resource is not dominated by the most ICT-aware project team member

ICT tools can facilitate both planning and implementation of project activities if the following factors are taken into account:

A clear distinction should be made between the **information presented publicly** about the project (such as online newsletters, the public part of the progress report, information about public events, or release of project products) and the **internal work** process and the information which should only be accessible to team members (such as partner finances, or internal management decisions).

For the purpose of public information the emphasis should be on clear messages, attractive design, consistent visual identity, and the possibility to receive feedback and questions. For the project's virtual work platforms confidentiality should be considered a key element. On these platforms, only the authenticated users are allowed to access the data. One of the most common authentication mechanisms is password authentication. When a user performs an action on data, this must be clearly linked to the user's identity so he or she cannot deny performing the action. Communication done with the selected tools should also be secure, not only by not being accessible to people outside the project, but also in the sense that a sender cannot deny having sent a message, and the recipient cannot deny having received it.

From this perspective, integrated communication platforms, connected with emails (every action on the platform is signalled by an automatic message) are the most reliable option. The reliability of emails has decreased over the past few years, due to filters and restrictions imposed by the overwhelming volume of spam sent across the internet. Sometimes emails are blocked by intermediary servers, or by the main server of the receiving institution and never reach the computer of the team member supposed to receive them. Other times, they end-up in a spam folder or arrive without the attachments considered potentially harmful by the security software. Sharing access to a common virtual work area is an easy way to make sure that information is accessible to team members and the name of the user who posted the information, together with the date and time of the uploading, are usually also displayed.

If emails are used, some people attempt to ensure that the message has been received by requesting a confirmation receipt. However, this is not supported by all email systems and does not represent a totally safe option. Besides, some partners might not want to disclose the exact moment when they read the message and could feel frustrated if all the messages they receive require confirmation receipts.

Of course, first of all, ICT tools selected should be accessible to all team members and all should get the necessary support for an effective use of the tools. The project co-ordinator should

Box 5: Example of barriers to use ICT in a Multilateral Project

In a Multilateral Project with nine partners, aiming at designing and piloting a training curriculum, the co-ordinator suggested the use of Moodle as a communication platform. During the kick-off meeting a presentation of the tool was made and tasks were distributed to partners until the next face-to-face meeting, four months later. The result was that only the co-ordinator was posting documents, while only two partners reacted regularly to them. One posted long and specific comments, the other replied with short messages basically saying '*I confirm I received and read your file*'. Of course, this way the tasks were not properly performed and it was not until the next face-to-face meeting that the situation was clarified and corrected:

- One of the partners lost his username and password (both consisting of meaningless combinations of figures and letters)
- In the case of one partner the person in charge of the platform made a mistake and sent a wrong username
- One partner does not like technology and does not feel comfortable with this kind of platform

The other non-active partners did not react for various reasons: Some just thought '*if others do not react, why should I?*', some did not like the way the two active partners reacted (one sent long replies full of meaningless details, the other was not really contributing). The co-ordinator, although aware of the lack of involvement of partners, did not want to embarrass them and preferred to wait until the next face-to-face meeting for clarification.

All these obstacles were overcome during the face-to-face meeting through an open discussion, but the situation could have been corrected much earlier on by individual or group emails sent by the co-ordinator or by organising a virtual meeting.

Box 6: Extract from the questionnaire of the Virtual Intercultural Team Tool regarding ICT competencies, attitudes and behaviours

Technical issues

INTERTool

1. The following table contains a list of e-tools that can be used as means of communication among the team members of the project. Which of the following e-tools are you familiar with and to which extent? Tick the box that suits best to your situation.

	I have never heard of it	I have heard of it, but never used it	I can manage, but some help would be useful	I can use it, I feel comfortable using it	I can teach others to use it
1 Chat	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
2 Wiki	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
3 Audio conferencing	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
4 Video conferencing	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
5 Forum	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
6 E-mail groups	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

2. How often do you have access to internet / check your email

❍ Every day
❍ 2–3 times a week
❍ Once a week
❍ Seldom / once in a while

3. How quick do I answer e-mails

❍ Every day
❍ 2–3 times a week
❍ Once a week

also pay attention to establishing a collaborative, secure and reliable but at the same time user-friendly environment for groupware support.

Such issues should be addressed by the team in the early stages of a project to prevent possible communication difficulties, loss of data, or even tensions in the team. Members should agree on how to deal with these issues and the definition of team rules for virtual communication is a useful endeavour.

This process can be facilitated by the use of the Virtual Intercultural Team Tool, available to all European projects at www.intertool.eu and briefly introduced in *Chapter 7: Intercultural Elements in European Project Management* (as ICT-related attitudes and competencies are seen as an element of the diversity within the team).

The agreed rules can refer to aspects of communication such as:

- The expectations regarding acceptable time before an answer is sent (some people find it normal to answer an email within a week, while others send a brief message just to confirm the reception of the message, even if they are not able to answer in detail)
- The activation (or not) of an automatic out-of-office message during periods of absence
- The use of the *request read receipt* option
- The use (or not) of emoticons in written communication, the use of carbon copies and of *reply all plus* addressing formula and greetings

It is recommended not to spend too much time and energy on defining rules. As with the choice of ICT tools, there should be a minimum number of rules that are really necessary for the effective functioning of the virtual team. Some important rules are actually part of what is commonly called *netiquette*, the code of good virtual behaviour, but project co-ordinators should make sure that all members are aware of them.

Box 7 shows some netiquette guidelines which are useful for communication in a Multilateral Project, taken from the main reference document published by the Internet Engineering Task Force in 1995 (http://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc1855).

The leader of a virtual team should be able to anticipate and find prompt and appropriate responses to two main types of challenges:

- Technology-related challenges
- Time-related challenges

Box 7: Netiquette for virtual communication

1. *Mail should have a subject heading which reflects the content of the message.*
2. *If you are forwarding or re-posting a message you've received, do not change the wording. If the message was a personal message to you and you are re-posting to a group, you should ask permission first. You may shorten the message and quote only relevant parts, but be sure you give proper attribution.*
3. *Watch cc's when replying. Don't continue to include people if the messages have become a two-way conversation.*
4. *Do not forward chain emails: chain emails are forbidden.*
5. *Use mixed case. UPPER CASE LOOKS AS IF YOU'RE SHOUTING.*
6. *You should not send heated messages (they are called flames) even if you are provoked. Do not respond to flames sent to you.*
7. *At the end of a chat session always say goodbye, or some other farewell, and wait to see a farewell from the other person before closing the session.*
8. *If you make mistakes when typing in a chat session it is often not worth the time of trying to correct, if the other person can understand what you meant.*

The challenges related to **technology** may concern purely technical aspects, such as the compatibility between software and various operating systems, limitations generated by security measures in some networks (and for this qualified technical support might be needed), or may be related to lack of skills on the side of the users (in this case a balance must be found between choosing easy to use tools and providing additional training and support for some team members).

The challenges related to **time** can be broken down into the aspects of motivation, priorities, participation, team time, and flexibility which have related impacts. If a team member has low motivation this will impact on participation and on his/her flexibility to be available for team meetings and to meet team

priorities. The converse is also true. If a team member has low flexibility to manage time and to be available for meetings, this will impact on participation and motivation. Early identification and intervention is crucial for supporting low and non participating team members.

5. Virtual meetings in Multilateral Projects

Face-to-face project meetings represent important moments in the life of a Multilateral Project. They provide opportunities for reviewing and assessing the work done, planning the next activities, make joint decisions to improve effectiveness and also stimulate team-building and personal interaction. However, it is common and understandable that, after each meeting, the level of interaction and the team performance will decrease. Therefore significant effort is required to get the team back to the same level for the next face-to-face meeting. The graphic below illustrates the dynamics of interactions and effectiveness of a team, with and without ICT support. If ICT support is provided, by using, for example, a common virtual workspace, but also by organising virtual meetings, the interaction and the co-operation between team members can be maintained in between the meetings.

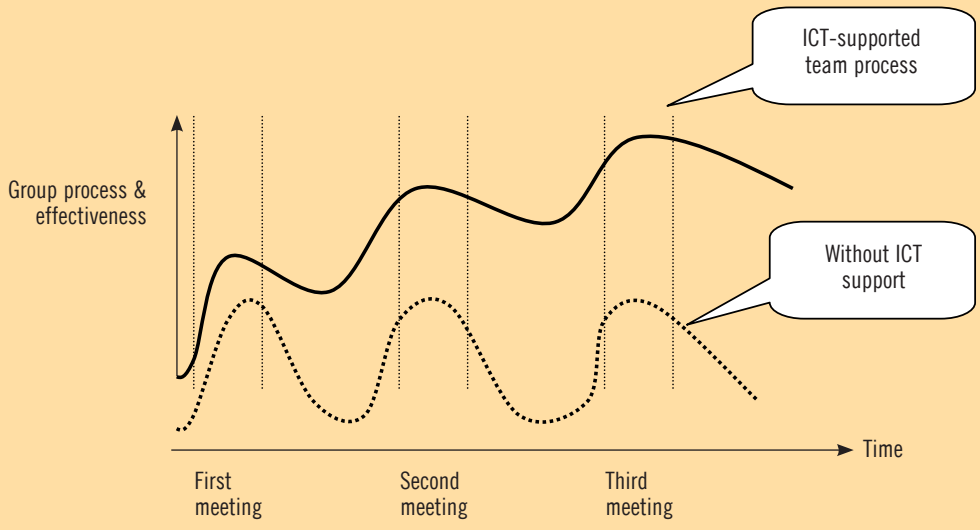
Chapters 3: Planning a Multilateral Project and *6: Effective Collaboration* both refer to the flexibility needed in a Multilateral Project's management approach. Indeed, the plans made during the project meetings may need to be reviewed and adapted in response to changes and unanticipated real life situations. Virtual meetings are a possible solution for these occasions.

The current status of ICT makes virtual meetings accessible to every project team, while providing reliable and good quality interaction. This changes completely the structure of interactions among team members: a few years ago, face-to-face project meetings were key moments when everything had to be clarified and planned, between meetings partners were expected to work on their own and to maintain communication essentially by email or by using a file-sharing platform. Now, with the support of technology, partners can have as many meetings as they need.

Virtual meetings can serve several purposes in a Multilateral Project:

- Assessment of progress with the implementation of planned activities plus detailed planning and distribution of tasks among team members (this was usually done only during face-to-face meetings)
- Review of draft products in a joint discussion, within the whole partnership, or by subgroups (this was usually done by collecting feedback formulated independently from each team member involved)
- Collaborative work, joint development of elements of the envisaged project outputs. In the absence of virtual meetings the outputs could only be explained during face-to-face meetings and then developed independently, piece by piece, by various partners, while one would receive the task of putting together and harmonising all the contributions

Box 8: Role of ICT support in team development in Multilateral Projects



Of course, a balance needs to be achieved. Face-to-face meetings are still important, but virtual meetings make it easier for smaller sub-groups to work together regularly. Special attention is needed to avoid situations when partners more experienced in the use of ICT or of specific platforms do not form a 'partnership within a partnership' by creating separate approaches and developing their own understanding of the project tasks and activities.

There are various tools available for virtual meetings which allow, as a minimum, for simultaneous:

- Direct audio or audio/video communication
- The exchange of short text messages (chat)
- The transfer of files

A good example for this category of tools is Skype, which is nowadays widely used in Multilateral Projects.

Additionally, more advanced virtual conferencing tools include possibilities for:

- Using wallpapers (areas where any user can write or draw and all participants see it instantly)
- Sharing specific applications (document editors, slides presentations software, web browsers, photo albums viewer, video player, etc) or sharing the desktop screen of a presenter with all meeting participants
- Making rapid polls and showing immediately the results in a easy to understand format
- Signalling the intention to make a comment or to ask a question, express agreement or disagreement with what is being said
- Recording all voice exchanges in an audio file

Examples of such tools are Acrobat Connect and DimDim.

Some of these tools need the purchase of a licence by at least the organiser or the host of the meeting, while others are free or have free versions. Some imply installing software on each computer, while others only ask participants to login to a specific website, with no downloading required. Some free versions include advertisements, while others do not.

A virtual meeting can only be successful if all participants have access to the required infrastructure, are in a place where they are not disturbed and they do not disturb others, and all have at least a basic level of familiarity with the tools. It might be necessary to have a short training session just on the use of the tool with the whole group, before any virtual meeting. This first meeting can have as topic *The tool* or a presentation of the tool followed by presentations of team members of partner organisations, so that opportunities for practice are also provided.

It is also wise to agree from the beginning on a method and procedure to use in case of technical failure with the agreed tool, including loss of contact with one or several team members: *Should we continue or cancel the meeting until the team is complete? Should we move onto the phone or onto an alternative communication platform?* For example, when a more sophisticated tool is being used, such as Acrobat Connect, as a backup solution in case of technical problems, the team may decide to be ready to pass on Skype, or to use Skype for providing personalised support for a team member whose technical settings are not configured in order to provide full access to the virtual meeting.

When discussing the use of virtual meeting tools, personal preferences of team members should be taken into account. An important element to consider is related to working styles. Some people prefer to work in team and have frequent interaction and are more creative and productive in a group situation, while others prefer to be left alone to deliver what they are expected to produce and only need meetings for planning and obtaining feedback from colleagues.

Just as in the case of a face-to-face meeting, for a successful virtual meeting specific attention should be given to three phases: before, during, and after the meeting. The lists below can serve as suggestions and as tools for checking the effective preparation, management and follow-up of the virtual meeting.

The length of the virtual meetings is a critical element, affecting the way it will be prepared and managed. The most common virtual meetings will last one to two hours. It is also possible to organise one day virtual meetings, which will take place in a similar manner as a face-to-face meeting. In any case, attending a virtual meeting must be clearly planned in the daily agenda of each team member and not take place in between daily office activities.

As mentioned above, virtual meeting tools can now also facilitate small virtual workshops and the collaborative work of project team members. Two or several (not too many) team members can work together, each being in a different location, as if they were sharing the same room, to produce a specific output. The difference is here that the management of the meeting will be more flexible and adapted to the circumstances.

Box 9: Checklist for a successful virtual meeting

Before: preparing the virtual meeting	
1. Defining the **goal(s)** of the meeting.	☐
2. Determining **who should participate**; in a small group participation of all can be essential and an agreement must be reached on a time when all are available; meeting scheduling tools (such as Doodle) can be used for this purpose.	☐
3. Proposing a **draft agenda**.	☐
4. **Inviting** participants by:	☐
a. Specifying: **when, for how long, and where** (provide the link or indicate the tool) will the meeting take place, who will attend	☐
b. Requesting **feedback** and suggestions regarding draft agenda	☐
c. Mentioning **what participants should prepare** (required reading, files to have prepared for sharing with others, websites to check, etc)	☐
5. Providing specific **details and technical instructions**, if appropriate. The host (or the person in charge of providing the technical support for the meeting) might want to invite team members with little or no experience of using the tools to join earlier (20–30 minutes before the meeting) in order to make all required set-ups, **test the functioning** and get used to the main functions of the tool.	☐
6. Sending a **reminder email**, a short time before the meeting, specifying the time, the URL of the meeting place, and the main goal of the meeting or the key points of the agenda.	☐
During: managing the virtual meeting	
1. There should be a clear **moderator** during the whole meeting (it can be the same person during the whole meeting or different moderators during various points of the agenda). The moderator can be the same as the technical host of the meeting, the co-ordinator or another team member.	☐
2. The meeting can start with a **brief round** of comments on how everyone is doing and **what is new** in general terms and then can address one by one the points on the agenda.	☐
3. The moderator should make sure that **everyone has the chance to speak** and that discussion is kept strictly **on the agenda**, the moderator should also have opportunities to express her/his own opinion.	☐
4. The moderator should **summarise** the key ideas and decisions for each point of the agenda.	☐
5. Someone other than the moderator can **take notes** directly on the virtual meeting platform, so that all participants can follow and react if needed.	☐
6. The moderator should **be the timekeeper**, in order to make sure that all issues on the agenda can be discussed, or, if this appears as not possible, inform participants that they should decide to leave some issues for a following meeting. Some issues might also be left in charge of a smaller group to deal with in a future virtual or face-to-face meeting.	☐
7. The meeting should **end** with:	☐
a. A **summary of the key outputs** of the meeting and of the plans for what each team member or subgroup will do after the meeting	☐
b. A brief round of comments on **how each participant feels** and how s/he sees the work outlook	☐
c. An agreement on a time for the **next meeting** or on a procedure to agree on a time for the next meeting	☐
After: ensuring follow-up of the virtual meeting	
1. Not later than 24 hours after the meeting the **conclusions, the minutes, or a report** of the meeting should be posted on the project virtual workspace and/or sent to all participants and, if appropriate, to other team members who did not attend the meeting.	☐
2. If the meeting was recorded, the **link to the voice file** should also be communicated so that absent team members can listen. Recording is most effective when decisions are to be made or for presentations that can be understood without visual support.	☐
3. Any **immediate action** decided during the meeting, such as requesting availability for the next virtual or face-to-face meeting, should be implemented within the days following the virtual meeting.	☐

An alternative is also that two (or several) team members work in parallel on specific outputs of the project, while being connected via a virtual communication tool (Skype, for example). This way, whenever is needed, they can have a brief chat or voice call to clarify specific elements and continue work separately.

ICT tools now also allow for the real-time broadcasting of a face-to-face or of a virtual meeting. In this case, besides the actual participants, there will be an audience, able to follow what is being discussed and usually address written questions to the moderator. This is also useful if some team members could not travel to a face-to-face meeting but are able to follow it from distance. Technology also enables virtual interventions of a speaker during a face-to-face or virtual meeting, when the presenter is given a specific time and can answer questions from participants afterwards.

Virtual meeting tools can be used very well, not only for interaction amongst project team members, but also for interactions between team members and external evaluators, participants in virtual focus groups and to assess the needs of beneficiaries, or with people who have tested or piloted the products of the project, to provide feedback.

6. Keeping up with the evolution of technology

ICT offers a rich potential for enhancing the quality and the efficiency of European project work, whilst also supporting closer and more intense interaction among team members. It therefore represents an opportunity not to be missed by any project. However, these benefits come only if appropriate tools are selected, based on an open process taking into account the specific needs of the project, the tools available, and the preferences of team members.

The past decade has witnessed huge changes in both the accessibility of various ICT tools and in what they have to offer. The new possibilities offered by the internet (Web 2.0), make it easy for anyone, not only to use the internet as a resource, but also to provide content, accessible online directly, without requiring specialised skills or training. This has started to be reflected in European education projects and will probably develop even more over the next few years. If during the first phase of internet development technical support was essential and the possibilities of ordinary users were very limited, with Web 2.0 the web is seen as an open platform and the users take the lead. Although a fuzzy and even controversial term, Web 2.0 is a good metaphor to illustrate the evolution in the use of the internet. Web 2.0 is also associated with the idea of democracy and participation: Anyone can now attract thousands of visitors to her/his blog or make it to the headlines of the mainstream media by posting a video onto YouTube. The wikis, made famous by Wikipedia, the encyclopaedia based on contributions by users, are also part of this new landscape. This offers new opportunities for European Multilateral Projects, from the increased ability to find partners, to exchanges with peers during implementation and wider dissemination of their products.

Another important trend is related to the use of the internet for communication. If now it is already easy to speak with colleagues and to see them, or to organise virtual meetings, we can expect that in the near future connectivity will be so high that team members will be able to be in contact with each other at any time and from wherever they are, even when travelling. Internet is now widely accessible by phone or other mobile devices, making it possible to check emails, receive notices about updates on a website, and even attend a virtual meeting. It is therefore difficult to give detailed instructions and recommendations in this dynamic environment, but the key ideas of a thoughtful selection of ICT tools, of the importance of virtual leadership skills and of the joint and transparent definition of rules about using ICT, are now unavoidable issues to be dealt with by any transnational European education project team.

Note: We chose to use generic terms for the ICT tools described and not to give the names of specific tools. We made only a few exceptions for free tools: Skype, Doodle, YouTube, Second Life, Moodle and the Virtual Intercultural Team Tool (resulting from a LLP project). In the case of all the tools mentioned, a simple search on the internet will provide various options. Specific links to examples of tools are also available on the *Survival Kit* website www.european–project-management.eu

Chapter 9: Quality and Evaluation

In common with the other components of the *Survival Kit,* evaluation should be seen as a process, linked to all of the other chapters and therefore permeating project management. This process should be driven by questioning and by the desire for a high quality project. Quality is partly defined through the impact of the project, but should also extend to relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and long term sustainability. If evaluative evidence shows that goals have been achieved now is the time for the project to move on to further priorities and quality outcomes. Coupled with this approach is the willingness to change direction should evaluative results indicate that the anticipated outcomes are not being achieved or are not of high quality.

Evaluation should itself be an opportunity for learning and this chapter will examine the role of evaluation and quality assurance in the context of a Multilateral Project in the Lifelong Learning Programme. It will offer suggestions for choosing evaluation approaches and tools appropriate to the project. It will also stress the use of a clear and unambiguous vocabulary that is shared and understood by all project participants.

1. Defining the role of evaluation in a Multilateral Project

It is generally accepted that it is good practice to reflect on any educational project. In terms of Multilateral Projects in the Lifelong Learning Programme this reflection needs to be a well organised strategy which not only fits the individual project but also conforms to the evaluative principles set out by the funder, in this instance the European Commission. A working definition for all Multilateral Projects could be:
Evaluation is the systematic application of empirical methods which aims to assess and improve the planning, implementation and impact of a project.

In the context of a Multilateral Project evaluation should therefore be seen as an important and productive process:

- It supports the project and acts as a check on whether the targets have been met
- It allows the results to be improved based upon judgements made about the value and quality of the project
- It simplifies decision making and can assist with fundamental changes in the project, should these be necessary
- It involves all the project partners and provides a context for open discussion, debate and agreement on project performance
- It should reveal strengths as well as weaknesses and identify obstacles to progress

Measuring the impact and quality of projects is not easy, it is much more straightforward to assess if the outputs (publications, courses, websites) have been produced, and produced on time. Many projects will then supplement this information by frantically circulating questionnaires alongside their products towards the end of the funding period. This does not fit in with the evaluative principles set out by the Lifelong Learning Programme. Evaluation is a process that must not be left to the final stages of the project. By this time outputs and results may have been achieved but without a more searching evaluation. As a consequence the project team may have failed to put forward or even to note desirable modifications. Thus opportunities will have been lost and the quality of the project impaired.

An explanation of terminology

A common understanding of terminology is vital in clarifying the purpose of evaluation in the context of a Multilateral Project.

Formative and summative evaluation are two commonly used terms:

Formative evaluation is the fundamental tool for improving good practice and therefore the performance of any project. It takes place during the whole lifespan of the project and has the purpose of gaining feedback to ensure that the project is progressing as planned. Formative evaluation is therefore a developmental process which at its best is 'owned' not just by the project team but also takes the form of a dialogue with other stakeholders (often referred to as co-development).

Summative evaluation happens at the end of the project and probably employs different evaluation tools and methodologies. It too has an important role in assembling what has been learned from the project's work and making this available to audiences that can benefit directly or are in a position to take the work further.

Two additional terms are *internal evaluation* and *external evaluation*:

Internal evaluation is carried out by project partners (or by one partner) and is effectively self-evaluation. External evaluation involves the appointment by the project of an independent 'expert' who will follow the progress of the project and apply a range of agreed evaluation tools.

External evaluation need not follow all of the project activities but may sometimes be employed for summative purposes only. An external evaluator does not function as an inspector, but should remain reasonably detached from the project in order to present an independent view. External evaluation is dealt with later in this chapter.

Box 1: Evaluation in action – Example 1

Mental Health – Trained Today to Train tomorrow (Grundtvig Project)

The project's approach to the internal evaluation of the project:
We decided in January in Bucharest and in the next months via email that the main items of the internal evaluation of our project must be:

- *Quality of the transnational partnership*
- *Project management, leadership and quality assurance*
- *Project*
- *Resources*
- *Guidelines for evaluating*

We decided to use as an evaluation tool the one created by Aberdeen City Council Education Department: www.aberdeen-education.org.uk/European/

Project website: http://mentalhealth-trainedtodaytotraintomorrow.eu/

Monitoring and evaluation: the potential for confusion

These two terms are frequently used together but have different meanings. Monitoring is the on-going review and assessment of performance or progress towards stated objectives. Evaluation, as the previous section states, is focussed on the quality of all the project's processes, outputs and outcomes. This includes the quality of the monitoring process.

Monitoring can be a demanding task for the co-ordinator of a European project where the partners are scattered geographically. Some of the ICT communication tools discussed elsewhere in this document have useful applications in project monitoring. In principle review meetings can be done virtually: Collaborative tools, telephone or video conferences, chats and forums, or messenger systems like Skype can be used to compare and discuss achievements and shortcomings.

Monitoring relies on accurate and timely reporting and co-ordinators may put in place specific reporting formats for this purpose. Monitoring can also be achieved through meetings or by dedicating agenda time in meetings that have a wider purpose (face-to-face or virtual): these are review meetings (see Section 3).

Monitoring is covered in greater detail in *Chapter 5: Project Administration.*

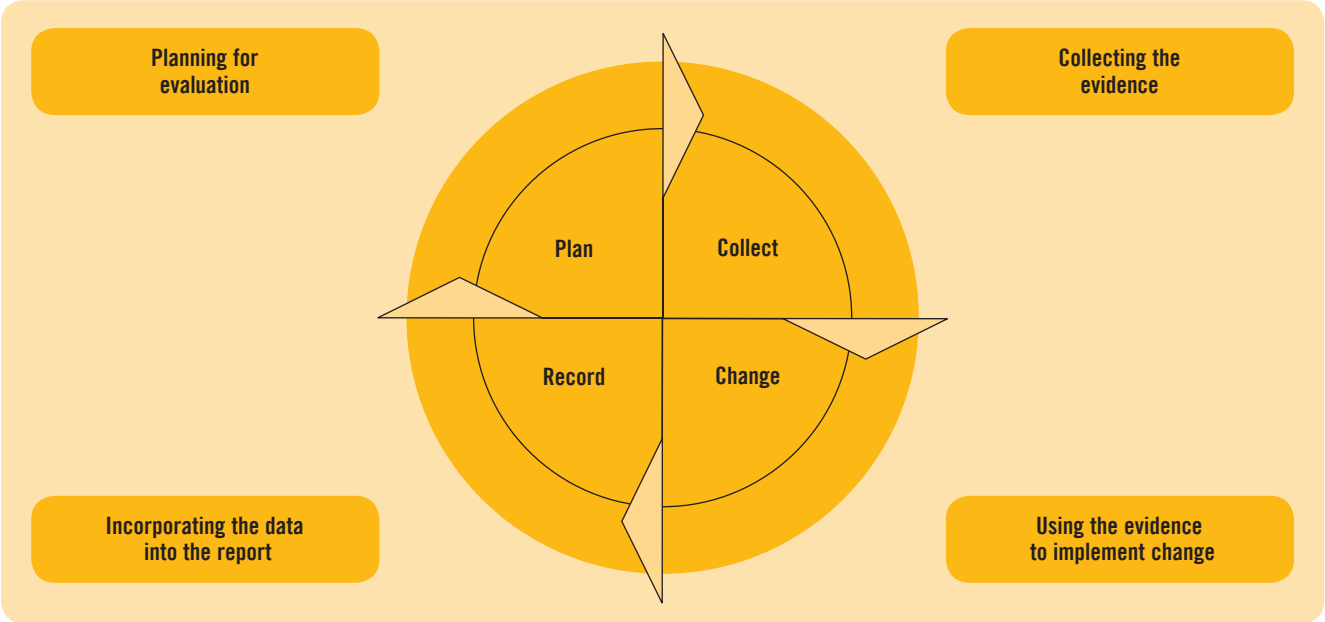
Stages in evaluation

The requirement for an evaluation strategy is a feature of most, if not all funding programmes inside and outside of the EU. Constructing this strategy is often not a top priority for a project team working to complete a complicated application for a rapidly approaching deadline. However, a convincing evaluation plan shows the funder that the project has the capacity to be flexible. It also helps to demonstrate that the needs and demands of the target group(s) have been taken into account.

Therefore the evaluation processes suggested by this document aim to:

- Support the management of the project
- Simplify the consultation process within the project partnership
- Predict the development of the project and prepare the project team for pressure points in the course of the project life span
- Assist the project co-ordinator in quantifying results and relating these to the project objectives

Box 2: Project evaluation cycle



- Reduce the workload of constructing the interim or final reports
- Ensure the quality of the processes, outputs and outcomes of the project

The sections in Box 2 are built around a cycle of events, however it is important to emphasise that each stage should be accompanied by dialogue within and outside of the project:

2. Planning for evaluation – a learning exercise

Evaluation cannot take place unless the partners in a project are clear about what they expect the work will achieve. The planning stage for evaluation acts as a learning exercise because it makes completely clear what the measurement of success and quality will look like and this is inextricably linked to the aims and objectives of the project. Therefore at this stage any conflicts of interest will tend to be exposed. It is clearly better for this to happen as the project is being planned rather than during the delivery phase. A systematic evaluation plan will break the project into distinct elements, list the quality indicators for each element and finally identify appropriate evaluation tools.

Examples of Evaluation Plans can be found as downloads on the *Survival Kit* website: www.european-project-management.eu

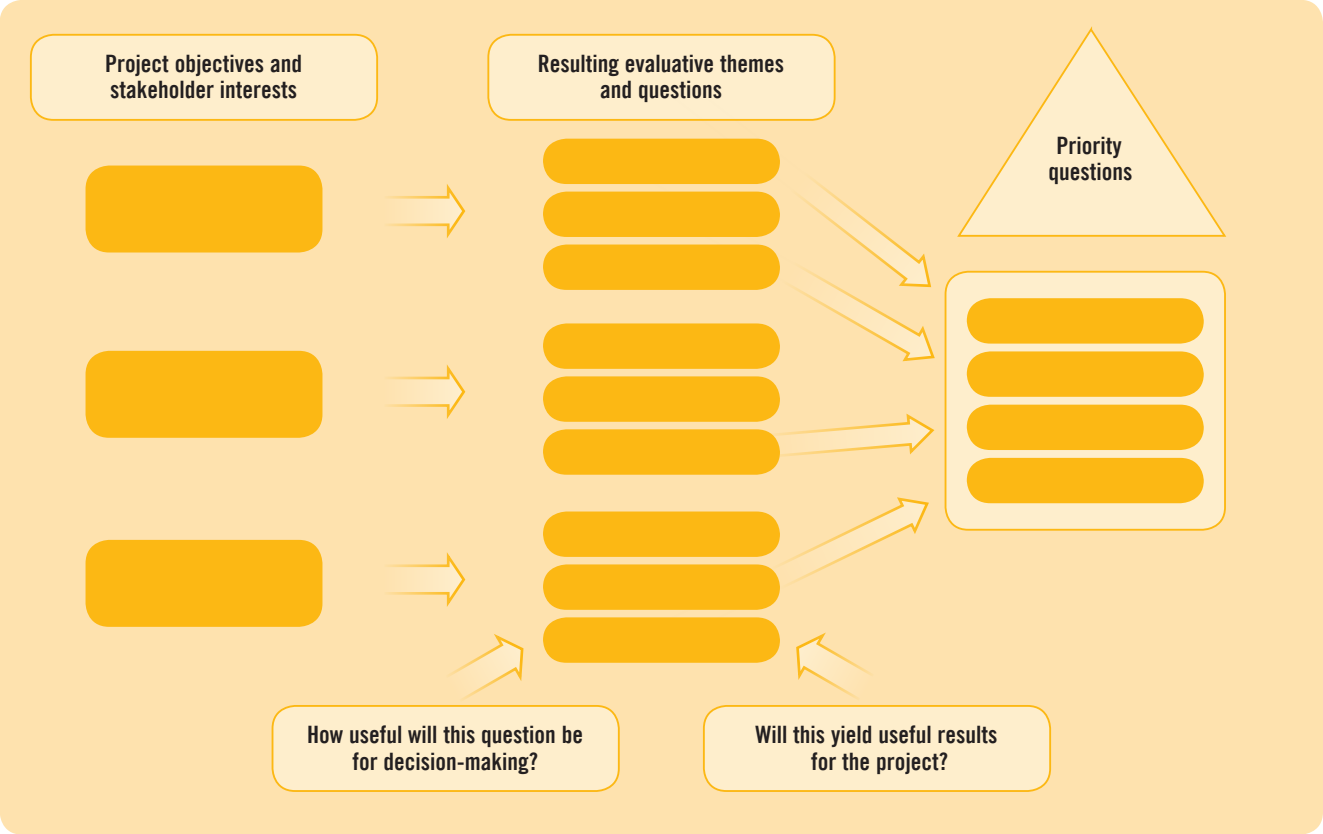
Box 3: Evaluation in action – Example 2

Seniors in Action (Grundtvig Multilateral Project)

The evaluation plan for this project is being applied at two levels: internal and external. The external evaluation will be undertaken by an expert in the field and will have a summative typology. The internal evaluation is mainly of the formative type. It applies on an on-going basis amongst the partners. The techniques used are: conceptual reports, discussions, filling in questionnaires and where appropriate written observations. The main aspects that are subject to the evaluation is the degree of correspondence between project's objectives the project's results, the project's approach and the project's impact to the target groups. Assessments will be also made for the possibilities that will be created to sustain the project's results and achievements beyond its lifespan. An evaluation review will be published on the project's website:

www.ecose.org/seniorsinaction

Box 4: Focusing project evaluation on common themes and questions



Key planning questions

1. Do all members of the partnership have the same understanding of what is most important in the project?
Is the evaluation strategy focused on these issues?

2. What are the priorities for evaluation?
It is impossible to evaluate everything! The following diagram (Box 4) illustrates the process of refining the component parts of a project and making balanced decisions about the themes or areas which are to be evaluated. These should be spread across the following broad categories:

- The processes of the project (activities, meetings, communications)
- The ongoing project plans especially the plans for dissemination, exploitation and sustainability
- The outputs or products (materials, website, DVDs, learning platform, conferences)
- The management and day to day operation of the project
- The 'transnational element' (European added value)

It is also important that some outcomes are included in the list. These might include:

- Changes in thinking or behaviour of the target group(s)
- Achievements of members of the target group(s)
- Impact of the project on member institutions or organisations
- Impact of the project on other institutions or organisations
- Any broader impact on regional or national systems

This is a more difficult area because in order to evaluate it effectively the project team needs to know the original situation. They are likely to know it in relation to themselves and their own organisations but less likely for other institutions or systems. Just like other areas of the project the targets for evaluation also need to be S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Resourced (and Relevant) and Time-related).

3. Benchmarking: do we know the original situation?

This is the process of assessing the current situation of the target group(s) for the project. In the context of a Multilateral

Box 5: External versus internal evaluation

Internal evaluation	External evaluation
Higher learning potential for people involved	Higher degree of objectivity
Internal evaluators bring thematic expertise	Adds to the credibility of the project
Joint reflection contributes to team building	Necessary if the project needs justification
Less expensive	External evaluator brings evaluation expertise

Project some benchmarking may already have been achieved as part of a needs analysis prior to the application. This process establishes that there is a real need for the project, that it is attainable and that it has the potential to benefit a number of groups. Benchmarking usually takes the form of a survey which helps the project team to judge the existing skills, knowledge and attitudes of the target groups.

4. What will be the indicators of change?

Indicators of change are clear descriptions of what the project team (and others) should observe if the project is a success. Establishing these indicators is very much part of the planning process whereas measuring the degree of change is part of the evaluation strategy of the project.

5. How do we budget for evaluation

Many projects underestimate the costs in term of time and funding required for evaluation. Although it is difficult to make concrete recommendations in terms of financial allocation most projects aim to dedicate approximately 10 % of the time involved on evaluative activities. However, this includes both internal and self evaluation carried out by the co-ordinator and partners coupled with sub-contracted external evaluation and any peer evaluation that the project might commission.

6. Who will be the evaluators?

There are several approaches to the practical issue of delivering the evaluation plan:

- Form an internal evaluation team from within the partnership which concentrates on **self evaluation** and has the ultimate aims of learning and improving quality as the project proceeds. In this way the responsibility for evaluation is shared across the partnership perhaps alongside the work of an external evaluator (see Box 6)
- Cross evaluate with another project (see Section 3: Evaluation Methodologies)
- Appointing one partner who takes the lead role in planning and implementing evaluation, this might be their only role in the project
- Appoint a competent and credible external expert to take care of all evaluation activities

Evaluation credibility and competence

External evaluators need a number of qualities if they are to be accepted and their findings are given credibility by the project team. These qualities need to be stated when the project draws up a tender for the evaluation role and they include:

- Being trustworthy as well as professionally competent
- Having complete integrity and discretion
- Independence
- Good social and communication skills

In practice most projects rely on a combination of these approaches, perhaps with the external evaluator only being used at certain times during the project when an independent voice is needed.

Terms of reference for an external evaluator can be found as downloads on the *Survival Kit* website: www.european-project-management.eu

Box 6: Exemplar self-evaluation sheet: Degree of involvement in network activities
(From: Bienzle/Gelabert/Jütte/Kolyva/Meyer/Tilkin (2007), The Art of Networking, p. 103)

Involvement: Please circle in column 1 the level of involvement you **should** have (according to your agreement with the co-ordinator) in each p activity below and circle in column 2 the level you **actually** have.
Scale: 0 = none, 1 = very low, 2 = low, 3 = moderate, 4 = high, 5 = very high.

Overview of typical network activities	1: Should have						2: Actually have					
Collection of relevant materials	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Evaluation / assessment of relevant materials	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Production / writing of reference materials	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Doing research in this field	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Piloting / testing methods / material	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Organising conferences	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Organising training days	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Being a speaker, giving presentations	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Sharing experience within the network partnership	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Communicating within the network	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Working with specific target groups	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Training of network actors (partners, members, target groups)	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Passing on information in your own institution	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Providing support to other projects in this thematic field	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Creating visibility of the network beyond its participants	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Awareness raising, campaigns in the field	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Representing interests and advocacy	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Contacting policy makers	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Dissemination / valorisation	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Policy development	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Validation, recognition, integration of innovation into existing systems	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Curriculum development	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Creation of a European added value	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Calling upon your own (existing) networks	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Developing and extending the network	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Interacting with other projects and networks	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Generating new projects	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Mainstreaming: integrating outcomes in regular curricula:	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Creating a network culture	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5

3. Evaluation methodologies

Questionnaire:

The questionnaire is a commonly used methodology. Questionnaires may follow courses or conferences, accompany newsletters or other project products or feature as 'pop-ups' on a project website. However, the return rates from questionnaires may be extremely low.

Interview:

Interviews may be face-to-face, telephone or virtual. If several interviewers are to be involved it is important that their questions are identical and include opportunities to 'probe' an interviewee with an additional question or development of an answer. Interviews may generate a considerable amount of material and require detailed analysis.

Most Significant Change (MSC):

This is a form of participatory monitoring and evaluation that can be planned to occur throughout the project to provide data on both impact and outcomes. It involves the collection of 'stories' about significant changes brought about by the project. These stories will usually come from structured interviews with members of the target groups who are asked the same questions across the project partnership. When the stories have been collected they are analysed by an independent panel whose members identify the most significant factors in the stories. MSC has become a well used evaluative methodology in international projects.
See: www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf

Peer Mentoring:

There may be occasions in the life cycle of a project where Peer Mentoring has a place as an evaluative strategy to explore issues and challenges facing the project more probably in terms of the project's processes rather than its outputs. It works well in bringing together workers who are comparatively isolated (either face-to-face or virtually) to explore issues and challenges. It is therefore part of the self-evaluation process based on Action Learning:

Action Learning:

'…is a process underpinning the belief in individual potential: a way of learning from our actions, and from what happens to us, and around us, by taking the time to question, understand and reflect, to gain insights, and consider how to act in future.'
Krystynia Weinstein (1995): Action Learning – A Practical Guide for Managers

Peer Mentoring works best if it follows a defined structure:

- Project workers agree to meet collaboratively on a regular basis
- The group agrees ground rules which include complete openness and mutual trust
- Members take turns in presenting their individual situations complete with highlights, challenges and problems
- Action points are discussed and agreed
- The overall quality of the project is improved

An important part of the process is the way in which the discussion is structured so that groups (focussing on each individual member in turn) give advice and offer options for action in ways which encourage reflection and problem solving. One very important ground rule is for members to avoid simply telling their own stories as a ready means of providing a solution. In an international project it is most unlikely that working circumstances are the same or even similar so it is important for group members to ask questions as part of the procedure.

This process can be summarised in the GROW model (Box 7).

GROW model (or process):

This is a technique for problem solving or goal setting which is used extensively in the business arena but has many applications elsewhere. The model can also be used by any group who are all working on the same problem or goal. No one person can be identified as the originator but Graham Alexander, Alan Fine and Sir John Whitmore who are all well known in the world of coaching, made significant contributions.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GROW_model, March 2010

Box 7: The GROW model

The GROW model

G	R	O	W
Goal	**Reality**	**Obstacles and Options**	**What, when, whom?**
What is it that we are aiming to achieve in this aspect of our work?	What is the reality of the situation? What feedback have we received so far about the project? What are the issues and concerns identified through the evaluation?	What are the obstacles to change? What are the recommendations? Are they useful? What are the resources we have available?	What exactly are we going to do differently? Who is going to do it? When?

Review meetings:

Review meetings may be used to monitor the progress of the project but also to examine the findings from formative evaluation work (see Section 1). Review meetings may be timetabled to coincide with important project milestones such as reporting deadlines and may be face-to-face or virtual. To make them a success they should:

- Update partners on what has happened
- Focus on specific aspects of the project to be monitored
- Be based on already organised and interpreted information
- Be clear about the key documents and sources of the information
- Reflect critical points in the project cycle (milestones)

It is important to remember that these should also be occasions when project achievements are celebrated!

'Critical friend':

This term is open to interpretation but usually refers to an individual who is asked to provide an informal view of project progress from time to time. 'Critical friends' will usually not enter into a formal contract in the same way as an external evaluator.

Cross project evaluation:

This is a practical proposition when two or more projects are engaged on similar themes or working with similar target audiences. The two projects each devote some evaluation time to the other project. As the evaluators are involved in similar projects they understand very well the thematic field and the structural framework of the activities. There may also be considerable savings in the planning stage since both projects can benefit from the same documentation. Cross project evaluation also brings other benefits since the two projects will become linked and a certain amount of cross fertilisation of ideas and techniques is inevitable. Cross-evaluation might be cheaper than contracting an external expert. Within the Lifelong Learning Programme there is also the potential for the collaborative development of both projects as a network.

Agile and Open Space – the possibilities offered by new methodologies:

The Agile system of project management evolved in the world of software development. This system is based on flexibility, on working groups and teams coming from diverse backgrounds and not necessarily using a hierarchical approach to the management of their project. In terms of project evaluation this implies that a range of evaluation tools need to be available to the group to be used appropriately.

Open Space Technology is connected with meetings and events of the sort that are typical of a Multilateral Project.

Box 8: Evaluation in action – Example 3

A comparative analysis of folk tales: a multicultural perspective (Comenius Project)

The partner meetings in this project were basically planned in order to evaluate methodologies and results. During these meetings the partners shared their own experiences along with the dissimilar and diversified practices they experienced. Moreover the partners attended the workshops run by their colleagues whenever possible during these meetings. Since the consortium was composed of academicians/scholars who were from different disciplines – although all are related to education – the applications and practices were enriched by suggestions and re-structured for the best results. As well as being a multicultural study, the project has also been operated on a multidisciplinary basis. In this way both the partners have re-evaluated and enriched their own activities, workshops and applications under peer inspection within an internal observation system and they have also contributed to the improvement of the activities and their applications in a reciprocal way.
Project website: www.caft.gazi.edu.tr

The important difference from a tightly structured event is that participants create and manage their own agenda around a number of themes of strategic importance to the project. In terms of evaluation this again implies flexibility and resourcefulness on the part of the project co-ordinator plus a familiarity with a number of evaluation tools and techniques.

4. Evaluation tools – collecting evidence

This intention of this section is to help the project team to choose appropriate evaluation instruments which can be used to collect evidence both from project workers and from target groups. Experienced project co-ordinators may have favourite and familiar evaluation techniques which have worked in the past. However, every project is different and it is also important for projects to keep up to date with recently developed methodologies and be imaginative in the choice of evaluation tools. The following table could be used as a means of narrowing down the choice and also showing where a single tool could be used for several purposes:

Box 9: Evaluation instruments to choose from

Project objectives	Indicators of change	Evaluation tools
		1 2 3 4 5 6
		1 2 3 4 5 6
		1 2 3 4 5 6
		1 2 3 4 5 6
		1 2 3 4 5 6
		1 2 3 4 5 6

1	Questionnaire	2	Learning Log	3	Web Tool
4	User Group	5	Stats Analysis	6	Interviews

Different kinds of data

Evaluation methodologies will inevitably generate data of one sort or another. Therefore before evaluation starts it is important to predict the nature of that data and how useful it will be in steering the work of the project. It is advisable to generate both qualitative and quantitative data, in this way subsequent decision making can be seen to be based on a mix of information.

Qualitative data tends to be descriptive text and includes interviews, the minutes of meetings or focus groups, case studies, reflective diaries and observations.

Box 10: Evaluation instruments and guidelines developed specifically for European projects

Self-Evaluation in Adult Life Long Learning (SEALLL):
www.sealll.eu/

This project was funded under the Grundtvig strand of the Socrates programme and ended formally in 2007 although material is still being added to the website. In terms of content it firmly relates to the Lifelong Learning Programme and especially to Adult Learning but it is important to note that it is aimed at organisations rather than multi-national projects. As the project title states the focus is on self evaluation, therefore this site does not aim to provide a ready made set of evaluation instruments which can easily be adapted to generate quantitative material. The project team envisaged self evaluation as a developmental tool which can be applied by learners, teachers, developers and project managers to aspects of an institution or organisation (learning, teaching, programme, organisation and management and external relations).
A key part of the site is the 'Tools Grid' which enables access to a whole series of evaluation instruments. It is very much in the spirit of self evaluation that a project actor can use this grid to select an appropriate instrument dependant on the target group. Much of the material has been translated into several languages so that target groups can self evaluate in their mother tongue, this is an important factor in qualitative work where a lack of facility with a foreign language can easily take away the meaning of a useful comment.

INTERtool: www.intertool.eu
The INTERTool project aims at providing European project managers and teams in adult education with the basic specific intercultural competencies necessary for successful transnational co-operation in the framework of European projects, with a strong focus on the virtual dimension. To this end, virtual and face-to-face learning and training tools are being developed, produced and tested. INTERtool includes an Evaluation Tool alongside its other aids to project management.
(cf. also *Chapter 7: Intercultural Elements in European Project Management)*

Quantitative data is measurable and includes the hits on a website, numbers attending a course and any other numerical data the project is able to generate.

Designing a questionnaire

Using too many questions will create a large amount of data and a lengthy period for its analysis. Choose a few questions with clear wording. Initial questions may start by asking the respondent simply to recall what took place. Only later or final questions should ask for judgements and personal responses. Free software is now available to generate email questionnaires or surveys with a highly professional appearance. These survey tools can easily incorporate multiple choice, rating scales and drop-down menus and also offer support in the analysis of data.

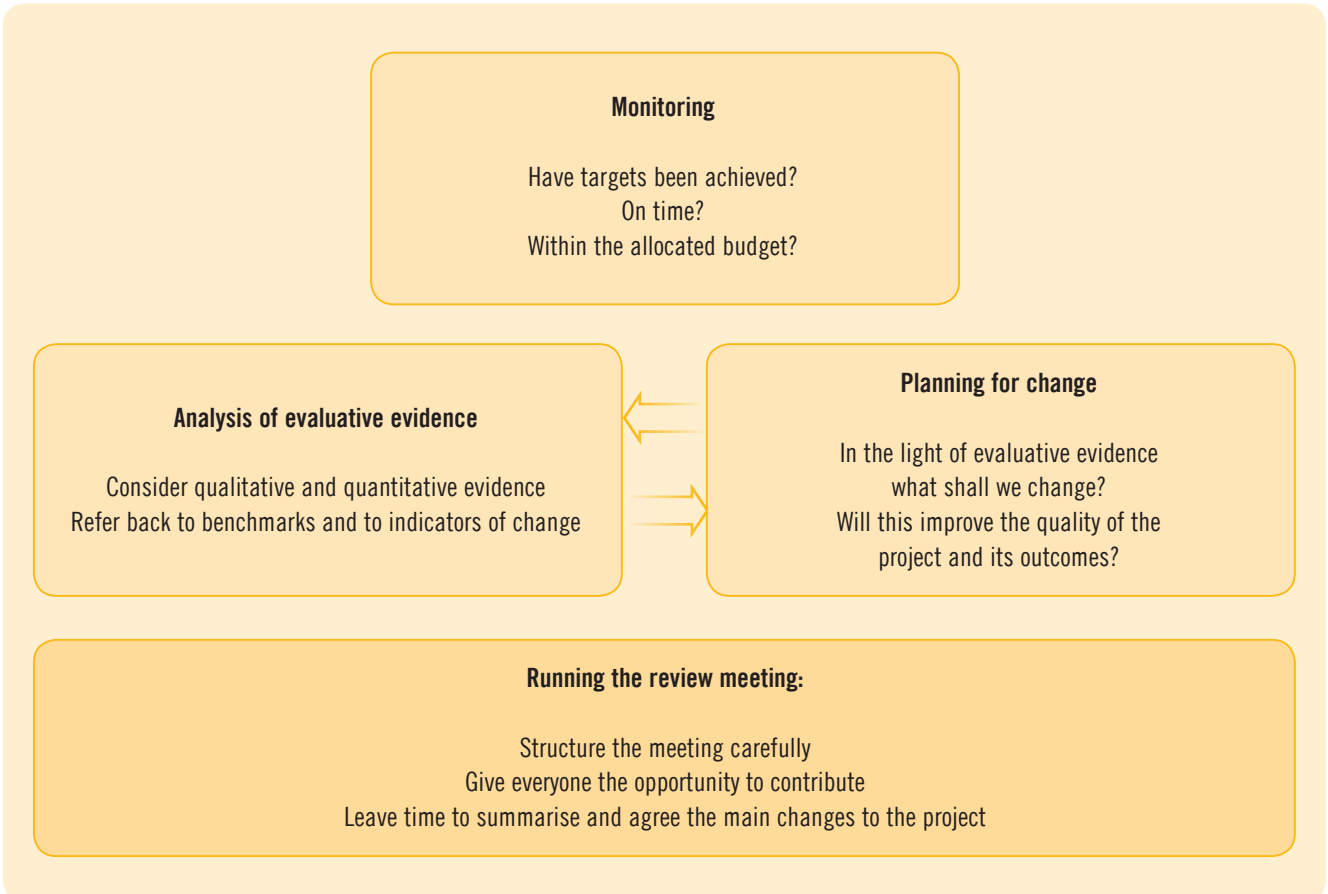
5. Using evidence to implement changes

It is very much within the spirit of self-evaluation for the evidence obtained to be the subject of a review meeting between members of the partnership. This can also be used for monitoring purposes. Such a meeting should include discussion and decisions on issues of quality and potentially re-aligning some of the project's objectives in the light of evaluative findings.

Qualitative evidence

It is important to remember that qualitative evidence is not easy to interpret especially when this consists of opinions – albeit based on an informed view of the project. Most questionnaires or surveys will include a small number of very positive or very negative comments but these should not attract undue

Box 11: Review meetings



attention. Instead it is worth focusing on evidence which shows real change, progress and development and is especially worth looking for the unexpected outcomes from the project. These may be revealed through more innovative evaluation tools such as interviews or reflective diaries. Stakeholder comments will need to be extracted and presented in a useable format before the meeting.

Quantitative evidence

Quantitative evidence will need to be interpreted before such a meeting. It is important not to underestimate how long this process might take. It is also useful to remember that for some people interpreting data is their full time profession. Much time might be saved either by seeking external expertise for this part of the project or by using suitable data analysis software. Project co-ordinators should also not overlook the possibility of errors given that the initial data collection may be in the hands of a project partners who may not all be similarly skilled.

6. Incorporating evaluative data into project reporting

It is now generally accepted that to be effective evaluation activities should run over the whole funding period of a European project. This is also a clear expectation of the Executive Agency, and planning for evaluation is an important section in any application for funding from the Lifelong Learning Programme. The Executive Agency expects to see a dissemination plan for the results of the project (products, methods, experiences, policy lessons and European co-operation). There is also an expectation that the project team will strive to achieve high quality results and that this will involve an ongoing process of evaluation and subsequently some modification of the original project plan. And finally, thorough project evaluation is an important criterion against which the Executive Agency assesses the level of achievement of a Multilateral Project.

Therefore the final and interim reports for a Multilateral Project should contain a section on the effectiveness of the evaluation strategy. If important modifications have been made to the objectives and work plan as a result of the evaluation results it will be especially important for the Executive Agency to understand the evidence that has led to these changes.

The report should contain:

- The targets for evaluation (why were these chosen?)
- The means of collecting evidence and the times at which this was carried out (a variety of methods focusing on qualitative and quantitative evidence)
- Summaries of the data and other notable responses (not forgetting quotations where appropriate)
- Minutes of the Review meetings (face-to-face or virtual)
- Project modifications (as a result of formative evaluation) together with further justification if appropriate

It is also important to include results from the very end of the project (summative evaluation) and these should include some extra factors such as drawing lessons from what the team members have experienced and how this learning might be disseminated to other projects.

Chapter 10: Dissemination and Exploitation of Results

Dissemination, exploitation of results and sustainability are key elements in a Multilateral Project in the Lifelong Learning Programme. Their importance has increased through several generations of EU funding programmes. While the aim of Multilateral Projects is to achieve concrete and innovative results and products with a clear European value, the results of many projects have not been adopted to the expected extent by organisations outside the partnerships or even by the partner organisations in the long-term.

In the Lifelong Learning Programme dissemination plays an important role from the beginning of the project's life-span to its end. From the funding programme's point of view it is not enough to focus the dissemination activities mainly in the final stages of the project. Instead, a strategy which covers the whole project cycle is necessary.

The chapter aims to provide core information about the concepts of dissemination, exploitation and sustainability of results of a Multilateral Project in a way that a project can adapt it to its own needs. Guidance documents on project dissemination which are already available on the website of the European Commission have been used as reference material:
(http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/valorisation/index_en.html)

1. Basic concepts and key terminology

This section examines the main concepts related to spreading information about projects, their activities, outcomes and their impact in the educational field. It is important to understand these concepts to be able to construct a compact project plan and to successfully carry out dissemination and exploitation activities in the project. On its central website on these issues, sometimes subsumed under the French word *valorisation,* the European Commission defines the key terms as follows:

Dissemination: *This is defined as a planned process of providing information on the quality, relevance and effectiveness of the results of programmes and initiatives to key actors. It occurs as and when the results of programmes and initiatives become available. This activity happens at both project and programme level, and involves the active participation of intermediary* relay *bodies.*

Exploitation *consists of* **mainstreaming** *and* **multiplication**. Mainstreaming *is the planned process of transferring the successful results of programmes and initiatives to appropriate decision-makers in regulated local, regional, national or European systems.* Multiplication *is the planned process of convincing individual end users to adopt and/or apply the results of programmes and initiatives.*
(Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) Guide 2010. Part I: General provisions, p. 56: http://ec.europa.eu/education/llp/doc848_en.htm, March 2010)

Sustainability *is the capacity of the project to continue its existence and functioning beyond the end of the funded period. The project results are used and exploited continuously. Sustainability of results implies use and exploitation of results in the longer term.*
(http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/valorisation/glossary_en.htm, March 2010)

To put the expectations of the Lifelong Learning Programme more concisely: A Multilateral Project should seek to promote the project, its processes and (interim and final) results from the beginning, make sure that the results reflect the needs of their envisaged users and are actually used by these groups, and make provisions for these results to have a lasting impact on the educational field concerned.

2. Developing a dissemination plan

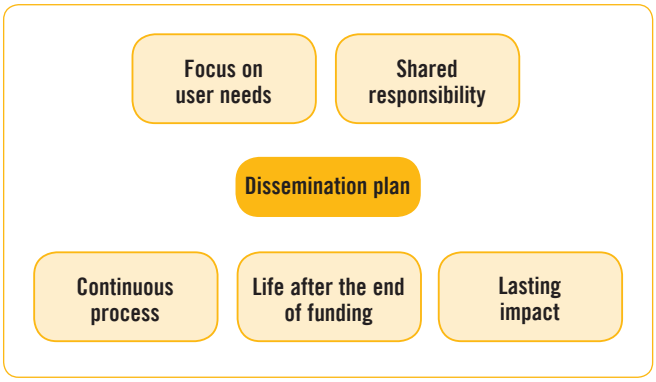
A plan for dissemination and exploitation indicates all project activities in this respect to be carried out during a project's lifetime. A first plan has to be drafted at proposal stage and needs to be refined in the start-up phase of the project. It contains activities to be carried out continuously until the project's end (and possibly afterwards).

A solid dissemination and exploitation plan addresses the following questions:

- What kind of needs does the project respond to? (needs analysis)
- What are the expected project results? (anticipation of outcomes)
- Who are the potential users and final beneficiaries of the project's outcomes? (exploitation and sustainability of results)
- What types of dissemination activities are appropriate to reach the target groups (action to be taken)
- What are the most appropriate means channels (dissemination channels)
- When should the activities take place? (timing)
- What are the human and financial resources available for dissemination? (resources)
- Who is doing what? (task allocation)

Box 1 lists characteristics of a sound dissemination plan.

Box 1: Characteristics of a sound dissemination plan



A clear and dynamic focus on user needs

A thorough needs analysis is the starting point for the process of dissemination. In an ideal world it should take place before starting a project (cf. *Chapter 3: Planning a Multilateral Project*), but in many projects a detailed analysis is not done until the first project phase. The analysis aims at defining the needs of the target group and orientating project activities to effectively answer these needs.

It should be kept in mind that a Multilateral Project is a Europe-wide activity therefore the different educational contexts of European partner countries need to be taken into account with regard to dissemination.

The dissemination plan should set out how the initial needs analysis will be reviewed and updated during the project to ensure that the results remain relevant to the targeted end users. The plan should also indicate scanning activities to identify broader target groups with a potential interest in the results.

Shared responsibility amongst all the partners

Dissemination is of such high importance in the project that it should not be allocated just to one person or to one project partner. Each partner has to be involved in dissemination activities. The dissemination plan should set out clearly each partner's specific tasks in line with their particular interests and expertise. Responsibility for the dissemination and exploitation of results lies with the whole partnership. A dissemination plan which focuses on the dissemination channels of the co-ordinator or few partners only should be avoided.

The networks of each partner are essential channels of dissemination and they should be involved in the dissemination plan of the project. Dissemination can also be an opportunity for some project partners to reach out to new European audiences hitherto not addressed.

A continuous process

Dissemination activities should be conceived and planned from the very outset of the project. When starting the planning of dissemination it is important that it embraces the whole life-span of the project and that there is continuity in the dissemination activities during the project. While at the early stages of the project dissemination activities ensure that the project is addressing the needs and demands of the target group, the process will move on to potential marketing opportunities by the end. This time perspective makes it clear that dissemination is not a separate activity, instead there is a close link between all promotion activities and the development of the project.

Life after the end of the project

One of the guiding principles in planning dissemination and exploitation of results is that the end of the funding period should not be the end of dissemination activities. The project period is often a phase of intensive work towards ambitious goals. It is wise to think of the time after the project period while still in the first phase. If dissemination can continue after the end of funding the project's impact and sustainability can be increased. This is a difficult task for many partnerships.

In spite of the problem of finding both the resources and the motivation for continuing dissemination activities the long view should eventually replace the much shorter term of the project's funded period.

Lasting impact

Impact is the effect the project and its results have on practices and systems. When drafting a project proposal the project has to anticipate what impact it will eventually have on the partner institutions involved, on institutions in their neighbourhood and, at a larger scale, at national and European level.

Important questions to address with regard to planning impact are: How will the project results get to the envisaged users? Which decision-makers, multipliers, policy-makers may be interested in the project and could help to integrate its results into mainstream education?

3. Dissemination questions: what, to whom, how and when to disseminate

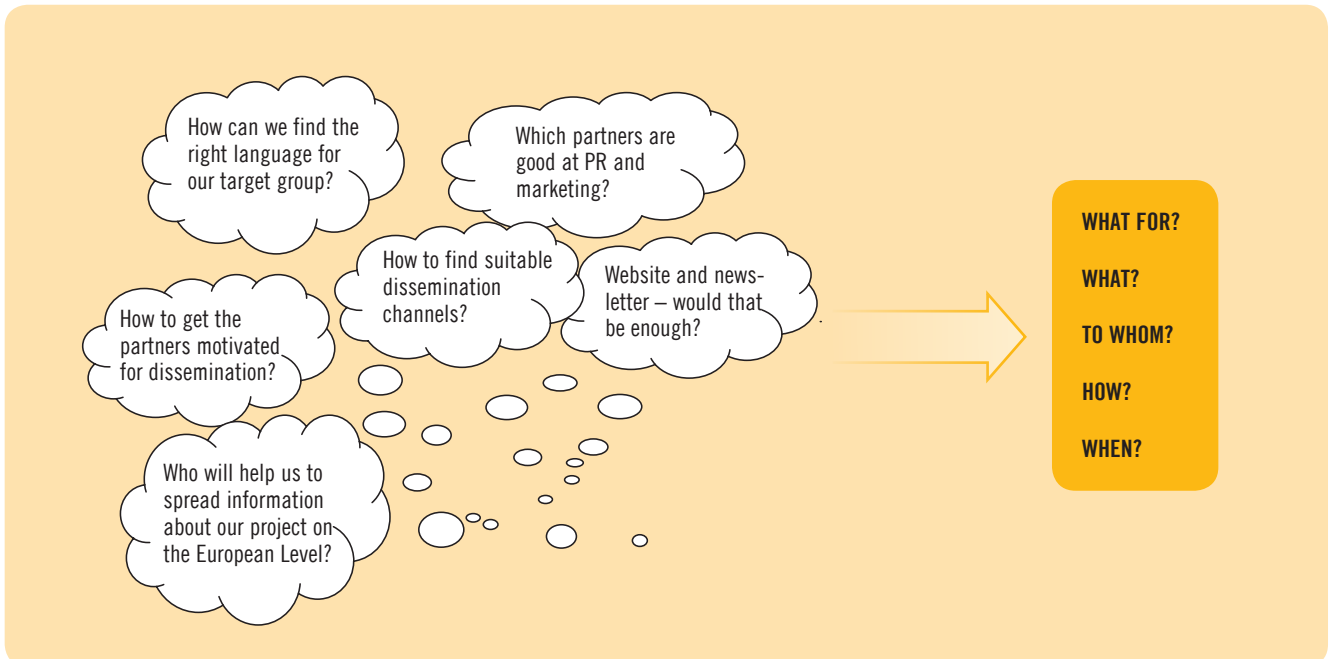
When starting dissemination planning a project co-ordinator might have a number of vague questions in his or her mind, as Box 2 illustrates. They need to be brought into a systematic dissemination plan. Orientation towards a few guiding dissemination questions can help in this process.

Dissemination: what for?

It is crucial that the partners in a Multilateral Project ask fundamental questions about the purpose of their dissemination activities in order to avoid widespread misunderstanding. Dissemination is not about spreading information to a vaguely defined group of recipients. It is about formulating messages to identified stakeholders and entering into a dialogue with them. This is a purposeful, two way process. Therefore in its dissemination and exploitation strategy a project should make clear which key issues it wants to get across to which group(s) and provide these groups with plenty of opportunities to express their needs, make suggestions and give critical feedback with regard to the main aspects of the project.

JISC, a UK expert network which gives support to the education and research communities lists the main purposes of project dissemination:

Box 2: Initial thoughts about dissemination



All dissemination should have a purpose, and support or inform project development in some way. The purpose of the activity may be to:

- *Raise awareness – let others know what you are doing*
- *Inform – educate the community*
- *Engage – get input/feedback from the community*
- *Promote – 'sell' your outputs and results*

First think about what you want to achieve. You may want to announce the project's inception, highlight a specific result or finding, or get early feedback before going on to the next stage. Then think about what the project will gain from it (e.g. raise your profile, gain support, or get input to influence future project work).
(http://www.jisc.ac.uk/fundingopportunities/projectmanagement/planning/dissemination.aspx, March 2010)

What to disseminate?

Dissemination starts with making the project known:

The first thing to do is to send out the message: We exist, this is who we are, this is where we are and this is our mission! When spreading this basic information expectations for the future are created and the ground paved. What else should we tell to the outside world? Next we should spread information about news and upcoming activities and events, opportunities for people to participate and materials they can use.
Bienzle/Gelabert/Jütte/Kolyva/Meyer/Tilkin (2007), The Art of Networking, p. 114

When approaching the end of the project the final products become more and more important in the dissemination strategy. Project results and tangible products are undoubtedly the most valuable dissemination objects in a Multilateral Project. In fact, all the other information activities can be seen as a preparation for the dissemination of the final outcomes and products. A project, however, should not wait with its dissemination activities until these products are ready, but disseminate preliminary results whenever it reaches a milestone, e.g. the end of the research phase, results of need analysis or the organisation of a workshop.

Results of Multilateral Projects can be tangible or intangible and normally fit into one or more of the following categories:

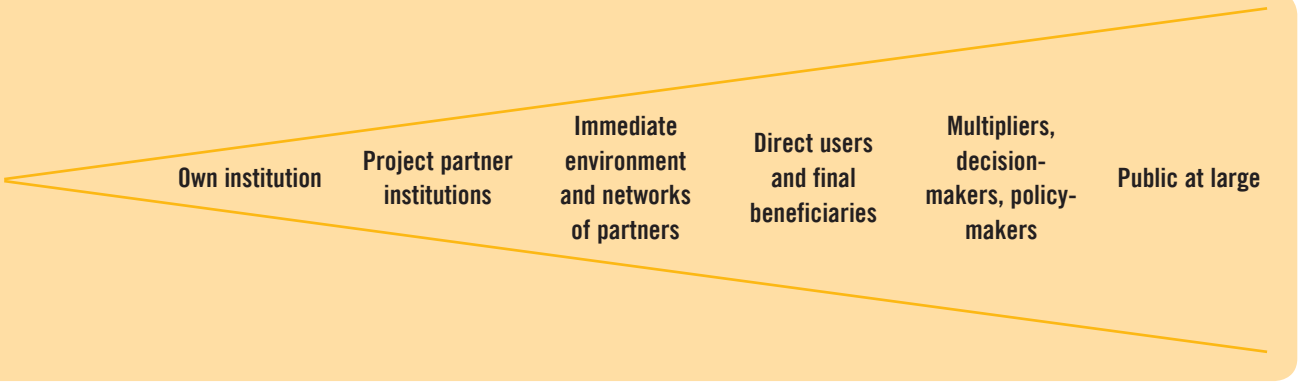
- Learning and teaching products like curricula, reports and (comparative) studies, handbooks, e-learning content or events like conferences, courses and seminars
- Methodologies, ideas and experiences. They are intangible and usually not as durable as tangible learning and teaching products, but often a very rewarding outcome of a transnational project
- Policy recommendations can be the result of a project which aims at developing (parts of) education systems, e.g. funding mechanisms of adult learning. These results are targeted to policy makers at national or European level
- Co-operation structures and informal networks, which evolve from a project. This fabric of relations between organisations and individuals is a result which may not unfold its value immediately but has a considerable potential for future benefits

Looking at the diversity of these results it is evident that each type of result will require a different dissemination approach.

To whom to disseminate

Project dissemination activities have several ranges, from the immediate environment to the public at large, as Box 3

Box 3: Dissemination ranges



illustrates. These widening ranges are also reflected in the Dissemination Planning Tool (Box 6) presented below.

Spreading information in the partners' own institutions is important. The more that colleagues and management in the organisation feel part of what the project is doing the more likely it is to get support from them when needed. Personal conversations, regular meetings, and internal newsletters are efficient ways of keeping colleagues updated on the project.

The staff and learners in organisations in the local and regional environment are the next target audience. The relevant national bodies should be involved from the start- their advice and guidance will be invaluable, e.g. the adult education community in partner countries should be involved.

And finally organisations working at the European level, like European associations or networks funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme or European journals can play an important role in dissemination.

In addition, it is interesting to note that the internet has made dissemination world-wide. Although the activities of the Lifelong Learning Programme are European, the project information on the websites is accessible to people on every continent. In this way European projects can have a geographically broader impact than originally thought.

How to disseminate?

There is not one perfect dissemination method that fits all projects although many Multilateral Projects seem to rely on the '*Golden Dissemination Four*': website, flier, newsletter and dissemination conference. But the adequacy of a specific dissemination method depends on the nature of the project and its results, as well as on the target groups. It remains a challenge for each Multilateral Projects to identify the most suitable approach.

In the age of advanced, interactive Web 2.0 technologies almost all dissemination methods can be done online as well as offline.

A project should have an unmistaken visual identity which helps people to identify and remember it. Core elements of a visual identity are the project title, the project logo, recurrent visual elements (sujets), a uniform lay-out of the project communications (colours, fonts etc.), and perhaps, a project slogan. If there is no partner with specific expertise in the consortium it may be worthwhile in many cases sub-contracting the development of the visual identify elements to a professional graphic designer.

In addition to the specific visual identity created by the project the logo and disclaimer of the funding programme must be used in all project communications (http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/about/eacea_logos_en.php). A Multilateral Project is funded by European taxpayers' money, and it is a contractual obligation to disseminate this fact along with the project content.

In most Multilateral Projects the project website is the central dissemination tool not only because it is a contractual obliga-

Box 4: Dissemination tools

Type	Tools	Mode
Product distribution	Main products (handbooks, CDs etc.)	Online Offline
	Project website	Online
	Newsletter	Online Offline
	Project flier, brochure	Online Offline
	Poster, give-aways	Online Offline
Media contributions	Article in journals/publications	Online Offline
	Press article, press release	Online Offline
	TV and radio broadcasts, podcasts	Online Offline
	Text, audio and visual contributions to interactive Internet resources, social networking sites, file-sharing applications, newsgroups etc.	Online
Events	Presentations, workshops, stalls at conferences, exhibitions and fairs	Online Offline
	Training courses, seminars	Online Offline
Personal networking	Appointments with decision-makers, policy-makers and multipliers	Online Offline
	Consultancy	Online Offline
	Informal, un-premeditated promotion	Online Offline

tion to have a presence on the internet but also because of the potential audience. What should a good project website look like?

When setting up a project website basic principles of website usability and online reading behaviour should be taken into account (Cf. Jakob Nielsen, www.useit.com):

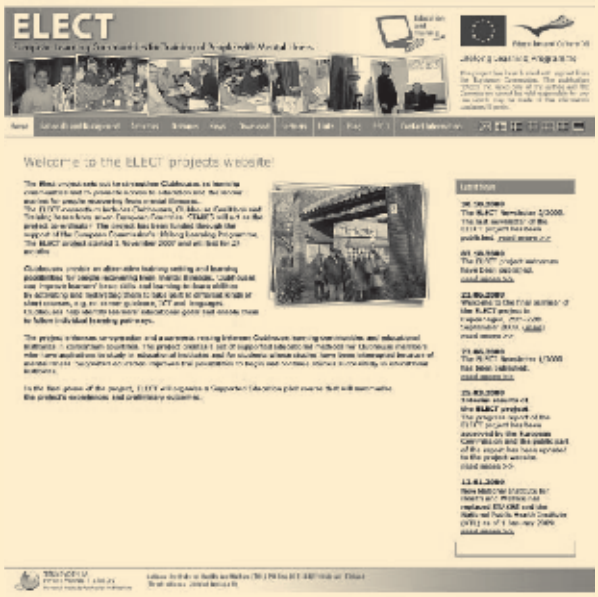
- Internet users seek immediate gratification and do not spend much time looking for relevant information:
  - The website navigation should be simple and intuitive
  - The value of the website should become clear at a first glance
- Internet users do not normally read whole pages, but scan for information:
  - Provide texts and materials which are concise and easy to scan
  - Longer texts should be broken into several sub-pages of provided as downloads
- Only websites which provide new information are re-visited:
  - Update the project website regularly
  - Offer information and external links beyond the limited project scope
- A project website is not an application form:
  - Do not copy paste from formal project documents, write lively journalistic texts
  - Avoid self-praise and hype, write in an objective, informative style!
- Users want to become active:
  - Address the user and offer services
  - Offer interactive elements (forum, subscription, blog, etc.)

An example of an attractive project website is www.elect-project.eu (Box 5).
The structure of the website is clear and informative. The sub-pages are easy to identify at first sight. Welcoming words on the front page make the site accessible and friendly. The news column is easy to find and enables a quick update of the most recent activities of the project.

When to disseminate

A timetable for all dissemination activities needs to be developed. All partners should time their dissemination activities at an early stage of project and update this timetable regularly. Large European conferences, for instance, which provide an excellent forum for dissemination, issue their calls for papers several months before the event.

Box 5: Dissemination in action: a good project website



Dissemination activities should cover the whole life span of the project and be based around the completion of milestones. Possible milestones for dissemination are, for instance, the project start, launch of the project website and the publication of a handbook.

4. Tools for planning dissemination

The five guiding dissemination questions are collected in a basic tool for planning project dissemination, presented in Box 6. It can help with the organisation of the dissemination strategy if it is filled in by each project partner.

An extended version of a dissemination planning tool may have the following additional elements:

1. Dissemination strategy: Aims and target groups.
2. Targets: Estimated number of professions/institutions to be reached.
3. Main dissemination products to be produced.
4. List of target groups and stakeholders.
5. Dissemination activities planned such as:
   a. Distribution of information
   b. Project presentations
   c. Articles and postings (websites, blogs, newspapers, journals, books etc.)
   d. Other activities envisaged

Box 6: Dissemination planning tool

LEVEL	WHAT FOR? PURPOSE	TO WHOM? TARGET GROUP	WHAT? CONTENT	HOW? METHOD	WHEN? TIMING	EXPECTED RESULTS & IMPACT
Own organisation						
Partner consortium						
Relevant education sector at national level						
Relevant education sector at European level						
Other: _____						

Both of these planning tools can be downloaded at www.european-project-management.eu Whichever dissemination tool a Multilateral Project chooses, it is important that each partner contributes to the overall plan.

The planning tool can also be used as a reporting tool for the dissemination activities which have been implemented. In this case it should form part of the internal reporting forms which are an integral part of the partnership agreement.

Further examples of project dissemination strategies can be found at the European Commission's valorisation website: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/valorisation/index_en.html and in the Valorisation Guidance Note for Applicants and Projects (Procedure B), produced by the Leonardo UK National Agency in 2004 (http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/leonardo/new/valorisation/doc_en.html).

5. The role of EU programme actors in dissemination

Although dissemination is mainly the responsibility of each individual Multilateral Project, other actors in the Lifelong Learning Programme can support a project in this task, most notably the European Commission and Executive Agency, the National Agency and the networks and projects funded by Grundtvig and other actions of the Lifelong Learning Programme.

Box 8: Dissemination in action – an example of a project dissemination strategy

EuroPol project wants to raise interest in traditional politics, with voting, debates, ideological choice and decision-making by building on traditional education techniques.
In the first months the project website was developed. A fully equipped project contact centre with an experienced secretary was set up. The partnership produced 6,000 postcards in two different designs that were distributed throughout the partners' networks. The design of the postcards was light hearted and recipients were invited to share their thoughts on politics by sending the postcard back – free, without a stamp – to the information centre. The nicest reactions are quoted on the website and their authors receive a small surprise present, a kind of timeless political calendar that includes the themes of the training materials that the project will produce depicted in an innovative way in the form of twelve handmade drawings plus a calendar that shows days that are connected with important political / social issues like Human Rights Day.
Other dissemination means used by the project are: e-newsletters, a political blog, a web community and a channel on YouTube where partners stored the videos made during their transnational meetings.

Website of the project: www.politicscanbefun.eu

Box 7: Extended Dissemination Plan

Extended Dissemination Plan

1. Dissemination strategy: aims and target groups
The project's dissemination strategy will be mainly targeted to
>…
>…
They will be reached through
> Virtual activities:
○ …
○ …
> Face-to-face events :
○ …
○ …
> Media publications
○ …
○ …
>…

2. Targets
Short-term: XXX adult education practitioners in Europe
Long-term: at least XXX adult education practitioners in Europe

3. Main dissemination products to be produced

No.	What?	What for?	When?	Who?
1	Project logo	Visual identity of the project		
2	Project website	Central marketing instrument, information and download, access to LMS		
3	Project flier	Information about project and courses, virtual and hard-copy distribution		
4	Project poster	Marketing instrument for events, use in partner institutions		
5	Standard project presentation	Presentation of the project at conferences and seminars		
6	Project newsletter	Project news and promotion of the courses		
7	Project articles	Presentation of the project to educational communities		

4. List of target groups and stakeholders

Target group	Target (institutions)	Target (persons)	Comments
Education providers and practitioners in Europe			
Universities and research institutes			
National and European umbrella associations in education and other multipliers			
Actors in Grundtvig and other LLP projects and networks			
National Agencies of the LLP			
Journals of adult education and			
Other: _____			
Total:			

5. Dissemination activities planned

5.a. Distribution of information

No.	Type of activity	Target groups	Target (institutions)	Target (persons)	Date	Comments (effects, observations, problems etc.)	Who?
1	4 project newsletters	Practitioners in adult education, authorities, multipliers	1000	1500	01/08 05/08 08/08 05/09		
2							
…							

5.b Project presentations

No.	Type of presentation	Target groups	Target (institutions)	Target (persons)	Date	Comments (effects, observations, problems etc.)	Who?
1	Key note speech LLinE conference Helsinki: www.lline.fi	European practitioners and researchers in adult education	100	120	20/01/09		
2							
…							

5.c Articles and postings: (websites, blogs, newspapers, journals, books etc.)

No.	Type and medium	Target group	Date	Comments (effects, observations, problems etc.)	Who?
1	Article in Infonet: www.infonet.com	European journalists in adult education	01/08		
2					
…					

5.d Other activities envisaged

No.	Type of activity	Target groups	Target (institutions)	Target (persons)	Date	Comments (effects, observations, problems etc.)	Who?
1							
2							
…							

European Commission and Executive Agency

To increase visibility of the projects funded by the programmes implemented by the Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) the database EVE (http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/eve/) was launched in Spring 2009. It is an electronic platform for the dissemination and exploitation of results. Project co-ordinators are invited to contribute to EVE as their project and products evolve.

Similar databases exist for projects funded by Leonardo da Vinci (www.adam-europe.eu) and for decentralised projects (EST, http://est.indire.it) like Grundtvig Partnerships. These are projects administrated by the National Agencies in the participating countries of the Lifelong Learning Programme. They will eventually be integrated into EVE.

While the introduction of these databases marks a significant improvement of dissemination support by the funder, they have not yet reached the status of well known dissemination hubs.

Activities by the Executive Agency to disseminate projects and their results are:

- Compendia of funded projects with short summaries and contact information of the co-ordinators: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/results_projects/project_compendia_en.php

- Publication of project reports: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/project_reports/project_reports_en.php
- Regular co-ordinators' meetings of funded projects, with spaces for displaying project products
- Publication of *Success Stories* and organisation of a yearly *Lifelong Learning Award* for outstanding projects
- The *European Quality Kit*, a document containing a lot of links and addresses related to European adult education policy and practice which can very useful when building up the dissemination strategy of a project: http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/grundtvig/doc/kit.pdf

National Agencies

National Agencies of the Lifelong Learning Programme (http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc1208_en.htm) carry out intensive promotion activities about all the funding opportunities of the programme. Most National Agencies arrange yearly information events to which currently funded projects are invited to introduce their activities. Some National Agencies organise regular meetings with the Multilateral Projects in those countries. The Finnish National Agency, CIMO, organises yearly thematic dissemination events with a range of project presentations. The British National Agency, ECOTEC, publishes monthly e-flashes with dedicated sections for project news in which the projects can share their news and experiences.

The amount of potential support National Agencies provides may vary from one country to another, because the National Agencies plan their activities independently. In any case it is advisable for project co-ordinators and partners to establish contacts with their National Agency when the project has been approved. The National Agencies should be priority target organisations for project dissemination, as they can open access to project actors and educators at large.

Grundtvig networks

Dissemination of the results of previously funded projects is one of the specific tasks of the networks funded by Grundtvig and other actions of the Lifelong Learning Programme. Although the number of the networks is small and only a few thematic areas are covered by these networks a Multilateral Project should check in the compendia mentioned above to see if a relevant network exists.

One Grundtvig network can be of particular importance for dissemination: European InfoNet Adult Education (www.infonet-ae.eu) is a network providing information about current developments in adult education. InfoNet regularly reports about interesting European projects. These articles are translated into different languages, can be downloaded from a database and are used by adult education journalists in their contributions to journals and publications.

Other funded projects

Networking with other projects working in the same thematic area can open up new opportunities for dissemination. Projects could for example join their efforts in the implementation of dissemination campaigns or events if they have similar topics or target audiences.

Continuing with a project focusing on dissemination can be another option. In the transversal programme of the Lifelong Learning Programme there is a special action for dissemination issues: Key Activity 4: Dissemination and exploitation of results. Funding is available for projects with an integrated approach across two or more educational sectors and/or related activities in the field of culture, media, citizenship and youth.

6. Exploitation: making the best possible use of project results

If dissemination is about making project results available, exploitation is about ensuring that they will actually be used by the target groups: institutions, professionals and learners within and beyond the project partnership. But how can this be achieved? This is one of the most difficult tasks of a Multilateral Project, and one the greatest shortcomings of EU funding programmes in general. Too many innovative and high-quality project products have not found their way to their potential users.

Effective dissemination activities are a pre-condition for the sustainable use of project outcomes after the end of funding, but are not sufficient. Making sure a product will be used amounts to more than spreading information about it.

Interaction with stakeholders

Intensive interaction with the eventual users and beneficiaries of the project and other stakeholders is of crucial importance for the successful and sustainable exploitation of the results. The interaction should be ongoing from the beginning of the project work until the end of the working period.

One way of including people from outside the partnership and inviting target groups to work closely with the project is the establishment of a Focus Group.
The role and the tasks of the Focus Group could be:

- To express the needs of the future users of the material being developed
- To comment on certain interim products of the project
- To participate in an event organised of the project and give feedback on it

The group members can bring valuable information to the partnership. Working actively in a Focus Group motivates people to exploit the project outcomes later on. An example of guidelines for organising a project Focus Group can be downloaded at www.european-project-management.eu.

Testing and piloting draft educational products on a sample of the envisaged users is also crucial. In this way important feedback on the adequacy of the project products and hints how to improve them can be received.

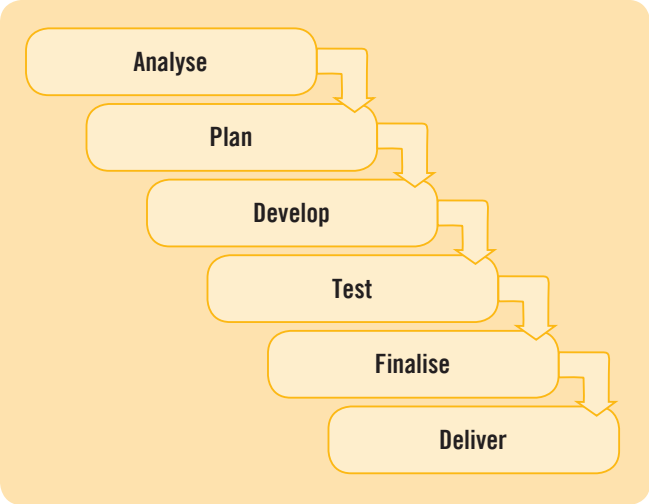
When it comes to interacting with stakeholders a co-ordinator of a Multilateral Project can learn important lessons from Agile Project Management, an approach first applied in software development project. Agile project managers aim to limit this interaction to the start of the project (needs analysis) and to the stage immediately prior to the finalisation of the product (piloting). Often the needs of stakeholders have changed in the meantime or were not properly understood in the first place. If the traditional waterfall model (cf. Box 9) is applied the project products may fail to meet their expectations. This is a sequential approach where the main activities follow one another.

In contrast to the waterfall model the Agile approach (cf. Box 10) is characterised by several small, rapid, and iterative planning and development cycles instead of heavy initial planning process which is then implemented sequentially. Stakeholders are intensively involved in all stages of the developmental process. Through their constant evaluation and feedback the unpleasant surprises at the end of the project may be prevented! The short duration of the cycles allows for immediate modifications and adaptations.

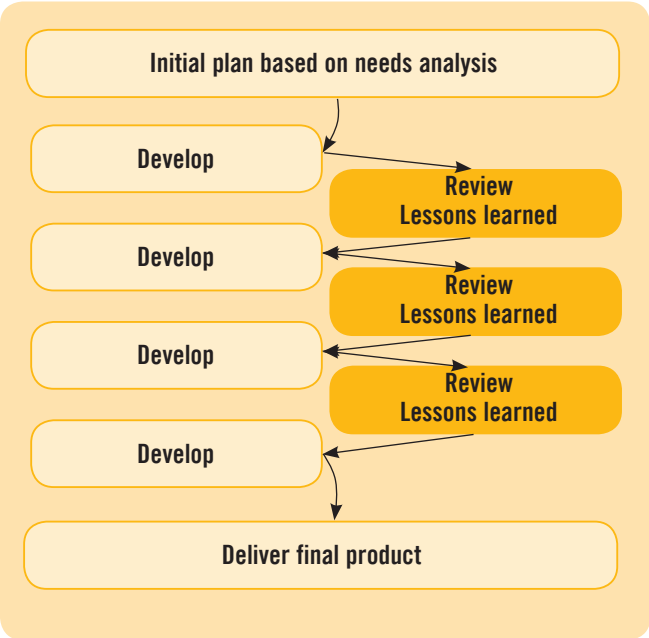
Exploitation plan

The issue of the exploitation of results should be high on the project agenda from the very beginning. The funding mechanism requires that each Multilateral Project has a separate exploitation work package, in which an exploitation plan is developed. In Box 11 the exploitation activities of one Grundtvig project are described.

Box 9: Waterfall model of project management



Box 10: Agile project lifecycle



Examples of exploitation plans of other projects can be found at www.european-project-management.eu

The exploitation plan should be constantly revised and updated, and in its final stages define how the project products will be used by the partners after the end of funding. For this, intellectual property rights (IPR) needs to be discussed.

Box 11: Example of an exploitation plan

The main objectives of the exploitation activities are:

- *To promote and raise awareness about the project contents, developments and results*
- *To successfully transfer the results to appropriate decision-makers to achieve their sustainable promotion and support*
- *To convince individual end-users to adopt and/or apply the results, also after the project and support by its partnership has ended*

In order to outline the exploitation strategy for POTENS project, the following chapters try to answer central questions such as:

- *What will be the project results?*
- *What kind of needs does the project respond to?*
- *Who are the final or potential users or beneficiaries of the project's outcomes?*

http://potens.com.pl/documentation/Plan_of_Exploitation.html, March 2010

Intellectual property rights (IPR)

Intellectual property is a legal concept referring to the protection of works created by the human intellect. It consists of an exclusive right conferred upon the creator or/and the owner of an intellectual work. The owner can be the creator of the work (most usual case) or a transferee, in the event of a transfer of copyright. (http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/valorisation/ipr_en.htm)

Intellectual property is a legal concept which refers to the protection of works created by people, in our case the products of Multilateral Projects like books, CDs, websites, training materials etc.

It is wise to start the discussion in the partnership on IPR issues early on and not to leave it to the stage when the products have already been developed. Partners may have different expectations with regard to the ownership of these products and these may lead to conflicts.

Although only few projects develop and sign formal copyright agreements it is very useful to do so. A copyright agreement regulates:

- Ownership of the project products
- Duties and rights of each partner with regard to the use of the products after the end of funding
- Processes of modifying jointly developed products
- Information and/or permission duties regarding the use of the products
- The duration of the agreement

Intellectual property rights issues are rather complex and varied. There is no common European law on copyright issues, nor does the funding programme prescribe a particular regulation. Multilateral Projects need to create their own copyright agreements. The following resources and references may help:

- An introduction to copyright issues in EU projects (already mentioned) http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/valorisation/ipr_en.htm
- A small document called *Intellectual Property: Guidelines for Promoters of Training Projects* was published by the European Commission in 1997. Although quite old, it is still useful, as it introduces co-ordinators to basic questions about IPR
- Much more detailed information on IPR issues can be obtained from the IPR Helpdesk, a Commission-funded free service available to all those involved in running European projects: www.ipr-helpdesk.com. It needs to be said, however, that this service focuses on IPR issues in research projects, which are much more complex than in Multilateral Projects
- A very useful resource is http://creativecommons.org Creative Commons is a non-profit organisation which provides six free licence models of how to regulate intellectual property. The range of the licences is from very restrictive to extremely liberal. A project can choose or combine the ones which best fit their needs
- At www.european-project-management.eu examples of copyright agreements other projects have used can be downloaded

Evaluation of exploitation strategies

The exploitation activities of a project need to be evaluated during and at the end of project period like any other project activity.

A list of the topics to be discussed could contain the following items:

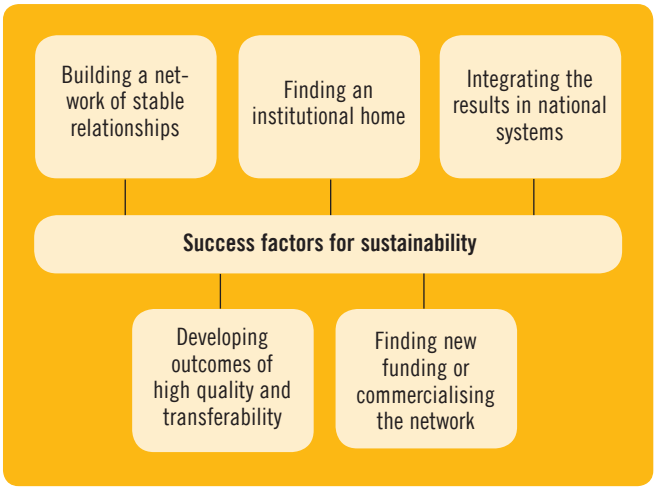
- Have there been obstacles to the implementation of dissemination and exploitation activities?
- How has the needs analysis been carried out in the planning phase of the project and was it sufficient?

- Did the planning create a firm basis for the further work or was there something crucial missing?
- What were the products and other outcomes of the project, how have they been evaluated and what was the feedback?
- Were all the partners involved in the exploitation activities? If their input was different would the differences be seen in different countries and how?
- Were the objectives in creating new contacts and networks reached during the project?

7. Pathways to sustainability

Guy Tilkin developed a set of guiding questions in an effort to make EU-funded project results sustainable. They were originally developed for Networks in the Lifelong Learning Programme, but apply also to Multilateral Projects.

Box 12: Sustainability factors, based on Bienzle/Gelabert/Jütte/Kolyva/Meyer/Tilkin (2007), The Art of Networking. p. 120



Building a network of stable relationships

A well established network of contacts and relationships is the best guarantee for sustainability:

- How close are the co-operation bonds between the project partners?
- Are there co-operation perspectives beyond the project duration?
- Do the partners have well established contact networks to relevant stakeholders?

Finding an institutional home

The adoption and appropriation of project results by relevant institutions in the thematic sector:

- Is the *work for the project* embedded in the regular activities of the participating institutions?
- Is the project of significant strategic relevance to one of the partner institutions? Is this institution willing to make a lasting commitment to finance staff to continue the work of the project and update the results?
- Would institutions outside of the partnership be interested in taking over any elements from the project: e.g. the hosting and updating of the website, the organisation of a thematic conference or running a developed training course

Integrating the results into national systems

Mainstreaming of project results into education systems would be the best possible solution to guarantee that the project has a long-term impact:

- Does the project approach (partially) coincide with local or national policy aims?
- Do policy and decision-makers in the partner countries know about the project?
- Are decision-makers regularly addressed? Is there a coherent advocacy strategy?

Quality, transferability and ongoing relevancy

It is important that the project products, activities, methods, and approaches can be easily adapted for use in other contexts:

- Does the project develop generic or replicable models?
- Are there any other sectors, target groups or countries where the results could be used? Will the results be regularly reviewed and updated?

Finding new funding or commercialisation

It is important to consider how to gain extra funding in order to continue development or promotion:

- Are there any European or national funding opportunities for a follow-up project or network?
- Might there be any private sponsors?
- Can a business model be developed which finances at least the staffing necessary to maintain and update the project results?

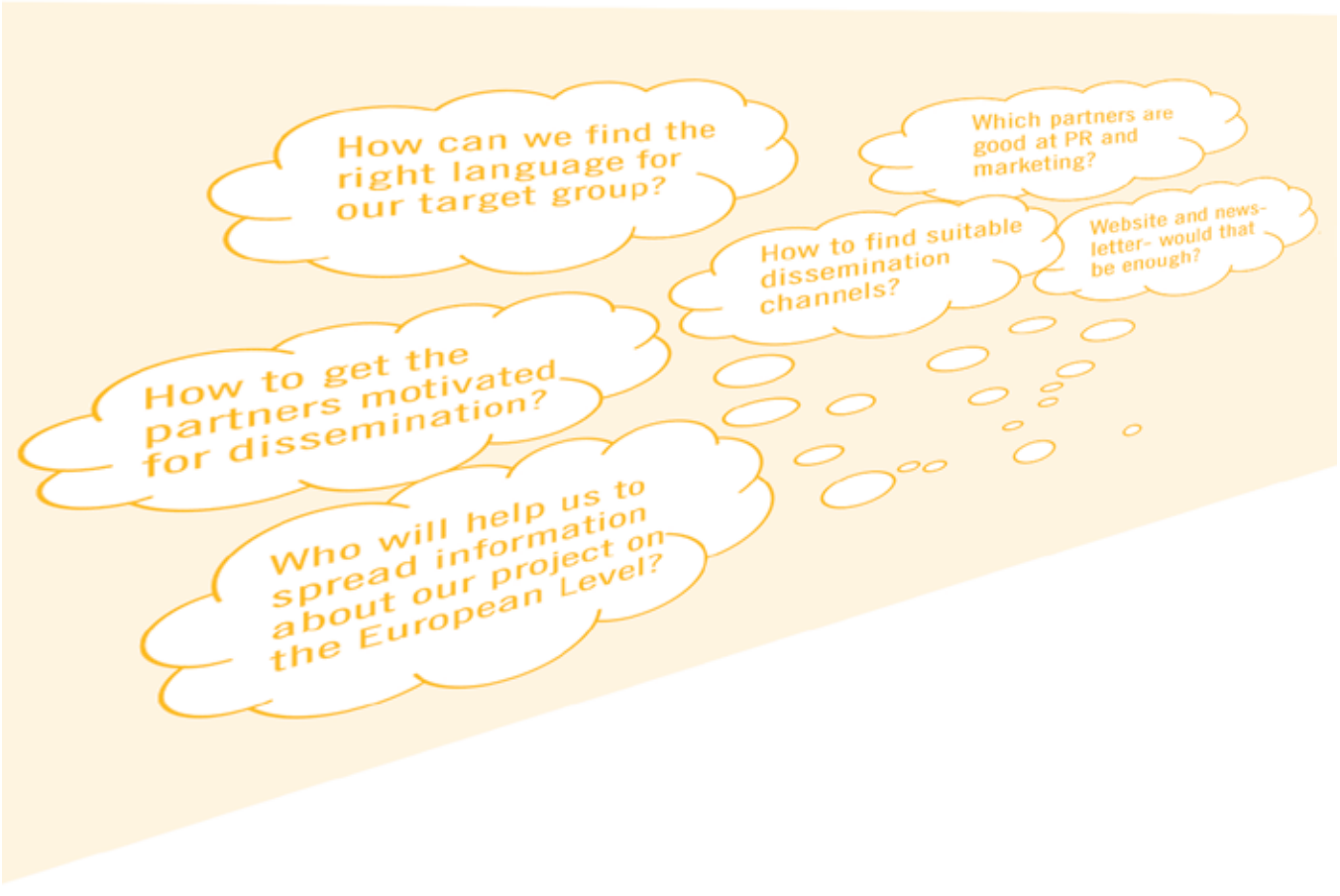
To be successful these exploitation and sustainability issues need to be pursued during the whole project duration. The European Commission recommends spending 10 to 20 percent of the whole project budget on valorisation activities.

Sustainable project results may appear very different from project to project. They may range from at least using the results in the partner institutions up to integrating a curriculum developed by the project into mainstream provision. In many cases an excellent way of making a project last is to organise on a regular basis a Grundtvig in-service training course for staff of adult education institutions. Through such courses the project partnership can get valuable feedback on the project products and also find new channels and ways of exploitation. Participation in these courses is funded by the National Agencies of the Lifelong Learning Programme.

There can be no doubt that the funding programme expects quite a lot by assuming that a Multilateral Project funded for two or three years should have a sustainable impact. Nor are there sufficient support and capacity building mechanisms at European or national levels to help Multilateral Projects to live up to these high expectations. On the other hand it is legitimate to ask for a certain degree of impact beyond the direct beneficiaries if public money has been spent on a project.

A possible minimum level of sustainability each Multilateral Project should be able to reach:

- There is still a contact person available for at least the whole project, or, preferably in each partner institution
- The project results are integrated and systematically used in the partner institutions and disseminated in their local (national) environments
- The main project results continue to be distributed in their local (national) environments by all partners and can be easily obtained on request
- The project website is maintained and fully operational for three years after the end of the funding period. Through the website potential users can access the project results and ask for support from the project partnership when using them



Concluding Remarks

In this publication much has been written about the challenges that project co-ordinators and partners of a Multilateral Project in the Lifelong Learning Programme might face, and a range of theoretical inputs, recommendations, tools, templates and resources have been offered to help in mastering these challenges and steering the project to a successful end.

The authors believe that highlighting potentially crucial aspects of project management is the purpose of a publication of this kind. Having said that they hope that the *Survival Kit* albeit with its somewhat ironical title also got the message across that participation in a Multilateral Project usually generates huge added value. Most co-ordinators and partners will testify that participation in Multilateral Projects generates multiple

Box 1: Benefits of participation in European projects
(From: ECOTEC (2008), Final Evaluation of the Socrates II Programme 2000–2006: Annex to the Joint Report (C3318), p. 103)

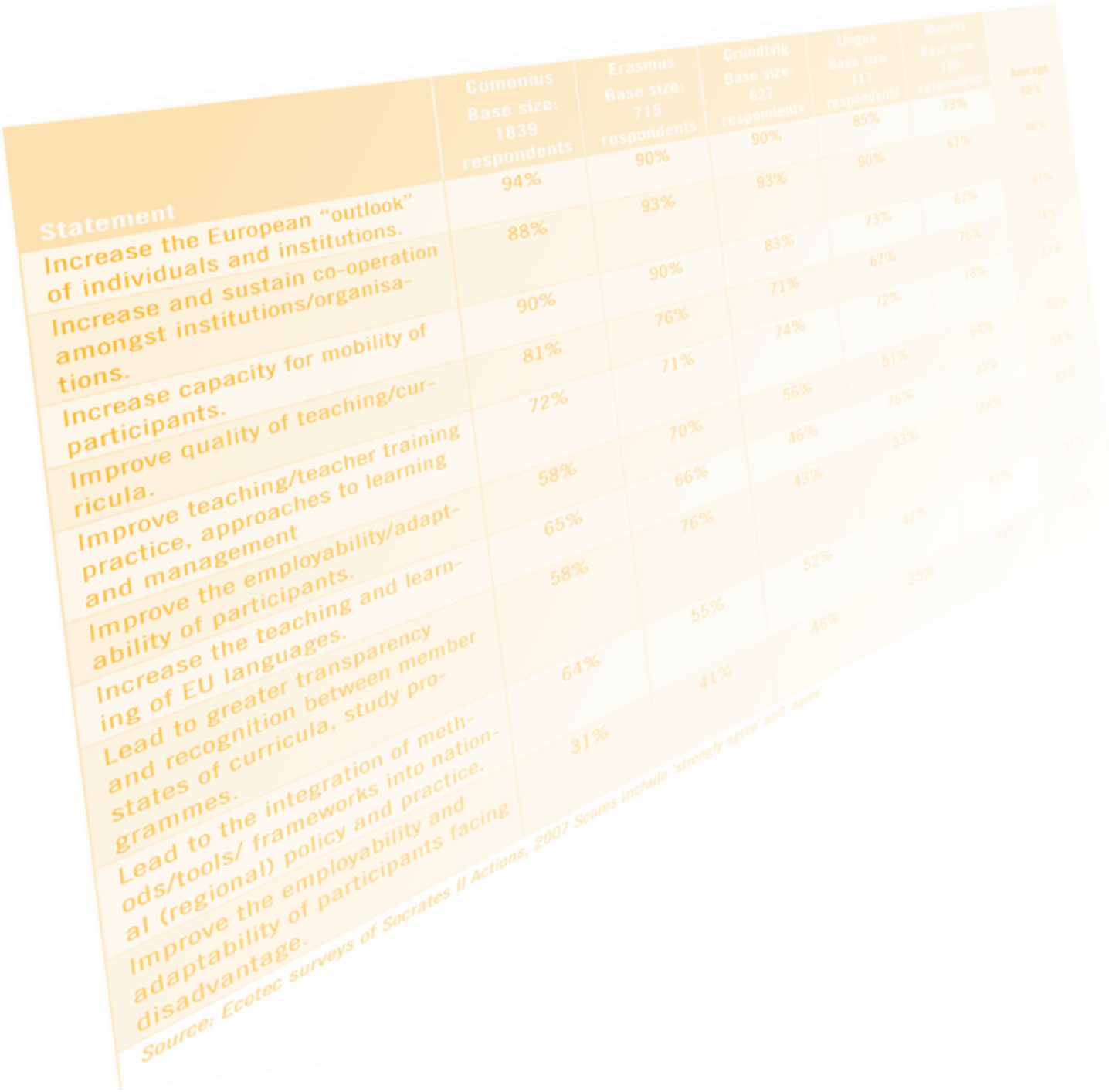
Statement	Comenius Base size: 1839 respondents	Erasmus Base size: 715 respondents	Grundtvig Base size: 627 respondents	Lingua Base size: 117 respondents	Minerva Base size: 109 respondents	Average
Increase the European "outlook" of individuals and institutions.	94%	90%	90%	85%	79%	88%
Increase and sustain co-operation amongst institutions/organisations.	88%	93%	93%	90%	67%	86%
Increase capacity for mobility of participants.	90%	90%	83%	73%	67%	81%
Improve quality of teaching/curricula.	81%	76%	71%	67%	76%	74%
Improve teaching/teacher training practice, approaches to learning and management	72%	71%	74%	72%	78%	73%
Improve the employability/adaptability of participants.	58%	70%	56%	51%	64%	60%
Increase the teaching and learning of EU languages.	65%	66%	46%	76%	35%	58%
Lead to greater transparency and recognition between member states of curricula, study programmes.	58%	76%	43%	33%	48%	52%
Lead to the integration of methods/tools/ frameworks into national (regional) policy and practice.	64%	55%	52%	42%	42%	51%
Improve the employability and adaptability of participants facing disadvantage.	31%	41%	46%	25%	33%	35%

Source: Ecotec surveys of Socrates II Actions, 2007 Scores include 'strongly agree' and 'agree'

benefits at the personal, professional, institutional, and sometimes even at the political level.

This general conclusion was confirmed in a study carried out to evaluate the second phase of Socrates (2000–2006), one of the predecessor programmes to the LLP. The feedback from project actors (cf. Box 1) was not only overwhelmingly positive, but illustrated that participating institutions derived benefits in more than one respect. Side-effects and spin-offs (e.g. a more European outlook, future co-operation opportunities) were rated at least as highly as the impact of the main outcomes produced (e.g. improved curricula, better teaching quality) or changes brought about at system level (e.g. greater transparency, recognition of programmes and integration of innovation in national policy).

Notwithstanding all of the technical suggestions and recommendations offered in the *Survival Kit*, above all, project management is about maximising such benefits for all professionals and partner institutions involved in these projects.



Glossary

1. Key terms related to the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP)

Action: A generic type of activity funded within a specific programme in the LLP.

Applicant Organisation: The partner organisation(s) legally responsible for an application. When an application is approved, the Applicant Organisation becomes the Beneficiary Organisation.

Beneficiary/Contractor: In financial terms, the organisation, institution or individual with whom the *contract* (formally: *Grant Agreement*) for receiving a grant is signed. *In multi-beneficiary contracts the main contractor is also called* co-ordinator*, and the partners are* co-beneficiaries.

Call for Proposals: Legal text calling on interested parties to submit proposals for projects. The text defines the necessary specifications to prepare and submit a proposal, i.e. thematic priorities, instruments used, the address and other technical means for submission plus deadlines etc.

Centralised action: Action within the LLP which is managed by the Executive Agency.

Consortium: A group of organisations or persons conducting a joint European Co-operation Project, Partnership or Network.

Co-ordinating Organisation: The organisation within each Partnership, Project or Network responsible for overall leadership and day to day management of the project. The responsibilities of the Co-ordinating Organisation vary from Action to Action. In centralised Projects and Networks, the Co-ordinating Organisation is often also the Applicant Organisation.

Decentralised action: Action within the LLP which is managed by the National Agency designated by the national authority of the country concerned.

Dissemination and Exploitation of Results: Activities designed to ensure that the results of the LLP and its predecessors are appropriately recognised, demonstrated and implemented on a wide scale. Within the context of the LLP, the following distinctions should be observed:

- Promotion and awareness raising are used primarily in the context of publicising the existence of programmes and initiatives, their aims, objectives and activities and the availability of funding for given purposes. This definition excludes the publicising of results. As such, promotion and raising awareness occurs primarily before and during the actual implementation of the programmes or initiatives
- Dissemination is defined as a planned process of providing information on the quality, relevance and effectiveness of the results of programmes and initiatives to key actors. It occurs as and when the results of programmes and initiatives become available
- Exploitation consists of 'mainstreaming' and 'multiplication'. Mainstreaming is the planned process of transferring the successful results of programmes and initiatives to appropriate decision makers in regulated local, regional, national and European systems. Multiplication is the planned process of convincing individual end-users to adopt and/or apply the results of programmes and initiatives

Dissemination and exploitation are therefore distinct but closely related to one another. The keys to a successful **exploitation of results** are:

- Producing relevant results from projects and programmes/initiatives to satisfy the demands of providers, policy-makers and ultimately society more generally
- Ensuring, through the use of effective dissemination and exploitation, that such results reach the right target audiences in a format and at a time which enables them to benefit

European Added Value: European added value is to be found in actions that cannot be simply undertaken at Member State level, and therefore, for reasons of scale or effect, are better undertaken by the Community. It is the results of this synergy which emerge from European co-operation and which constitute a distinctive European dimension in addition to the actions and policies at Member State level.

European Dimension: This describes moving from a national to a wider field of activity through exchange, co-operation and mobility between educational and training institutions and their staff and learners.

Evaluation: Evaluation (at project level) is a crucial phase for projects since it enables firstly a review and qualitative and quantitative assessment of the results achieved against the aims (as regards activities/products) with implications for the whole of the grant if the results are unacceptable. Secondly where results are very poor it assesses the means

used to achieve these results in relation to the contractually agreed budget.

Executive Agency: Executive agencies are organisations established in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No 58/2003 (OJ L 11, 16.1.2003) with a view to being entrusted with certain tasks relating to the management of one or more Community programmes. These agencies are set up for a fixed period. The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) is the one responsible for the management of certain parts of the LLP.

Good Practice: Good practice is an exemplary project (including results or processes) which has positively influenced systems and practices through its activities and results. Consequently, these good practices are worth transferring and exploiting in different contexts and environments by new users or entities.

Impact: Impact is the effect that the project and its results have on various systems and practices. A project with impact contributes to the objectives of programmes and to the development of different European Union policies.

Innovative Results: Innovative results are those which represent some new and distinctive features, distinguishing them from others with similar characteristic, and adding value in relation to conventional solutions.

Legal Representative: The person within the Applicant Organisation who is legally authorised to represent the organisation in legally binding agreements. This person must sign both the grant application and the Grant Agreement in case the application is approved.

Lifelong Learning: This refers to all general education, vocational education and training, non-formal education and informal learning undertaken throughout life, resulting in an improvement in knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective. It includes the provision of counselling and guidance services.

Mainstreaming: Mainstreaming is a process which enables activities to impact on policy and practice. This process includes identifying lessons, clarifying the innovative element and approach that produced the results, their dissemination, validation and transfer. More specifically, mainstreaming also defines the phase of transfer and the way in which other actors take account of the final results, approaches and key elements of a project.

Mobility: Spending a period of time in another Member State in order to undertake study, work experience, other learning or teaching activity or related administrative activity, supported as appropriate by preparatory or refresher courses in the host language or working language.

Monitoring (at project level): The process involves a continuous and systematic control of the project's progress. The intention is to manage and if necessary to correct any deviation from the operational objectives and thus improve the performance. Every project should be monitored throughout its duration in order to ensure its success. Monitoring consists of supervision of activities, comparison with the work plan and using the information obtained for the improvement of the project. During the monitoring process dissemination and exploitation activities must be carefully checked, verified and, if necessary either reoriented or adapted.

Multilateral: Involving partners from at least three Member States. The Commission may regard associations or other bodies with membership from three Member States or more as multilateral.

Multilateral Project: A European co-operation activity with a defined and exploitable outcome developed jointly by a formal or informal grouping of organisations or institutions.

National Agency: National Agencies are structures set up at national level for the co-ordinated management of the implementation of the Lifelong Learning programme at Member State level. They play a key role in the management of the decentralised parts of the programme, where they are responsible for the evaluation, selection and management of projects.

Needs Analysis: Ideally this takes place at the planning stage before starting a project (ex-ante needs analysis). The aim is to define the needs of a target group (future beneficiaries and users of the project results) and to better orientate the project's activities, with the aim of effectively responding to these needs. Needs analyses should be reviewed and updated during the course of the project, to ensure that the end results remain relevant to the intended users' needs.

Network: A formal or informal grouping of bodies active in a particular field, discipline or sector of lifelong learning.

Partnership (bilateral and multilateral): A bilateral or multilateral agreement between a group of institutions or organisations in different Member States to carry out European activities in lifelong learning.

Project: A co-operation activity with a defined outcome developed jointly by a formal or informal grouping of organisations or institutions.

Project Co-ordinator: The organisation or institution in charge of the implementation of the project being undertaken by the multilateral group. *The term is also used for the person leading the project on behalf of the co-ordinating institution.*

***Project Handbook**:* Guidelines for the Administrative and Financial Management and Reporting, *published by the*

Executive Agency, annex to the Grant Agreement of a Multilateral Project.

Sustainability: Sustainability is the capacity for the project to continue to exist and function beyond the end of the contract. The project results are used and exploited continuously. Sustainability of results means use and exploitation of results in the long term.

Transferability: Transferability is the relative capacity of a project's results to be adapted and used in new contexts. Factors supporting the transferability of project results include availability in several languages; use of generic terminology; clear descriptions and indexing of content; good dissemination activities; use of accepted ‚industry' standards, benchmarks etc; modular formatting; free access.

Valorisation: Valorisation is the French term for the dissemination and exploitation of results.

Definitions, unless in italics, are taken from:

- Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) Guide 2010. Part I: General provisions: http://ec.europa.eu/education/llp/doc848_en.htm
- The Lifelong Learning Programme 2007–2013 – Glossary: http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/glossary_en.html

Words in italics were added by the *Survival Kit* authors.

2. Key terms related to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

Blog: (contraction of *weblog*) This is a type of website, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse chronological order. Many blogs provide commentary or news on a particular subject; others function as personal online diaries. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, websites, and other media related to its topic. The ability for readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of many blogs. *Blog* can also be used as a verb, meaning *to maintain or add content to a blog.*

E-learning platform: A web-based platform allowing learners registered for an online course to interact with course content, with teachers and, in some cases, with fellow-learners.

File-sharing system: System where multiple users can upload files which become accessible for view and download to all other users. While most such systems are restricted to registered users, there are also public file-sharing systems. Probably the most popular is YouTube, a video-sharing website where registered users are permitted to upload an unlimited number of videos, while unregistered users can watch them.

ICT (Information and Communication Technologies): Technologies used for information processing and communication by electronic means. They are nowadays usually computer based and the internet has become the main environment for data transfer and communication.

Instant messaging: Usually known as *messenger* is traditionally, a form of real-time communication between two or more people based on typed text. Nowadays these systems also include possibilities for exchanging files and photo albums, as well as audio and video communication.

Learning management system: Software application allowing for the automatic management of educational activities, whether they take place in a classic or in an online environment. Such a system, based on the internet, can be very useful for online courses or for *European courses*, providing easy management of course registration, delivery, evaluation and certification.

Multi-user editor: A web-based text editor which is accessible to several people working together on a text. Everyone can see changes made by others and identify who and when made each change.

Netiquette: A set of rules concerning *polite* communication over the internet. Most of the rules established in the early years of the internet are still valid today, while others have lost their relevance with the evolution of technology. Therefore, there is no fixed set of rules with general validity.

Online broadcast platform: A website where registered users can upload in real-time images and sound recorded with a digital video camera or with a mobile phone. The content broadcasted can be open to everyone or restricted by password. Some systems also allow for the storage of broadcast content, so that is can be viewed or downloaded later. Some of these platforms are free.

Open source tools: Software tools that comply with the criteria established by the Open Source Initiative, a non-profit structure aiming at proving free access to software based on the voluntary contributions by programmers who develop it. Both open source and free software are accessible for free to users.

Podcast: A series of digital media files, either audio or video, released episodically and downloaded through web syndication. Software known as pod catcher is used to automatically identify and download new files in the series, when they are released.

Project virtual working space: An interactive website with access restricted to project partners, where they can upload and view files, post comments and announcements for team members, and, sometimes, exchange private messages or set-up meeting times.

RSS feeds: A type of web feed making the content of frequently updated websites directly accessible to the subscribers. This way, there is no need to regularly check a website for news, whenever new content has been published, it will appear automatically on your web browser. News agencies and newspapers, for example, provide subscription possibilities for RSS feeds, but projects that have regular news flows to communicate, may also do this.

Social networking website: Wide platforms where members have a personal profile and are connected to *friends*, send each other messages, share statements, pictures, links, join specific interest groups, provide support for various causes or spend time playing together. Unlike virtual communities, they are based on the idea that one joins and then finds friends and connects with them based on various common interests.

Virtual communities: A virtual communication platform designed for supporting the interaction of a group of people, usually sharing common personal or professional interests. Members of the community can see each other's profile, can post announcements or can participate in working groups or discussion groups. Unlike social networking websites, people join a virtual community because of its goal, knowing that they will find individuals with similar motivations or interests.

Virtual conference: There are two main meanings for *virtual conference*. The first refers to a virtual meeting involving more than two people. The second refers to the organisation of a conference in a virtual environment, implying, as for a traditional conference, registration of participants, keynote speeches, presentations of communications, workshops and side-events, all of them being done online.

Virtual learning environment: System designed to support teaching and learning in an educational setting, over the internet and provide a collection of tools for assessment, communication, uploading of content, return of students' work, peer assessment, administration of student groups, collecting and organising student grades, questionnaires, tracking tools, etc.

Virtual support system: Online system providing support to individuals or groups in achieving tasks, making decisions or improving performance, by engaging them in a step by step process, guided by a set of questions. Software developers usually provide such services for their clients but the Virtual Intercultural Team Tool is also an example of such a system.

Virtual world: A virtual environment where members take over a fictitious identity (using an avatar) and interact with other members online, based on rules defined by the creators of the virtual world. The most well-known virtual world is nowadays Second Life. Due to its popularity the EU has also a presence in Second Life.

VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol): Voice communication via the internet, equivalent of internet telephony; implies conversion by voice in digital format and exchanged through the internet. There are now various providers of free computer-to-computer and of low-cost computer-to-phone communication services. For its most common use, all that is needed is a computer connected to the internet and equipped with a microphone.

Website access statistics tools: Tools allowing a track of access to a webpage and displaying statistics of access (from the number of visitors and the numbers of visits, to countries where visitors are located and preferred time of access). For some tools these statistics are visible to the public, while for others they are only accessible to the website owner.

Wiki: A type of collaborative software program that typically allows web pages to be created and collaboratively edited using a common web browser. Websites running such programs are themselves referred to as wikis. There are many free systems providing any user with the possibility to set up a wiki.

Links and References

Project management and leadership in projects (general)

Sanjiv Augustine and Susan Woodcock (2003), *Agile Project Management*: www.ccpace.com

An inspiring essay on the principles of Agile Management. In clear language the difference between traditional and Agile project management approaches is highlighted.

Kenneth H Blanchard, Drea Zigarmi, Patricia Zigarmi (2000), *Leadership and the One-Minute Manager. Increasing Effectiveness through Situational Leadership.*

Kenneth H Blanchard, Paul Hersey, Dewey E. Johnson (9th *edition 2000). Management of Organizational Behavior – Utilizing Human Resources.*

Classics on leadership and management, in particular the concept of situational leadership which may also be useful for Multilateral Projects. The concept is built upon two fundamental principles; leadership style and the group's level of maturity.

David I. Cleland, Roland Gareis (Eds.) (2006), *Global Project Management. Planning, Organizing, and Controlling International Projects.*

Kathleen B. Hass (2007), *The Blending of Traditional and Agile Project Management*, in PM World Today – May 2007 (Vol. IX, Issue V).

IPMA Competence Baseline (ICB- IPMA Competence Baseline Version 3.0: http://www.ipma.ch/Documents/ICB_V._3.0.pdf)

An internationally acknowledged competence framework for project managers. The International Project Management Association (IPMA), founded in Europe in 1967, has forty national project organisations as members. IPMA Competence Baseline describes the 46 competence areas of a project manager (technical, behavioural, contextual) and provides certification at different levels.

Bennet P. Lientz, Kathryn P. Rea (2002), *Project Management for the 21st Century.*

Office of Learning Technologies Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) (2003), *Introduction to Project Management Principles:* http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/hip/lld/olt/resources/toolkit/intro_project_management.pdf

Short and readable introduction to the basics of project management, useful for newcomers.

PMI (2008), *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge: PMBoK Guide Fourth Edition.*

Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge is the most widely acknowledged project management standard and generally accepted as central reference document. It is published by the project management institute PMI (www.pmi.org)

PRINCE2:
http://www.apmgroup.co.uk/PRINCE2/PRINCE2Home.asp

PRINCE2® is a process-based approach for project management providing an easily tailored and scalable method for the management of all types of projects. It is owned by the UK Government's Office of Government Commerce but has grown to become a truly international methodology with the core publications available in a variety of languages.

Project Smart: http://www.projectsmart.co.uk/

A commercial project management resource with an up-to-date commentary on the latest methodologies and ideas. Also contains a range of tools and templates for download, some of them free.

T-kit 3, Project management:
http://youth-partnership.coe.int/youth-partnership/publications/T-kits/3/Tkit_3_EN
T-kit 9, Funding and financial management:
http://youth-partnership.coe.int/youth-partnership/publications/T-kits/9/Tkit_9_EN

The T-kit series has been jointly developed by the Council of Europe and the European Commission for the youth sector. The publications are not geared towards the Lifelong Learning Programme, so some funding programme related information has to be treated with caution. Nevertheless the kits include some useful materials for any type of European project work.

University of Hull, Project Management Resources:
http://www.hull.ac.uk/workbasedlearning/

Resources for an Introduction to Project Management module assembled by Andrew G. Holmes, Academic Co-ordinator for Work Related Learning in the Centre for Lifelong Learning at the University of Hull. These materials (including PowerPoint presentations, handouts, forms and web links) are available to all but users outside of the University of Hull should acknowledge Andrew Holmes as the author or source.

Management of EU-funded projects

Holger Bienzle, Esther Gelabert, Wolfgang Jütte, Katerina Kolyva, Nick Meyer, Guy Tilkin (2007): *The Art of Networking: European Networks in Education*.
http://www.networks-in-education.eu/index.php?id=19
Holger Bienzle, Leena Ferogh, Esther Gelabert, Wolfgang Jütte, Katerina Kolyva, Nick Meyer, Tim Scholze, Guy Tilkin, Sabine Wiemann(2009), R*esource Pack for Networkers*.
http://www.networks-in-education.eu/index.php?id=104

Networks and the process of networking are integral to any international project. These two publications, developed in two projects funded by the LLP, provide guidance, learning and management tools for successfully acting in European networks and steering them.

City Learning Net, EU project guides:
http://www.sosuaarhus-international.com/CitylearningNet.htm#

The City Learning Net was established in 2005 in Girona, Catalonia. It is an informal network working together in lifelong learning projects. Jan Gejel, the network co-ordinator has published four EU project guides with valuable recommendations .

ECOTEC (2008), *Final Evaluation of the Socrates II Programme 2000–2006: Annex to the Joint Report* (C3318).

The report presents the findings of the ex-post evaluation of the Socrates II programme 2000–2006, the predecessor to the Lifelong Learning Programme.

ECOTEC (2003), *Transnational Partnership Guidance Note for Leonardo da Vinci Projects:*
www.leonardo.org.uk/core/core_picker/download.asp?id=62

Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), LLP website: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/index_en.php

The Executive Agency is in charge of the operational management of Multilateral Projects in the LLP. On this website all relevant information about Calls for Proposals and the implementation of already funded Multilateral Projects can be found.

European Commission (2004), *Aid Delivery Methods, Volume 1: Project Cycle Management Guidelines*.

Project Cycle Management (PCM) is a project management approach adopted by many EU funding programmes, above all in development aid. Although the LLP does not follow the PCM approach the Logical Framework Matrix may be a useful planning approach.

European Commission, DG EAC, LLP website:
http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc78_en.htm

The European Commission (Directorate General for Education and Culture) is responsible for ensuring the effective and efficient implementation of the LLP as a whole.

European Commission (2009), Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) Guide 2010. Part I: General provisions:
http://ec.europa.eu/education/llp/doc848_en.htm

European Commission, *Practical Guidelines for LLP Erasmus Coordinators. How to Assure a Successful Project Start-up:*
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/erasmus/documents/guidelines_for_llp_coordinators_project_start_up.pdf

Short, informal checklist of the most important steps to take in the starting phase of an Erasmus project for an effective start-up and successful project implementation.

European Platform for Dutch Education (2005), *Grundtvig Learning Partnerships Navigator:*

Easy-to-read, light project management guide book for small-scale partnerships in the Lifelong learning Programme, includes many practical recommendations.

Jan-Peter Kastelein and Mathew Ross (2004), *Handbook Virtual Teamwork. Making Co-operation Work in Leonardo da Vinci Projects. Information, Theory and Practical Tips*

KEYLINKS project: www.keylinks.eu

This project, funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme, aims at standardising the competences of a EU project manager. Based on a survey among project actors creating a competence profile and published a curriculum and competence framework which covers the main management and leadership tasks in all phases of an EU-funded project.

List of National Agencies of the LLP:
http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc1208_en.htm

Although not directly responsible for the implementation of Multilateral Projects the National Agencies are important interfaces between the funding programme and co-ordinators and partners of Multilateral Projects. They can give advice and support with the dissemination and exploitation of results.

Krewer Consult GmbH and Kooperationsstelle Hamburg (2000), *Managing International Projects. How to Promote Co-operation of Multicultural Project Groups. A Workbook Introducing Experiences, Cases, Self Tests, Advice, Links.*

Project Management publication developed in the framework of PROINNO, an Accompanying Measure funded by the European Commission's Innovation Programme. As the sub-title states, it is based on case studies of real projects and contains many practical management materials.

Effective collaboration

Nancy J. Adler (1997), *International Dimensions of Organizational Behaviour.* 3rd ed.

Gives global approaches on behaviour of leaders, employees, teams and organisations. Book consists of research, examples, assignments and case studies from different cultures.

Robert Axelrod (1984), *The Evolution of Co-operation.*

Famous study, based on the application of game theory, of how effective co-operation can develop and persist. Includes the 'tit-for tat' principle, which recommends to react to co-operation partners' behaviour in exactly the same way.

Meredith Belbin's team roles:
http://www.belbin.com/content/page/1971/Belbin_Team_Role_Descriptions.pdf

Meredith Belbin describes nine team roles, which are evident in successful teams. These roles can be taken up or dropped and one person can play different roles in different situations.

Tom Heck (2006), *Team Building Games on a Shoestring. How To Use Two Normal Shoestrings to Lead 8 Fun and Engaging Team Building Activities.*
www.teachmeteamwork.com

Jon R. Katzenbach, Douglas K. Smith (1993), *The Wisdom Of Teams: Creating the High-Performance Organization.*

Stephen W. Littlejohn, Karen A. Foss (2005), *Theories of Human Communication.*

This book of human communication gives a thorough view on how people communicate with each other, how they create meanings and understand messages. Littlejohn uses approaches on theory combined with practical examples.

Marcial Losada, Emily Heaphy (2004), *The Role of Positivity and Connectivity in the Performance of Business Teams. A Nonlinear Dynamics Model*, in The American Behavioral Scientist. Vol. 47 No. 6.

Losada has developed a postmodern model of team communication dynamics. The article contains the basic elements of this model and describes the dynamics of high performing teams.

Larry A. Samovar, Richard E. Porter, & Edwin R. McDaniel (2009), *Intercultural Communication. A Reader.*

Broad and comprehensive book about intercultural communication. The book contains case studies and examples on intercultural issues from all over the world.

Peter M. Senge (1990), *The Fifth Discipline. The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization.*

Senge's book is one of the management classics. The book handles the principles of systemic thinking and what is required to build a learning organisation.

Bruce W. Tuckman (1965), *Developmental Sequences in Small Groups*, in Psychological Bulletin, 63, 348–399.

Classic description of the team development in a four-phase model, forming – storming – norming – performing.

Intercultural elements in European project management

Milton J. Bennet (2002), *A Developmental Approach to Training for Intercultural Sensitivity*, in International Journal of Intercultural Relations, Volume 10, Issue 2, 1986, 179–196.

Dean C. Barnlund (1962), *Towards a Meaning-Centered Philosophy of Communication*, in Journal of Communication 11, 198–202.

European Commission (2004), *EQUAL Guide on Gender Mainstreaming:*
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/data/document/gendermain_en.pdf

European Diploma in Intercultural Competence (EDICC) project: **www.edicc.eu**

For those who want to learn more about intercultural communication and intercultural management, a network of universities and organisations from seven countries offering a European Diploma on Intercultural Competence. The website also provides contacts in institutions offering training programmes on intercultural communication.

Victor J. Friedman and Ariane Berthoin Antal (2005), *Negotiating Reality. A Theory of Action Approach to Intercultural Competence*, in Management Learning, Vol. 36, No. 1, 69–86

Howard Giles, and Tania Ogay (2006), *Communication Accommodation Theory*, in B. B. Whalen & W. Samter (Eds.), *Explaining Communication: Contemporary Theories and Exemplars*

William Gudykunst (2004), *Theorizing About Intercultural Communication.*

INERtool project, Virtual Intercultural Team Tool:
www.intertool.eu

The website provides access to a publication and a virtual community of educators interested in exchanging information about the management of diversity in European projects, as well as access to the Virtual Intercultural Team Tool, a virtual platform aiming at assisting European project teams to improve intercultural communication and build on their cultural diversity for an effective implementation of their projects. It includes a Kick-off Tool, a Monitoring Tool, an Evaluation Tool, as well as a 'Raise an issue' function.

Geert Hofstede (2001), *Culture's Consequences, Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations across Nations.*

Joe Luft and Harry Ingham (1955), *The Johari Window, a Graphic Model of Interpersonal Awareness. Proceedings of the Western Training Laboratory in Group Development.*

Open Windows: **www.openwindows.se**

Two practical tools, available online for free, allow teams members to get to know each other, using a model inspired by Johari Window model, and provides a team relationships inventory, useful for enhancing team development and reduce risks of intercultural misunderstandings. Available in Swedish, English and Portuguese.

SALTO publications: **http://www.salto-youth.net/publicationsCD/**

Website of the network of eight resource centres working on European priority areas within the youth field. SALTO has published a number of useful documents on intercultural and diversity issues, which can be downloaded for free.

Beate Schmidt-Behlau (Ed.) (2009), *SOS. Culture Communication Tool Kit. Guidance materials for European Project Leaders and Teams.*

Guidance publication on intercultural aspects of European project work in education. The publication was developed by the team of the Grundtvig project INERtool. It is based on a needs analysis among Grundtvig project actors.

Helen Spencer-Oatey (2000), *Culturally Speaking: Managing Rapport Through Talk Across Cultures.*

Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner (1998), *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Diversity in Global Business.*

weReurope project: **www.wereurope.eu**

A website produced in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme and including some tools (such as the virtual carpet of symbols and memories) and suggestions to reflect on diversity and intercultural dialogue in Europe.

ICT tools for European project work

Craig Baker, Khaled El-Sayed, Robson Nyereyemhuka, Elizabeth Ombija, Jamie Tang (2009), *The Effective Use of Technology to Improve Communication in Virtual Teams, Organizational Leadership and Management.*

The paper addresses issues such as how virtual teams communicate, what tools they use, how effective they are, what problems they face and how technology can be employed to create an environment that facilitates effective communication regardless of the team size, location, purpose or the length of its existence. It also formulates a number of practical suggestions for managers of virtual teams.

Lyn Brodie (2009), *Virtual Teamwork and PBL – Barriers to Participation and Learning. Proceedings of the Research in Engineering Education Symposium.*

The paper identifies and discusses several barriers to student participation and learning in a university course based on virtual teams and which has run for 7 years, with several courses per year. It presents conclusions of its evaluation, indicating success in meeting key learning objectives and in forming learning communities. A model is proposed which maps student engagement and learning in virtual teams.

Deborah L. Duarte, Nancy Tennant Snyder (2001), *Mastering Virtual Teams: Strategies, Tools, and Techniques That Succeed.*

A toolkit for managers and members of virtual teams, it includes guidelines, strategies and best practices for working cross-culturally, across time and distance to get a project through. A CD with resources is also included.

EuroPACE ivzw. (2006), *European Co-operation in Education through Virtual Mobility – A Best Practice Manual*:
http://www.being-mobile.net/pdf/BM_handbook_final.pdf

Coleen Garton & Kevin Wegryn (2006), *Managing without walls. Maximize Success with Virtual, Global and Cross-cultural Teams.*

Starting with outlining the skills of an effective manager of a virtual team, the book addresses topics such as virtual teamwork, time management, effective virtual communication, virtual leadership, and includes a set of checklists of various types of skills of an effective virtual manager.

Jaclyn Kostner (1996), *Virtual Leadership: Secrets from the Round Table for the Multi-Site Manager.*

The book is focussed on providing suggestions for overcoming challenges raised by working in virtual teams, for increasing virtual leadership power, for establishing trust and uniting people who do not share a common physical work space, and for using ICT as a bridge between team members.

Jessica Lipnack & Jeffrey Stamps (2000), *Virtual Teams: Reaching Across Space, Time, and Organizations with Technology.*

Beginning with an overview of what virtual teams are and how they work, the authors rely on examples from the work of multinational companies to provide information on virtual teams principles (people, purpose, links), on the skills and technology necessary to make successful virtual teams and on supporting the dynamics of virtual communication.

Jill Nemiro, Michael M. Beyerlein , Lori Bradley , Susan Beyerlein (Eds.) (2008), *The Handbook of High Performance Virtual Teams: A Toolkit for Collaborating Across Boundaries.*

A collection of papers dealing with various aspects of enhancing performance of virtual teams, from management and managing challenges, to developing trust, managing emotions and stimulating creativity.

Kresimir Pripuzic, Luko Gjenero, Hrvoje Belani, (2006) *Improving Virtual Team Communication. International Conference on Software in Telecommunications and Computer Networks*, 266–270.

The authors underline that, while the management of virtual teams become a necessary feature in large projects (they focus on software development projects), trust is required for effective team communication. They present a software tool aimed at enhancing co-operative work and support to virtual team communication.

Jamie S. Switzer (2004), *Virtual Teams*. In Hossein Bidgoli, *The Internet Encyclopedia*, Volume 3.

One of the over 200 articles of the Internet encyclopedia, the article on Virtual Teams provides a definition and describes the main features of this concept and provides an overview of the main challenges associated to the work in a virtual team.

Sonja Valjus (2002), *Virtual Mobility in Reality. A Study of the Use of ICT in Finnish Leonardo da Vinci Mobility Projects:*
http://home.cimo.fi/oppaat/virtualmob.pdf

Quality and evaluation

Wolfgang Beywl (Editor) (2002), *Selected Comments to the Standards for Evaluation of the German Evaluation Society*:
http://www.degeval.de/calimero/tools/proxy.php?id=71

This paper consists of an introduction followed by the Evaluation Standards (http://www.degeval.de/calimero/tools/proxy.php?id=19084) themselves and some guidance about how they could be applied. They are useful reading both for evaluators and for those who need to commission evaluations. The complete booklet is available in German from: http://www.degeval.de/standards/

*Evaluating a Networ*k, in Holger Bienzle, Esther Gelabert, Wolfgang Jütte, Katerina Kolyva, Nick Meyer, Guy Tilkin (2007), *The Art of Networking: European Networks in Education*, 96–110:
http://www.networks-in-education.eu/index.php?id=19

Network Evaluation, in: Holger Bienzle, Leena Ferogh, Esther Gelabert, Wolfgang Jütte, Katerina Kolyva, Nick Meyer, Tim Scholze, Guy Tilkin, Sabine Wiemann(2009), R*esource Pack for Networkers*, 63–68:
http://www.networks-in-education.eu/index.php?id=104

Networks and the process of networking are integral to international projects. These publications provide a guide to networks and their typical processes with a specific chapter looking at evaluation from the perspective of the network. Practical instruments for the evaluation of networks are included in the Resource Pack.

Council of Europe and European Commission (2007), *T-Kit 10: Educational Evaluation in Youth Work.*
http://www.youth-partnership.net/youth-partnership/publications/T-kits/10/Tkit_10_EN

CYFERnet website: http://www.cyfernet.org/index.php?c=6#

CYFERnet is a US network of educators working to support community-based educational programmes for children, youth, parents and families. The website contains plenty of useful links and resources for evaluation.

Rick Davies, Jess Dart (2005), *The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) Technique. A Guide to Its Use:*
http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf

A free and detailed guide covering both the practicalities and theory of Most Significant Change methodology. This is useful for a detailed consideration of the methodology or for those who simply intend to use it as one of a number of approaches to evaluation.

ECOTEC (2002), *Evaluation Guidance Note for Leonardo Projects:*
www.leonardo.org.uk/core/core_picker/download.asp?id=56

Meg Gawler (2005), *Useful Tools for Engaging Young People in Participatory Evaluation*. UNICEF CEE/CIS Regional Office:
http://www.cyfernet.org/index.php?c=6#

Get-in Project: Gender, Ethnicity and Integration through international school projects (2007), *Manual for International School Projects*:
http://www.get-in.info/downloads.php?p=manual

This manual was produced to support schools working on international projects with intercultural themes aimed at encouraging the participation of ethnic minority pupils. It contains useful advice on intercultural work and some especially clear guidance on evaluating projects in the chapter 'What makes a good project?'

W.K. Kellogg Foundation (1998), *Evaluation Handbook*:
http://www.wkkf.org/~/media/10BF675E6D0C4340AE8B038F5080CBFC.ashx

This handbook provides a framework for thinking about evaluations and the steps necessary to plan and conduct them. It contains enough information for programme staff to plan and conduct an evaluation with or without the assistance of an external evaluator.

Online survey tools:

Survey Monkey: http://www.surveymonkey.com/

A basic but free survey designer (with a charge for other services). Users can select from over a dozen types of questions (multiple choice, rating scales, drop-down menus) for internet- based surveys.

SurveyGizmo: http://www.surveygizmo.com

Polldaddy: http://polldaddy.com/

Self-Evaluation in Adult Life Long Learning (SEALLL) project:
http://www.sealll.eu/

The project team envisaged self-evaluation as a developmental tool which can be applied by learners, teachers, developers and project managers. It produced a downloadable manual with guidance and many practical tools for self-evaluation.

Sir John Whitmore (2002, 3rd Edition), *Coaching For Performance, Growing People, Performance and Purpose.*

The GROW model featured in this book was developed by Sir John Whitmore and is probably the best-known coaching model in the UK. Many coach training programmes use this model as the framework for developing the coaching relationship and this model can have an important part to play in both project monitoring and evaluating.

Felicity Woolf (2004), *Partnerships for Learning: A Guide to Evaluating Arts Education Projects,* Arts Council England:
http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publications/

This document has been used by thousands of arts organisations and practitioners as a framework to reflect on their projects and draw out valuable lessons. Arts-based projects are difficult to evaluate and the publication aims

to provide a flexible framework, which can be applied in many different situations and used to evaluate short or more extended projects. This is why it has also proved to be such a valuable starting point for evaluating international projects.

Hallie Preskill, Nathalie Jones (2009), *A Practical Guide for Engaging Stakeholders in Developing Evaluation Questions:* http://www.rwjf.org/pr/product.jsp?id=49951

This guide aims to assist evaluators in the process of engaging stakeholders with a view to increase the value and usefulness of evaluation.

Dissemination and exploitation of results

Making a Network Sustainable, in Holger Bienzle, Esther Gelabert, Wolfgang Jütte, Katerina Kolyva, Nick Meyer, Guy Tilkin (2007), *The Art of Networking, European Networks in Education*, 11–127:
http://www.networks-in-education.eu/index.php?id=19
Making the Network Sustainable, in Holger Bienzle, Leena Ferogh, Esther Gelabert, Wolfgang Jütte, Katerina Kolyva, Nick Meyer, Tim Scholze, Guy Tilkin, Sabine Wiemann (2009), *Resource Pack for Networkers*, 77–80:
http://www.networks-in-education.eu/index.php?id=104

These publications are about networks in education, and about networks funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme in particular. They contain chapters with introductory texts and training materials on dissemination and sustainability and a collection of training materials and practical tools which can also be useful for Multilateral Projects.

ECOTEC Research & Consulting Ltd. (2008), *Sharing Success – A Dissemination and Exploitation Handbook for Everyone Involved in the Lifelong Learning Programme*: http://www.leonardo.org.uk/page.asp?section=000100010023 0004&sectionTitle=Disseminate+and+Exploit+Results

The guide provides an introduction to dissemination and exploitation activities for individual participants and projects funded by the LLP programme.

European Commission (1997), *Intellectual Property-Guidelines for Promoters of Training Projects.*

European Commission (2006), *European Quality Kit. Striving for Better Quality in Grundtvig Projects*: http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/grundtvig/doc/kit.pdf

Document developed for Grundtvig, listing networks, associations, internet platforms and journals important for the dissemination of projects results in the field of adult education.

European Commission (2006), *Sustainability of International Co-operation Projects in the Field of Higher Education and Vocational Training. Handbook on Sustainability*: http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/tempus/doc/sustain handbook.pdf

European Commission, DG for Education and Culture: Valorisation webpage:
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/valorisation/

Official website of the European Commission on dissemination and exploitation of results of projects funded by EU programmes on education and training.

European InfoNet Adult Education: www.infonet-ae.eu

Grundtvig network providing information about current developments in adult education. InfoNet regularly reports about interesting European projects. The articles are translated into different languages, can be downloaded from a database and are used by adult education journalists in the journals and publications they write for.

JISC dissemination documents:

Dissemination plan:
http://www.jisc.ac.uk/fundingopportunities/projectmanagement/planning/dissemination.aspx

Dissemination methods:
http://www.jisc.ac.uk/fundingopportunities/projectmanagement/planning/dissemination/methods.aspx

JISC is a UK expert network which gives support to the education and research communities On their website they provide useful guidance materials for dissemination.

QaS – Quality and Sustainability, Project Support Quality and Sustainability: http://qas.programkontoret.se

A joint project between the National Agencies of The Czech Republic, France, Sweden and the UK, which provide a collection of practical tools for school and adult education projects for enhancing quality and sustainability mainly in the partnership projects, contains e.g. a guide on project management, dissemination guide. Brings together many new ideas on sustainability plus a focus on practical tips.

Theo Reubsaet (2005), *Valorisation Down to Earth – Guidance Through the Obstinate Context of Leonardo da Vinci Projects. Experiences and Tips from the Working Practice:*

http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/leonardo/new/valorisation/doc/dutchhandbook_en.pdf

A guidance publication on dissemination and exploitation issues, it gives many examples of how Leonardo projects have addressed different aspects of valorisation.

Riitta Suurla, Markku Marttila (1998), *Methods and Tools for Effective Dissemination. A Guide to the Dissemination of Results of International Educational Projects:* **http://www.leonardodavinci.fi/dissemination/disse-guide.html**

Marttila & Suurla have developed five different tools for systematically planning dissemination. The five tools planning dissemination have been placed in a dissemination wheel, to point out the importance of continuous movement, change and progress. In addition some ideas are provided on how to plan the dissemination jointly with the partners during a partner meeting.

SALTO Inclusion (2007), *Making Waves. Creating More Impact with Your Youth Projects:*
http://www.salto-youth.net/makingwaves/

Sustain project (2000), *Socrates ODL/Minerva Dissemination Guide:* **http://www.sustain.odl.org/Guide-Gen2000.pdf**

Acknowledgements

This publication was not produced exclusively by the team of authors. Many people supported us in its development.

We would like to thank all co-ordinators and partners of Multilateral Projects, Lifelong Learning Programme managers from National Agencies, evaluators and other experts, who returned questionnaires about their experiences, or dedicated time to individual interviews or focus group sessions.

Special thanks to those colleagues who were so kind to make detailed comments on draft versions of the publication, or shared good practice, examples and project management tools with us: Thomas W. Albrecht, Lindsey Atkinson, Sarah Beal, Judith Cerwenka, Karl Donert, Tomas Findra, Jan Gejel, Esther Gelabert, Vito de la Fata, Judith Galla, Annemarie Holm, Andrew Holmes, Maxine Judge, Helen Keogh, Gabriella Klein, Katerina Kolyva, Pavol Krempasky, Michael Marquart, Nick Meyer, Oana Nestian, Esa Niemi, Jane Nimmo, Henk Oonk, Jill Ritchie, Emilia Saulescu, Beate Schmidt-Behlau, Tim Scholze, Joanna Szczecinska, Guy Tilkin, Argiris Tzikopoulos, Jens Vermeersch, Maria Villanueva, Sabine Wiemann, Chris Williams. This list is certainly not exhaustive, and we apologise to those we have not explicitly mentioned here.

A particular contribution to the *Survival Kit* was made by our external evaluator Gareth Long, whose critical comments and suggestions helped us immensely in improving the publication.

Finally, we want to express our special gratitude to to the colleagues in the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). They supported and encouraged us throughout the project and made valuable comments and suggestions on the emerging publication.

Authors

This publication was jointly developed by a transnational team of authors:

Eija Wilen is a senior LLP programme manager at CIMO, the Finnish National Agency for the lifelong Learning Programme and has lot of experience in advising applicants for European activities and supporting projects in their activities. Eija has actively participated in project management training both at national level and European level. One of her areas of special expertise is project dissemination.

Silvia Wiesinger is a senior ministry official from Austria responsible for the co-ordination and strategic development of in-service training for teaching staff. In her former position as co-ordinator of international activities of one of the largest teacher training institutes in Vienna, she has been involved as co-ordinator and partner in many Comenius, Lingua and Leonardo projects, as well as in several European networks. Leadership training, educational management and project management are among her main fields of expertise.

Calin Rus (Institutul Intercultural Timisoara) has over 12 years of experience in national and European projects related to intercultural communication. He holds a PhD in social psychology of intercultural communication. Calin has much experience as European project co-ordinator and in designing, delivering and evaluating training on intercultural communication.

Vesa Purokuru is co-founder and senior expert of HUMAP, a Finnish company which provides training, process consultancy and ICT assistance for collaboration. He has co-ordinated various projects in the framework of Comenius and Netdays99. His special areas of expertise include team building, leadership, change management and facilitation, as well as ICT support of team processes.

Ray Kirtley (University of Hull) has co-ordinated nine centralised projects and been a partner in others (including Comenius, Grundtvig, Tempus and Leonardo). He has also worked as the external evaluator for a number of European projects. Ray is familiar with the research skills needed to assemble materials for publication and is experienced in writing and testing manuals, guidelines and training packages, especially those focused on international partnerships between education institutions. He is an experienced course facilitator with a background first as a teacher and then as a local authority adviser.

Eerika Hedman works as consultant at HUMAP in Finland. She holds university degree in communication and leadership and she has worked as a communication lecturer at the Open University of the University of Jyväskylä. Her main interest is communication at work, in teams and within intercultural settings. Eerika has also been actively fostering intercultural integration and tolerance as a leader of the European Erasmus Student Network in Finland.

Holger Bienzle is head of the EU department of *die Berater*, a private provider of adult education, training and consultancy in Austria. He has gained experience with European projects from different perspectives: As Austrian Grundtvig programme manager and advisor of project promoters, as external expert and evaluator for the European Commission, and as manager of European projects in research and education. Holger co-ordinated both *Survival Kit* projects, the previous Socrates project and the present LLP project which produced this publication.

Notes

Notes

Multilateral Projects are a specific type of European co-operation in the EU's Lifelong Learning Programme. Several institutions from different countries work together to jointly develop or transfer, test and disseminate innovative education products. The *Survival Kit* supports co-ordinators in the complex task of managing these projects.

dieBerater®
Human Concern