

Performance indicators in the frame of Networks of Excellence

Methodological guidance note

Preliminary note

Please note that these notes are merely intended for guidance. Networks of Excellence (NoEs) will be varied in their nature, content, structure and objectives. But they will all have the common feature of overcoming fragmentation.

They will also undertake other activities – research, and the spreading of knowledge, for example – and the key requirement is to establish a mechanism for measuring progress: namely a set of *verifiable indicators*.

Guidelines for an “assessment methodology”

The performance of Networks of Excellence (in terms of progress made towards durable integration of the participants’ research capacities) has to be assessed according to the individual characteristics of each network.

However, all the networks will have to be assessed against:

- The “**expected final results**” to be achieved in terms of durable integration at the end of the 5-7 year period of Community funding (example: “common management of human resources”)¹;
- The expected “**intermediate steps**” or milestones, necessary to achieve these final results, to be assessed at the end of each implementation period (i.e. each year if possible) (example: implementation of mobility programmes amongst participants);

By means of:

- The “**indicators of the progress achieved**”, quantitative goals easily checked at the end of each year (example: number of personnel exchanges amongst participants) as well as qualitative goals which could necessitate a deeper analysis (example: progress in terms of convergence of the training programmes).

¹ A proposal within which the « final results » mentioned do not appear sufficiently ambitious in terms of durable integration should not be selected.

The objective of NoE is not only to generate integration, but also to lead to **durable** integration of the participants' research capacities: therefore, during the implementation phase, special attention must be paid to the “**trends**” towards integration which may be observed.²

Furthermore, the setting up of **common tools** by the participants, although an indispensable condition to durable integration, does not *per se* demonstrate their will and actuality of durable integration. The **existing and increasing use** of these common tools by all participants will constitute an illustration of progress towards integration.

These two last remarks will have to be reflected in the “indicators of the progress achieved” that will be applied in each specific case.

*The **key aspects** of the proposed methodology could therefore be summarised as follows:*

- *Setting up of **sufficiently ambitious results** to be achieved at the end of the EC-funding period*
- *Definition of **intermediate steps** (milestones) covering:*
 - * *Specific operations necessary for the setting up of common tools (informatics, equipment, installations, facilities, ...)*
 - * *Administrative and legal operations necessary to allow for a common use of these tools by all participants*
- *Identification of **indicators of the progress achieved**, mainly under the form of measurement of the degree of achievement of the intermediate steps³*

² As an example, a very high number of exchange of personnel observed during one specific year is not sufficient to demonstrate a real commitment to integration: such a trend has to be confirmed and possibly enhanced during the following periods.

³ For example: 5= completely achieved, 4= mainly achieved, 3= partially achieved, 2= scarcely achieved, 1= not achieved at all

Annex

This Annex provides examples of “expected final results”, with possible expected intermediate steps and indicators of the progress achieved. As such, it is not to be considered as a “straight jacket” automatically applicable to all proposals.

Examples of results to be achieved

The results mentioned below **do not constitute** an exhaustive list. They are meant to provide **examples** of what could be expected from a network aiming at achieving a satisfactory level of integration at the end of the Community funding period.

Communications inside the network

- Fast and high-performance electronic connections among the network’s participants;
- Compatible and harmonised computer tools, including software;
- Common methodology of data classification;
- Common data codification;
- Common data base, directly accessible to all participants etc.etc.

Sharing and common management of equipment, installations, infrastructure

- Common installations, equipment, infrastructure (common ownership, or ownership of one participant with agreement regarding its use);
- Existing agreements regarding the use of equipment, installations, infrastructure;
- Common arrangements for the use of equipment, installations, infrastructure;
- Conditions for use which are evidently more beneficial to network members than on the open market etc.etc.

Common management of human resources

- Mobility programmes (short/long duration) among participants’ personnel;
- Common training programmes for the network personnel ;
- Training programmes addressed to students and researchers outside the network partnership;
- Harmonised working conditions (salaries, social protection, and codification of personnel...) etc.

Common knowledge management

- Sharing of the pre-existing knowledge of the network's participants;
- Fair distribution of the intellectual property rights following the results generated by the network's activities;
- Common patents etc.

Network management

- Setting up of a common legal structure representing all participating organisations in the network and having a legal identity of its own;
- Decisional framework;
- Management according to general principles shared by all participants (ethics, gender...)
- Effective and active participation of all participating organisations in the decisional process, possibly with weighting according to transparent and objective criteria;
- Regular meetings of the Steering Committee (at least every three months) etc.

“Insurance” of continuation after the conclusion of the Community's funding period

- Portfolio of projects involving all the network's participants (including those aiming at obtaining future Community funding);
- Search of external funding sources (both public and private);
- Decreasing dependence on Community funding

The table below shows, for each of these examples, possible intermediate steps as well as indicators which could be applicable.

Assessment of NoEs performance in terms of durable integration

Important remarks

- The table below only consists of EXAMPLES
- A specific table will have to be created for each network,
 - Where the intermediate milestones might be different from those mentioned below
 - Where several milestones could be defined for the same period
 - Where milestones might also be “distributed” “ over more than one period
 - Where, in order to monitor the trends, the same indicator could be applied for several periods
- The 5 last columns (progress indicators) are deliberately left empty in this example: as already mentioned, they should contain figures that reflect the degree of achievement of the intermediate milestones (for example from 5 to 1, see footnote 3 in the core document)
- Project officers may feel free to add further columns, such as for example “means to verify the achievement” (a description of the way in which the goals are going to be measured), or “risks and assumption” (a description of what problems might prevent the achievement of the goals set)

The actual contents of the table have to be defined according to the network’s specificity and starting situation.

Expected results	Intermediate steps (milestones)					Progress indicators				
	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4	Period 5	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4	Period 5
Communication inside the network										
Fast performing communications	Inventory of material, speeding of connections ...	Inventory of weak connections, inventory of possible incompatibilities...	Setting up of new connections	Development /purchase of new tools in view of complete compatibility	Optimisation of connections frequency and rhythm					
Compatible and harmonised informatics tools	Inventory of the informatics tools of participants.....	Inventory of "incompatibilities"	Harmonisation of informatics tools/ negotiation of directives for future acquisitions	Development /purchase of new tools	Optimisation of use of all informatics tools					
Common classification methodology		Inventory of various nomenclatures used by participants	Harmonisation of nomenclatures	Establishment of a common nomenclature	Implementation of the common nomenclature by all participants					
Common codification		Inventory of various codifications used by participants	Harmonisation of codifications	Establishment of a common codification scheme	Implementation of the common codification by all participants					
Common data base accessible to all participants	Inventory of existing data base among participants	Identification of missing data, possible incompatibilities	Elaboration of a scheme for the future common data base	Agreements among participants for common use	Launching of the common data base, optimisation of use...					
Sharing and common management of equipment, installations, infrastructure										
Installations, infrastructure, equipment commonly owned or	Inventory of equipment, installations,	Identification of too-shorts, inventory of	Further acquisitions/developments (if necessary)	Agreements for common/shar	Optimisation of shared/commo					

under shared use	infrastructure at the disposal of the network	obstacles to shared use...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In common ownership or ○ Shared use 	ed use	n use					
Agreements for use of the equipment, installations, infrastructures		Negotiation and conclusion of agreements for use	Implementation of these agreements by participants	Optimisation of implementation of the agreements						
Common rules on utilisation	Preparation of the future common rules	Negotiation and conclusion of agreements on the common rules	Implementation of the common rules	Possible review of the common rules in the light of the experience	Final optimisation of common rules and survey of the implementation					
Conditions for use	Negotiation and conclusion of agreements for use	Implementation of the conditions	Identification of possible difficulties, optimisation of implementation	Possible review of the conditions in the light of the experience	Final optimisation of conditions and survey of the implementation					
Common management of human resources										
Short/long term mobility programmes	Setting up of the “frame” of the mobility programmes	Setting up of mobility programme for the period	Implementation of the mobility programmes by all participants	Assessment of the application of mobility programmes and possible review	Survey and optimisation of application					
Common training programme		Inventory of weaknesses in terms of skills/ of the skills necessary	Setting up and negotiation of the content of the common training programme	First implementation, experimental CV	Stabilisation of implementation of CV					
Harmonised working conditions		Survey of the working conditions inside all participating organisations	Inventory of the working conditions to be harmonised/ setting up of various salaries tables	Negotiation of the conditions to be harmonised	Establishment of common tables and regulations					

Common knowledge management										
Sharing of pre-existing know-how	Inventory of pre-existing know-how (further to what is already foreseen by the consortium agreement)	Possible re-negotiation of the protected pre-existing know how	Negotiation of the various conditions for access and use of pre-existing know how	Implementation of the agreements	Survey of the implementation of the agreements and optimisation					
Distribution of intellectual property rights inside the network	Detailed inventory of IPR distribution inside the network	Identification of possible gaps or inequalities	Negotiation of re-distribution of IPR on a more equal basis	Implementation of the re-distribution	Survey and possible review of the re-distribution					
Common patents		Inventory of the possible obstacles to common patents	Identification of the necessary steps for the removal of such obstacles (legal, administrative, linguistic...)	Proposal of an approach for common patenting	Implementation (if possible) of the approach					
Network management										
Legal structure representing participants and network as such		First inventory of the possible legal structures to be envisaged at term	Determination of the selected form of legal structure by all participants	Negotiation of the statutes for legal structure	Setting up of the structure					
Decisional procedure based on majority					Setting up of a decisional structure involving all participating organisations					
Participation of all involved organisations	Designation of the representative of each of the participating organisations	Survey of the level of representation of each participant, identification of a common level within all participating organisations	If needed re-negotiation of representation of each organisation	Harmonisation of the level of representation of all organisations involved"	Designation of representatives of the adequate level by all organisations					
Steering Committee (governing board)	Identification of the main functioning rules governing the steering committee/governing board	Setting up of the internal regulation of the Steering Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o representation of 	First survey of the operation of the structure, identification of possible gaps or problems	Review of the internal rules, re-negotiation of internal regulation	Implementation of revised regulation					

		the organisati ons distribution of voting rights								
Continuity of the network										
Search for external funding	Inventory of possible funding sources	Setting up of a common cell for search of external funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o personnel o mission 	First cell activity report operations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o possible external funding sources identified 	Second cell activity report	Identification of external and operational funding sources					
Portfolio of common projects			Identification of possible topics for common projects	Setting up of a development plan for these topics amongst the participants	Preparation of future common projects (protocols of research...)					
Decreasing dependence towards Community funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Evolution of the yearly Community contribution: decreasing trend, at least the two last years, in dependently of the expenses linked to the JPA o Creation of an “external funding sources search” function of increasing importance 									