

The do-it-yourself EUROPE

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO PROJECT building AND MANAGEMENT



Social Networks for Local Empowerment



Europe
for Citizens



With the support of the Europe for citizens programme of the European Union
Co-financed by APQ Giovani protagonisti di sé e del territorio





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Project Number: 2011-4026/001-001

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This publication is part of the SOLE project, funded with the support from the European Commission, DG EAC – EUROPE FOR CITIZENS PROGRAMME – Action 1. ACTIVE CITIZENS FOR EUROPE – Support Measures 2.2. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be of the information therein.



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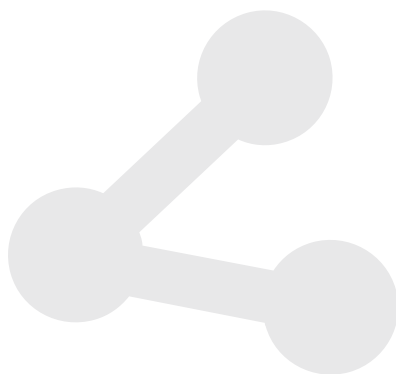
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Date of publication: May 2013



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Acknowledgements

This Guide has been written by Angela Martinez-Carrasco and Aurélien Leblay.

We would like to say thanks to all participants of the SOLE Training Course (July 2012, Palermo – Italy) who developed the original idea of this publication. Without their ideas, expectations and concerns this publication wouldn't have taken this form, of which we are very proud.

In the development of the contents, the partnership has been actively involved. We want to say special thanks for the revisions and the comments to Herbert Spindler and Benjamin Eberle (Sozial Label from Germany), Leah Strauss (Crossing Borders from Denmark), Laszlo Kocsis (Centre for Democratic Development from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Mark Mitchell (Dacorum CVS from UK), Ieva Upesleja (Pozitiva Doma from Latvia), Magali Lansalot (Pistes Solidaires from France), Andrea Ciantar and Andrea Bruni (ARSE Progetto Laboratorio from Italy), Andrej Kaplica (Progresit from Slovakia), Cosmin Ionita and Iulian Ghinoiu (Young partners for Civil Society Development from Romania), and Tina Michieli (Centre for information service, cooperation and development from Slovenia).

Their efforts and commitment for the creation of this publication and for the success of all project activities is the proof that Europe moves forward when cooperation happens.

ACRONYMS

CESIE: Centro Studi ed Iniziative Europeo (European Center of Studies and Initiatives)

DG: Directorates-general of the European Commission

DG EAC: Directorate-General of Education and Culture

EACEA: Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency

EC: European Commission

ECP: Europe for Citizens Points

EU: European Union

FAQ: Frequently asked questions

ICT: Information and communication technology/ies

LLP: Lifelong Learning programme

PDF: Portable Document Format

RSS: Rich Site Summary

SOLE: Social Networks for Local Empowerment

SALTO: Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities within the European YOUTH programme

USA: United States of America

INTRODUCTION

Since its creation over 50 years ago, the European Union (EU) has been present in more and more fields of our lives. It has supported and financed a great number of different activities. It has encouraged Europeans and the European civil societies to undertake all kinds of projects aimed at improving the present and the future life of European citizens. The EU is the symbol of the union of rights, based on a shared cultural identity but made of several ones respected and valorised. It is also the result of the efforts to maintain the peace on a continent marked by wars. 2012 is, in that sense, the year of the recognition of the value of the contribution of the EU to the creation of the area of freedom and peace, encompassing relations among millions of its citizens. The EU's Nobel Peace Prize award of this year is a sign of recognition from the world for its continuing efforts and results in this area.

Initiatives coming from different European actors in the social, cultural or educational level have become more and more relevant at European level, and because of this the EU has recognised the enormous benefit of **transnational cooperation**. One of the oldest examples of European cooperation is town twinning, which has contributed mostly to the establishment of long-lasting relations of cooperation and peace-building¹. Great efforts have been made to develop the scope of a simple economic union, and an increasing number of programmes and funding have become available for citizens as well as for public and private organisations, including funding for meetings among citizens of twinned towns.

However, not all citizens and organisations wishing to develop projects have been always able to do such. The EU has set up many procedures in order to guarantee the transparency and efficiency of its programmes, but this can become real obstacles for those who are not familiar with

¹ <http://www.twinning.org/en/page/history.html>

the process. For this reason, there is a well founded need for support materials and guidelines for the benefit of the individuals and organisations willing to implement a project but not knowing exactly how to proceed. Some basic rules or patterns have to be followed in order to be successful in an European project. These rules shouldn't be considered obstacles impossible to overcome, but only directions that every proposal must follow in order to be successful.

Moreover, the actual context is in favour of being rigorous and demanding concerning the planning and implementation of the projects. The economical crisis squeezes day- by- day the possibilities, with a decrease in the amount of funds available. As a result, there are less financing possibilities and a higher number of proposals submitted leading to European applications being highly competitive. This speaks in the favour of compiling accurate and high quality projects, but we don't want to discourage you! Just keep on pursuing the realisation of your dreams, concepts, the way you conceive them!

Key principles of the SOLE project and of the Guide

This Users' Guide is the result of the SOcial Networks for Local Empowerment (SOLE) project², an Europe for Citizens project coordinated by the European Centre of Studies and Initiatives (CESIE) from Palermo (Italy), aiming at involving more actors in European transnational projects, so that everyone can benefit of these opportunities. SOLE focuses on enhancing active citizenship, to reach local organisations that are new to this field, and provide them the capacity of giving life to their ideas within the framework of European programmes, especially within the Europe for Citizens.

In July 2012, representatives from local organisations from partners' countries (Italy, Romania, UK, Latvia, Slovakia, France, Denmark, Slovenia, Germany and Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) were selected and involved by partners in a training course about European project

² www.project-sole.eu

writing and management, and the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools for networking (especially social networks). The meeting resulted in an assessment of the needs and constraints for participation of local authorities and civil society organisations in transnational cooperation. Thus, partners and participants were encouraged to discuss and come up with the tips and ideas which were lately wrapped up in this Guide. Therefore what you are reading here is the result of many experiences gathered by European partners who have been active in the field of European cooperation successfully managing transnational projects for many years. On the other hand, the ideas of citizens, belonging to organisations who are novices in transnational cooperation were also collected. Therefore this Guide **targets anyone who wishes to start a project on their own under an European programme** but might feel insecure on how to start it.

We will mainly analyse the Europe for Citizens programme, as the main current opportunity to develop transnational projects promoting active European citizenship. Based on very simple methods of application and budgeting, the Programme makes it easier to enter the world of European cooperation to those organisations without experience. But don't forget that most of the aspects can be used in other European funding programmes. Finally we will also deal with social networking: exploiting the use of new ICT for communication, dissemination and networking.

The philosophy of the Guide

Sure we want to share knowledge and information. However we don't want to say "that's how you must do it"! That is why we will try to explain very clearly why every step described below is essential from our point of view to the success of a project, but the list is not exhaustive. You can do it well only if you believe in something, but **learning-by-doing** remains our main advice.

Once the importance of every aspect is understood, you will be able to shape your own way of participating in European projects.

1. INFORMATION ON THE EUROPE FOR CITIZENS PROGRAMME

1.1 A brief overview on Europe for Citizens place as part of EU funding schemes

To make part of the European life through cooperation is not only a matter of applying and getting funding for a project. It is important to understand how the EU's funding system is organised and why the EU allocates direct funding to organisations and individuals.

The European Commission (EC) is the institution which represents the interests of the EU as a whole³. It is in charge, among other, of the management of the EU funds and of the implementation of the EU policies. As it often happens in many countries, the EC's structure is divided in departments or Directorates-General (DG)⁴ which are similar to the ministers of the national governments. DGs, each one led by an European Commissioner, are in charge of the implementation of the different EU policies which fall within EU's competence. They are doing so by performing through different actions, which include the management of the allocated EU funding through **direct financial contributions**⁵ in the form of grants in support of projects or organisations⁶.

The EC encourages, among others, education in all its aspects, cultural issues, media dynamism and active citizenship. Three DGs are in charge of these: Education and Culture, Communication and European Aid Development and Cooperation.

³ *European Commission: http://europa.eu/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-commission/index_en.htm*

⁴ *Departments (Directorates-General) and services of the European Commission: http://ec.europa.eu/about/ds_en.htm*

⁵ *European funding is also distributed through the form of indirect funding, allocated to financial intermediaries or national/regional authorities (i.e. Structural Funds).*

⁶ *Full list of EC Grants fields: http://ec.europa.eu/contracts_grants/grants_en.htm*

The implementation of the Europe for Citizens programme and other programmes under these DGs is partially managed by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)⁷. It is the main organisational structure which issues calls, selects projects and provides grants to organisations.

The management of the European programmes is sometimes delegated to the National Agencies, which are executive agencies located in each Member State and candidate or cooperating states which have signed a pre-accession or cooperation memorandum/agreement with the EU-27. Depending on the programme, you will be in contact with them (in case of **decentralised actions**) or directly with the EC or central executive agencies (in case of **centralised actions**). The latter is also the case of the Europe for Citizens programme, which is centrally managed entirely, and the actions under the EACEA are only supported by national Europe for Citizens Points⁸ which however have no responsibility regarding the calls.

Here are the different policies and programmes for which the EACEA is partially responsible for its management:

- **Education and training⁹**: the Lifelong Learning programme improves learning processes at all stages of life; other programmes of cooperation in the field of higher education with different countries and regions of the World (Erasmus Mundus, Tempus, Bilateral cooperation and Intra – ACP academic mobility scheme)
- **Youth¹⁰**: the Youth in Action programme promotes youth participation in Europe through short or long term mobility and educational actions;

⁷ EACEA: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/index_en.php

⁸ http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/tools/ecp_en.php

⁹ http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/index_en.php

¹⁰ http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.php

- **Culture¹¹**: the Culture programme encourages expressions of cultural diversity and cultural diffusions, based on a common European heritage;
- **Audiovisual¹²**: the MEDIA programme supports the audiovisual sector in Europe through the circulation and attractiveness of new media products;
- **Citizenship¹³**: the Europe for Citizens programme intends to make Europeans citizens informed, acknowledged, aware of their European identity and the role they can play in the construction of Europe through their involvement in their local communities. The objective of the programme is to foster the European citizenship awareness and develop an common sense of belonging to European ideals, promoting an active citizenship all over Europe.

These programmes have been active in the period 2007-2013. In 2014 a new round will start for the next 7 years. In the education, training, youth and sport fields the Erasmus for All¹⁴ is the proposed programme, while Creative Europe¹⁵ will be the one supporting the culture and the creative sectors of Europe. The Europe for Citizens programme 2014-2020 will follow up the current one (see chapter 1.3).

1.2 The Europe for Citizens programme 2007-2013

The current programme was developed on the basis of the Active European Citizenship (2004-2006)¹⁶, a programme that pursued the objective of supporting bodies working in the field of active European citizenship and promoting actions in this field. It confirmed <<the need

¹¹ http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/culture/index_en.php

¹² http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/media/index_en.php

¹³ http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_en.php

¹⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus-for-all/index_en.htm

¹⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/culture/creative-europe/index_en.htm

¹⁶ http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/citizenship_2004_2006.php

to promote sustained dialogue with civil society organisations and municipalities and to support the active involvement of citizens>>¹⁷.

With 215 million Euro, the current programme has permitted until now the development and sustainability of actions initiated by different local, national and European public and private non profit actors. It has recognised the importance of **civil society organisations** in their contribution to the building of European citizenship, as well as has encouraged **town twinning** as a form of European cooperation and has contributed to actions of **remembrance** of the History of Europe.

The objectives and structure of the programme

The programme pursues **general** and **specific** objectives:

- **General objectives** are aimed at: constructing an ever closer Europe, sense of European identity and ownership of the EU, fostering tolerance and mutual understanding.
- **Specific objectives** are aimed at: sharing and exchanging the lessons from history and build the common future, fostering actions, debates and reflections upon the historical events and processes, promoting Europe's core values, interaction between citizens and civil society organisations.

The programme is now open to EU-27 Member States and the following neighbouring countries: Croatia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia. The Europe for Citizens programme is divided into 4 actions, each of which pursues different objectives.

¹⁷ *Decision No 1904/2006/Ec of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 establishing for the period 2007 to 2013 the programme 'Europe for Citizens' to promote active European citizenship, p.2: http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/lexuriserv_en.pdf*

Action 1 - Active citizens for Europe

It seeks to encourage meetings, exchanges and debates among European citizens from different countries, in order to learn from their countries' history and to start building for the future.

Measure 1: Town Twinning

- **1.1.1: Town twinning citizens' meetings:** encourage town twinning by supporting the meetings of citizens of twinned towns. This measure also promotes the creation of new twinning relationships among cities who share a common or similar view of the history or similar awareness and consciousness regarding problems of common interest. This measure is implemented through call for proposals to be responded by towns/municipalities or their twinning committees or other non profit organisations representing local authorities, involving at municipalities from at least 2 participating countries of which at least one is an EU Member State.

It is financed through flat-rate system¹⁸ for grants covering among 5.000€ and 25.000€.

Beginning of June and September 2013 are the next deadlines under this call.

- **1.1.2: Networks of twinned towns:** enhance and reinforce the existing networks of twinned towns. Through this action you will be able to give more content and build stronger links within an existing network of twinned towns. This can be made through meetings, creating new tools, developing new solutions to common challenges, etc.

Types of organisations that can apply for projects are: towns/municipalities or their twinning committees or networks, other levels of local/regional authorities, federations/associations

¹⁸ See chapter 2.2: Determining the budget

of local authorities and non-profit organisations representing local authorities. Projects must include at least 4 different countries of which at least one is an EU Member State.

It is financed through flat-rate system for grants covering among 10.000€ and 150.000€.

Beginning of September 2013 is the last deadline under this action.

Measure 2: Citizens' projects and support measures

- **1.2.1: Citizens' projects:** projects aiming at the direct involvement of citizens, through the use of innovative methods. It should target directly European citizens directly and can deal with many different fields related to European citizenship (education, European awareness, environment, advocacy...).

Civil society organisations and local authorities from at least 5 participating countries (of which at least one is an EU Member State) can apply for projects.

It is financed through real costs system¹⁹. A maximum of the 60% of the expenses will be covered by the grant, which must be among 100.000€ and 250.000€.

Beginning of June 2013 is the last deadline under this action.

- **1.2.2: Support measures:** supporting the creation of Europe for Citizens projects, especially under Action 1, and improving their quality, exchanging best practices among those with experience, and bringing about new skills. If you wish to support and enhance the European citizenship processes under way, this measure is for you. The SOLE project is an example of a project under this action. The kind of organisations that can apply for projects are federations/associations of local authorities or other bodies with specific knowledge/experience of citizenship, from at least 2

¹⁹ See [chapter 2.2: Determining the budget](#)

participating countries of which at least one is an EU Member State.

This action is also based on a real-costs system, and the grant can cover 80% of the expenses maximum. Grants must be from 30.000€ to 100.000€.

Beginning of June 2013 is the last deadline under this action.

Action 2 - Active civil society in Europe

Supports civil society organisations and think tanks, as links between European citizens and the EU. Fosters actions, debates and reflections related to European citizenship and democracy, shared values, common history and culture.

- **Measure 2.1 and 2.2:** included operational grants, which means that they were addressed to active organisations at the European level, which can benefit from those annual funding which cover their operational activities. No calls will be published in 2013.
- **Measure 2.3:** Support to projects initiated by civil society organisations: raising awareness on issues of European interest and on concrete adequate solutions. These projects are meant to foster and shape common values and decisive issues for the present, the past and the future of EU. Projects can address issues like European democracy and citizenship, intergenerational dialogue, citizens involvement in policy-making, local communities empowerment, European identity awareness, etc. The last deadline for this measure was closed on 1st of February 2013.

Action 3 - Together for Europe

Deepens the concept of active European citizenship through three sets of measures: high-visibility events, studies and information and

dissemination tools. This action does not offer the possibility of receiving grants.

Action 4 - Active European Remembrance

Remember the collapse of some core European values and democratic principles caused by Nazism and Stalinism in Europe. Commemorate the victims, protect the sites and archives associated with deportations, in order to preserve the memories of the past, including its dark sides.

The aim of the projects developed within this action is to remember for the memory of the victims of Nazism and Stalinism, in order to raise the awareness of the new generations, and to build the future on solid peaceful grounds and on the basis of mutual understanding.

The list of organisations (from one eligible programme country minimum) that can apply for projects includes many different types of entities: non-governmental organisations, survivors' associations, entities managing remembrance, museums, local and regional authorities, federations of general European interest, foundations and research/educational institutions.

It is financed through flat-rate system for grants covering among 10.000€ and 100.000€.

Beginning of June 2013 is the last deadline under this action.

Looking through past financed projects might help you in the definition of your proposal. On the EACEA and the EC's websites dedicated to Citizenship you can find concrete examples of projects co-financed by the Europe for Citizens programme²⁰.

The EC has also set priority topics for its actions. The portfolio of topics is quite wide, and is mainly intended to ensure that the projects are specific

²⁰ EC: http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/sharing-experiences/index_en.htm

EACEA: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/results_compendia/results_en.php

and concrete. You can see them as useful guidelines and source of inspiration!

The permanent priorities for Europe for Citizens Programme are: the future of the EU and its basic values, active European citizenship (participation and democracy in Europe), inter-cultural dialogue, people's well being in Europe (employment, social cohesion and sustainable development, and impact of the EU policies on the societies).

Moreover, the EU establishes each year a main topic which must encompass all the actions undertaken. 2013 is the European Year of Citizens²¹, while 2012 was the Year for Active Ageing and Intergenerational dialogue, and so follow up actions are expected also. Finally, in each programme the EC sets annual priorities which address European policies and objectives in accordance with the needs of the Europeans. For 2013, in the framework of the European Year of Citizens, two key priorities have been set: **EU, values, rights and opportunities for citizens** (making Europe's opportunities more visible and effective), and **citizens participation in the democratic life of the EU** (enable citizens to take part in European decision-making).

Responding to the general and specific objectives, and to some or all of these priorities is essential in order to have a project granted by this programme.

1.3 The Europe for Citizens programme 2014-2020

Based on studies on the impact and results from projects realised with the support of the programme 2007-2013, the EC has proposed this new programme which aims at promoting civic participation and contributing to increasing awareness and understanding about the Union. Although some of the actions will be reshaped, the Europe for Citizens programme should not undergo any major changes, and the

²¹ <http://europa.eu/citizens-2013/>

basis of European project management will remain the same. Therefore this Guide will be useful for you to prepare the new actions which can fall under the new call for proposals from 2014.

Two specific priorities have been proposed for the next operational programme²²:

- raise awareness on remembrance, the Union's history, identity and aim by stimulating debate, reflection and networking;
- encourage democratic and civic participation of citizens at Union level, by developing citizens' understanding of the Union policy making-process and promoting opportunities for societal engagement and volunteering at Union level.

The kind of activities that are likely to be co-financed from 2014 are:

- Citizens' meetings and town-twinning
- Creation and operations of transnational partnerships and networks
- Support for organisations of a general European interest
- Community building and debates on citizenship issues based on the use of ICT and/or social media
- Union level events
- Debates/studies and interventions on defining moments in European history, in particular to keep the memory alive of the crimes committed under Nazism and Stalinism
- Reflection/debates on common values
- Initiatives to raise awareness on the EU institutions and their functioning

²² *In the moment of the publication of this Guide the Proposal is still under discussion. The full text of the Proposal can be found in: http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/about-the-europe-for-citizens-programme/future-programme-2014-2020/index_en.htm*

- Actions that exploit and further valorise the results of the supported initiatives
- Studies on issues related to citizenship and civic participation
- Support of programme information/advice structures in the Member States.

2. PROJECT MANAGEMENT Skills: THE APPLICATION STAGE

2.1 The different stages of a project

If you have experience working in a public or private organisation you might be familiar with the life cycle of a local project. However, European direct financial contributions have some particularities linked to detailed proposals. What we present here to you are the basic stages for the design of your proposal.

The conception of your project

Conceiving and coordinating a project is a step-by-step process, which has a concrete origin: you should always keep it mind that it must be the accurate answer to specific **need of one or more target groups** at a local or transnational scale. This is one of the main aspects that evaluators will take into account when examining your project, and therefore the justification of the need becomes essential.

In response to it, you can build your project, by matching what it proposes to the identified needs. If your proposal responds to a need which is not only local, and **can be addressed at European level raising it effectiveness**, then you can opt to European funding programmes to support your proposal, by responding to a funding call. Fortunately, it does not mean your ideas and aspirations will be narrowed and constraint! European funding offers a great freedom in the project conception.

Keep in mind that in this case, your proposal must be an European answer to a local or national situation which is identifiable in the places where the activities are going to be implemented, and the results can potentially be exploited by other entities or individuals in other countries, multiplying its effects.

Search for European funding

As mentioned before, the EU, thanks to the agreement and coordinated action of its Member States, programmes every 7 years a multiannual financial framework²³ and approves every year the budget²⁴ to be spent in actions managed directly by public or private organisations and individuals to implement actions that responds to common objectives²⁵. The indications on how the budget lines should be spent are included in the programmes, programme guides and call for proposals²⁶, which define among others the objectives and the kind of actions to be co-financed.

Programmes are based on EC decisions towards measures to undertake to respond to a European needs and policies, for example in terms of education and training or European awareness, in a period of 7 years. They include the overall description of all the actions to be implemented in a period of time. **Programme guides** are constantly updated; however they normally don't undergo big changes because they respond to the approved programmes. They present policy developments and they describe the characteristics of all the actions derived from the programme. Finally, **call for proposals** are specific documents published with a periodicity that define deadlines, timeline, budget, concrete criteria of the proposals to be submitted, instructions on the submission of the applications, etc. They must be approved by the EC and issued for each new deadline, but there are exceptions. For example, in the case of the Europe for Citizens programme, for most of the actions the programme guide act as a permanent call for proposals (namely, they are the same document).

Once the idea of your project is defined, you should check in which European programme you can fit it by reading carefully the documents published. Most of the time, responding to a call means to adapt your

²³ *If you want to know more about how the EU budget is structured and how financial plans are agreed don't miss the website: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/index_en.cfm*

²⁴ *Financial Regulation from the EC: http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/budget/134015_en.htm*

²⁵ *http://ec.europa.eu/grants/introduction_en.htm*

²⁶ *On chapter 2.1 Application writing, documents and submission we will explain more about this issue.*

original idea to the requisites of it. Sometimes call for proposals with specific priorities can inspire you to have new ideas to respond to the needs of the target groups or territory in which you work. As pointed out before, you will find out that European programmes like Europe for Citizens allow a wide spectrum of possible actions to be implemented.

All information about programmes and call for proposals can be found in the website of the entity managing the programme. Checking often the websites of the DGs working in fields of your interest is a good practice. However, if you lack of time to do it, you can subscribe to the Rich Site Summary (RSS)²⁷ feeds that EU websites put at disposition. By linking this service to your email account or application²⁸, you will be able to receive news and updates on real time.

Sometimes **language can be a barrier** when looking for a call. Even if efforts by EU are put to translate as much information as possible in all official languages of the EU²⁹, many webpages are only available in English and French (German is the third language normally offered). Programme guides and calls are more likely to be translated in all languages. If nonetheless you have difficulties on understanding any information, you can always contact national agencies and information points, like the Europe for Citizens Points (ECP). Receiving support in your country and/or in your language can sometimes avoid mistakes in the identification of a suitable call for your project idea.

Europe Direct³⁰ service offers, apart from information about Europe in their website, the possibility to know more about Europe by talking by telephone with someone in your language. Moreover, the Europe Direct information network³¹ is present in almost all regions of the EU. Europe

²⁷ Full list of News Feeds of the EACEA and how to link it to your email service can be found here:

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/about/eacea_rss_en.php.

²⁸ For example, Google Reader: <http://www.google.com/reader/view/> (you must have a Google account to use it).

²⁹ To know more, please visit the EU Languages and Language policy webpage:

http://ec.europa.eu/languages/languages-of-europe/index_en.htm

³⁰ http://europa.eu/europedirect/index_en.htm

³¹ http://europa.eu/europedirect/meet_us/interactive_map/index_en.htm

Direct centres are a valuable reference to know more about Europe and concretely about the opportunities to participate at European level. Nowadays many organisations and websites (including the Europe Direct Points) offer you free services of news regarding call for proposals and other opportunities of participation at European level (conferences, call for partners, etc.). Subscribing to newsletters or to RSS services of those websites will offer you a further possibility of not missing any deadline of your interest.

If you are looking for a programme on the field of citizenship, the Europe for Citizens is the one that offers grants to public and civil society organisations and other non profit bodies. It is a programme that encourages a variety of activities to implement and objectives to address, which can make your proposal acceptable for funding.

Fulfilment of criteria

Once you have found a relevant programme for the idea you would like to implement, you must check if you meet all **eligibility criteria**³². These criteria are a set of characteristics that applicant and partners (if applicable), the project nature and the application must accomplish.

If you find relevant an action of the Europe for Citizens programme, verify the **common and the specific eligibility criteria** set up. An example of the common eligibility criteria is the legal status of applicant and partners: partners must be either a public or non profit organisations with legal status. A specific eligibility criteria depending on the measure is for example the minimum of organisations and/or countries to be involved or the maximum co-financing allowed.

The second area to check is the **exclusion criteria**. These indicate the list of situations in which you cannot apply (i.e. bankrupt). The exclusion criteria are common to all European programmes, but sometimes you might find further norms in some programmes. In the Europe for Citizens

³² *Check more detailed eligibility criteria on the Europe for Citizens programme guide, p. 16:*
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/programme/programme_guide_en.php

programme, the **Declaration of Honour** is the document that states that the applicant is not in any of the situations that might lead to the exclusion if applicable.

With the new financial regulation entered in force in 2013, European programmes have adapted the exclusion and the **selection criteria**³³. The last refer to the **operational** (human resources and experience) and **financial** (economic resources) capacity that the applicant organisation must have to manage a project.

Finally, the **award criteria** are defined to allow the evaluators to analyse the quality of the proposal submitted. Depending on the programme, you will find different criteria weighted up following the importance that the EC gives to each part of the proposal.

An example of the award criteria are **the qualitative and quantitative criteria** applied to all project grants under the Europe for Citizens programme³⁴:

QUALITATIVE CRITERIA: 80%		QUANTITATIVE CRITERIA: 20%	
25%	Relevance to the objectives and priorities of the programme	10%	Geographical impact: number of countries and partners involved.
25%	Quality of the project and methods proposed		
15%	Impact	10%	Target Group: number of direct participants involved – including disadvantaged people – gender balance, public indirectly reached by the project
15%	Visibility and Follow-up		

³³ [These criteria don't apply for grants lower than or equal to € 60 000.](#)

³⁴ [Europe for Citizens programme guide, p.20](#)

Application writing, documents and submission

The idea you have conceived must be described in detail in the **application form**. This is a document that allows you to structure your proposal in a logical way, and among others, helps to define how your idea fits into the priorities and objectives of the programme and the call you are responding to. Sometimes applications include a logical framework: a tool which helps you to logically describe and connect every aspect of your project, from objectives to results.

Europe for Citizens application forms are similar to those used for other programmes under EACEA. Few years ago, a full system of online documents was introduced by the Agency and now applications are downloaded in your computer but sent online. Currently the application is a PDF document (eForm) which includes a button to connect directly with the online system³⁵.

You must download the eForm corresponding to the programme you are going to apply for, as there are substantial differences among applications and programmes. Before start to filling in the document, make sure that you have selected the correct action: most of the times the same application is used for different actions under the same programme, but questions and boxes inside might change once you select the action you are applying for.

When your application is fully completed (the system will not let you send it if a compulsory field is blank), you can submit it. Check all the further requirements of annexes to your application³⁶, for example the Declaration of Honour to be signed by the Legal Representative of your organisation or the budget if applicable. Failure to send an annex or required documents or the wrong version will make your application ineligible.

³⁵ *Published eForms of the EACEA: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/eforms/index_en.php#1. Before downloading it, you must check that you have the technician requirements (for example, last version of the Adobe Reader programme).*

³⁶ *The EACEA list all the official documents which must be annexed to the application in the webpage of the call for proposals and/or in the guide of the programme.*

In the webpage of EACEA where you have downloaded the eForm you will also find a **technical guide** which will support you in the process of using online application forms. Specific indications about sending it must be read carefully; otherwise you risk to fail in the process. You can also receive technical support if something is not functioning well. In any case: **don't miss the deadline!** The online system will not allow you to send it after the deadline. It is even more recommended to not wait until the last moment as a high number of organisations applying at the same time might cause delays on the system.

Evaluation of your proposal and communication of the results

What happens after you have submitted your application? It will be evaluated by external experts of the EC or the National Agency of reference (depending on the programme), who will examine the criteria defined above. Analysing the eligibility and exclusion criteria will be the first step. If you fulfil these, experts will pass to consider your financial and operational capacity, and finally your proposal will be evaluated upon the award criteria, and a score will be given to each one of the categories defined in the call and/or programme guide. Projects having the higher score will be granted, up to the finalisation of the funds allocated for the call.

In the Europe for Citizens programme, evaluation process might take around 4 months and the implementation should start between 6 and 11 months after the deadline date. This timing might change from programme to programme. If any delay occurs in the process of evaluation of your proposal, the EC will postpone the start date of your approved project in order to ensure the correct implementation of it within the number of months foresaw.

EC will communicate the results of the selection of projects through the publication of the list of approved and rejected proposals and/or a letter to the applicant with the score obtained. Sometimes a reserve list will be created. In case of rejection of your proposal, don't hesitate to ask for the

detailed score based on the award criteria. This will allow you to know which parts of your proposal must be improved if you wish to apply again using the same idea in a new call.

Chapter 3 is dedicated to the implementation of your proposal in case it is approved.

2.2 The process of application in more detail

Shaping your idea in the application form

The application contains different parts usually in the following logical order: description and role of the organisation(s) involved, background, objectives, proposed activities, methodology, results and impact, visibility and dissemination, evaluation and follow-up activities, and budget.

Collecting information from you and your partners (if applicable) is essential in order to give evaluators a complete profile of your experience in the field concerned, including your operational capacity. Highlighting know-how and past projects and activities – even local ones – is essential in order to show how you will be able to manage the proposed activities and how your partners will implement their role. When contacting partners, ensure that you ask them all the requested information with enough time to allow the completion of all parts, not compromising the meeting of the deadline. In case of requiring the official signature of any document by partners, also consider that time needs might differ from one organisation to other: it is the case of public bodies that normally have longer internal administrative procedures in order to obtain the signature of the legal representative.

As mentioned before, the origin of the project must always be the response to one or more specific needs of target groups, described in the **background** with, for example, data, state-of-the-art, policy developments or your previous performance in the field and results obtained. The need must be the “guiding light” of your project from its beginning to its end.

When writing your application, keep in mind the coherence is essential. This means that your **objectives** must be totally accurate regarding the needs and target groups that you have defined precisely. These objectives will be achieved through the **activities** you propose that can be local, national and/or international. Objectives have to be both general (the main element on which you plan to bring about changes) and specific (a detailed description on specific issues, of how you will reach you general objective). They must be SMART: Specific (related to the concrete needs and target groups), Measurable (through concrete indicators), Achievable (during the project lifetime and through the activities selected), Realistic (connected to the resources available) and Tangible (which existence can be easily proved)³⁷.

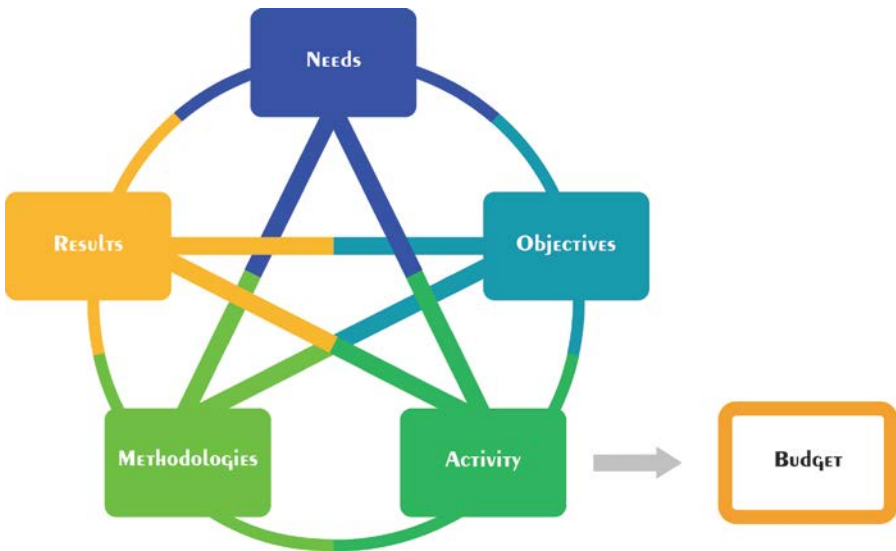


Figure 1: Coherence among application parts (own elaboration)

³⁷ SMART acronym referred to objectives has many different interpretations, depending on authors, users or context. Please check some examples: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SMART_criteria

The **methodology** is the educational philosophy of the activities of your project, the more accurate and quality oriented it is, the better it is. EC encourages and expects the use of participative methodologies that allow target groups to be fully included in an activity, taking part actively in their learning processes or in the progression and change of their situation. For example, non formal educational activities³⁸ foster the active involvement of groups in the project. With a good and appropriate methodology, your activities will lead to the expected **results**.

Results, or **project outcomes**, are all the changes you want to achieve on a specific situation. When talking about results, you will find different definitions and terms related such as outcome, output and impact³⁹, which can often lead to misunderstandings⁴⁰. In the DG EAC Glossary we can find a list of different results or project outcomes that your project can have:

- **products or tangible outputs**, such as reports, on-line tools, events, guidance materials, i.e. a training course on project management
- **methods**: know-how, new methodologies, exchange of ideas, i.e. new knowledge about participation in European funded programmes
- **experiences**: intangible experience gained on a field by participants, i.e. experience gained from a town twinning citizens' meeting
- **policy lessons**: overall experience and knowledge from different projects or from individual ones, but very effective and innovative,

³⁸ *DG EAC Non formal and informal education: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/informal_en.htm*

³⁹ *DG EAC Glossary on dissemination and exploitation of results: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/valorisation/glossary_en.htm*

⁴⁰ *EuropeAid Glossary: difference among OECD and EC definitions: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/evaluation/methodology/glossary/glo_en.htm*

i.e. policy lessons on tackling youth unemployment through lifelong learning

- **European co-operation:** increased awareness and cooperation among European organisations, i.e. new network of local organisations willing to enter in European programmes and cooperation.

Think about the objectives and define the results of your project. When building them, consider few key elements: their durability, their accuracy with your general and specific objectives, and their propensity to be spread and diffused all over Europe. Above all, an outcome has to be the appropriate response to the needs expressed at the origin of your project, and therefore has to produce an **impact** in terms of **effects** on target groups (and possibly on final beneficiaries), systems and/or practices. A direct short-term impact should be foreseeable after the project, while we can also forecast a long-term impact. This may occur on a wider scale, and at a longer-term date thanks to a cascade effect.

While results are expected during the lifetime of the project, impact includes direct and indirect consequences in a longer perspective. An example of the difference among result and impact would be the SOLE project:

- Results : a training course on project management (product), new knowledge on how to apply for a grant (methods) and experience gained from the intercultural learning environment (experiences) by participants;
- Short-term impact: these participants apply for a new project about sustainable development under an European funded programme, using the network of partner organisations they met during the training course;
- Long-term impact: new sustainable practices developed by target groups of the new project (the one created by participants in the training course).

Another important element is the indicators you will use to **evaluate** and demonstrate the impact and achievement of your initial objectives. All kinds of projects must be evaluated during and after their implementation, in order to analyse the achievement of the objectives as well as to improve the next ones. Evaluation is also a good way to know your weaknesses, as well as receive heart-warming encouragement for what you do well.

Planning evaluation should consider the **internal** (for example, by partner organisations or by internal trainers) and the **external** (for example, by participants in an event or by a subcontracted external evaluator) spheres of evaluation. The internal evaluation should analyse the quality of the project implementation, and if its objectives have been achieved. Partners will have to assess their own performance and the results obtained at different levels. Sometimes external evaluation is required by your funder, and results must be detailed to it after the project implementation in order to demonstrate the impact of the activities and the quality of the partnership. In the evaluation by participants of an activity, it is a good practice to mix non-formal techniques⁴¹ with a written questionnaire for more precise and anonymous feedbacks.

For the correct evaluation, the most appropriate thing is to define effective **indicators**⁴² at the project writing stage. An indicator is a <<**quantitative or qualitative factor or variable** that provides a simple and reliable means to reflect the changes connected to an intervention>>⁴³. They are objective elements which can give factual information about the specific change we want to give to a situation (again, connected to the original need). If your objective is to raise the awareness about Europe among pupils of a concrete school, a

⁴¹ See more information about non formal education on chapter 4.3 During the project realisation.

⁴² Examples of quality indicators of lifelong learning: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/policy/qualityreport_en.pdf

⁴³ Church, C. and Rogers M. <<Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programs>> chapter 4, page 44: http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/ilt/ilt_manualpage.html

quantitative indicator would be the number of pupils able to list all EU Member States after your activity in the school. Indicators might be also **qualitative**, which are based on people's judgements or perception. For example, perception of teachers on the knowledge about Europe among pupils. In both cases having an initial evaluation of the situation will give you the possibility to compare the situation after your intervention⁴⁴.

One of the ways of ensuring the impact of your project is the **dissemination and exploitation of results**⁴⁵. For this, you have to ensure the highest **visibility** of your project, before, during and after its realisation. That way, the most people will be aware of your activities and benefit from its results and impact. Skipping dissemination and exploitation makes no sense for a European project, since you want to give it the widest impact at European level. These efforts are always very useful, since they can inspire other projects of this kind, and promote your organisation in general. Through this cascade effect your project can have new lives or bring new initiatives to life.

When preparing your proposal, draft the communication plan and make attention to the difference among terms. **Visibility** is used to make other people and organisations aware about the existence of your project, while **dissemination** is every initiative intended to diffuse and spread the results of a project. **Exploitation** is referred to the use of the results after the project conclusion, by direct beneficiaries and other stakeholders and target groups. Including different kind of tools for visibility, dissemination and exploitation, tailored to the needs of the target groups, will ensure the success of your communication plan.

Note that your funder also requires its support to be promoted through communication activities. In the case of the Europe for Citizens, the EC has established very clear rules about visibility and communication using

⁴⁴ For a more detailed description of types of indicators we suggest the DG Development and Cooperation (EuropeAid): http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/evaluation/methodology/methods/mth_cid_en.htm

⁴⁵ DG EAC, Dissemination and exploitation of results of our programmes: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/valorisation/guide_en.htm

official logos and disclaimers⁴⁶. Moreover, to support communication strategies, the DG EAC has developed the EVE platform for the dissemination and exploitation of projects under fields of Education, Training, Culture, Youth and Citizenship⁴⁷. In the chapter 4 you will find more information about this important aspect of European projects.

This brings us to one of the main features of European projects: the **European added value**, which is how the project will be richer in terms of benefits from being implemented at a European level rather than at local or national level. This should be clearly demonstrated by providing data or descriptions of similar situations addressed in each country which can be solved or improved with higher impact if knowledge, experiences and resources from different European partners are put together. For example, a training course about European project management has a bigger impact if participants from different European countries experiencing similar situations (lack of knowledge) learn together in an intercultural environment. The **European dimension** can also be demonstrated if results have a potential impact in European population (thanks to the cascade effect), and if it contributes to enforce European partnerships and cooperation.

Determining the budget and the grant

Once all the activities of the project are decided, you have to define the budget and calculate the grant to be requested to the EC. The **budget** is composed by all the costs corresponding to the activities within the lifecycle of the project. Based on the **principle of co-financing**, the **grant** is the amount of the budget which will be covered by the European funding, always respecting the maximum established in the rules. This principle states that promoters must ensure the co-financing of the project with other sources than European funding. Avoiding

⁴⁶ http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/about/eacea_logos_en.php

⁴⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/eve/all_about_eve_en.htm

double financing⁴⁸ is essential: you cannot receive two different European grants for the same project. To cover the percentage or part of the budget not financed by the grant, you should use your own resources⁴⁹ (or the ones of the other promoters of the project) or look for alternative financing from for example participants in an activity paying a part of their travel costs, or regional bodies or private foundations, not directly linked to European funding, which might offer grants to local organisations.

Determining the project expenditures can be a challenge for beginners in European projects; however, some European programmes such as the Europe for Citizens have simple methods of calculation of the grant. These are two different systems of calculation that are normally determined by the EC (with some exceptions)⁵⁰:

- **Flat-rate system**⁵¹: the grant is calculated on the basis of a fixed amount per number of participants, number of communication tools and number of partners. Thus your grant will depend on these variables.
- **Budget based system**: the grant depends on a budget including all expenditure needed for the project realisation. Note that the European grant cannot exceed a concrete percentage of the budget⁵². Budget described must be balanced: total expenditures must be the same than revenues (including not European sources). Sometimes, maximum costs per item or category of expenditures are set by the EC⁵³. If you don't have experience on the estimation of the cost, you can check the real costs of the items in the place

⁴⁸ *Regarding the Europe for Citizens programme, you can consult all the financial and contractual conditions on page 29-34 of the Programme Guide.*

⁴⁹ *Please note that contributions in kind are generally not accepted under European funding programmes.*

⁵⁰ *For example, under the action 2.3 of the Europe for Citizens programme organisations can choose among two types of financing: flat-rate or budget based (see Programme guide p. 48).*

⁵¹ *Under the Europe for Citizens programme it is used for the actions 1.1.1 and 1.1.2, 2.3 and 4. The rest of the actions use budget based system.*

⁵² *Under the Europe for Citizens programme, Action 1.2.1 is co-financed at 60% while 1.2.2 is 80%.*

⁵³ *For example, the LLP programme allows a maximum daily subsistence costs and maximum daily staff costs which are many times used under other European programmes as a reference.*

where activities will take. For example, ask to different providers for the price of renting a room for the realisation of a meeting. Consulting more experienced partners is a good practice, as they can give you advice on the normal expenditures for the activities foreseen.

The kind of costs which are eligible and ineligible are always described in the guidelines or call⁵⁴. An example of eligible expenditures would be the ones under the Europe for Citizens: staff costs, travel and transportations, accommodation and food, rental charges, purchase of equipment, consumables and supplies, services, financial and/or audit services linked to the project. Ineligible costs are for example the return on capital or interest owed.

Type of projects

Many programmes establish a distinction among the different kinds of projects which can be co-financed. Differences might stand on the nature, for example, mobility projects or projects promoting the organisation of an event, or on the number and type of organisations involved, for example grants for a single beneficiary (i.e. LLP Grundtvig workshops) or for at least two organisations involved. The last is the case of the majority of direct EC grants, as this is one of the ways of promoting European cooperation and ensuring an European dimension. Through this guide you will find tips and recommendations for projects involving more than one partner; however many of the things are easily adaptable to the hypothesis of being the only organisation.

Eligibility period and duration of activities and project

Making a distinction among activity and project or action⁵⁵ is essential during the redaction of your proposal. The **project** will be made of

⁵⁴ [To know more about the financial report of your project go to chapter 3.6 Reporting.](#)

⁵⁵ [See glossary for the definitions of "action" used with this Guide.](#)

different kind of **activities** from preparation to implementation and follow up. EC can establish the minimum and/or maximum duration of activities (for example, not more than 21 days for a meeting) and/or the maximum number of months for a project⁵⁶, which means that many activities can be forecast. For example, it can take the form of several events (seminar, training course, meetings, public event...), planned once every few months, and its related activities of preparation and follow up. Your partners should be involved in all the phases of the project, by for example attending the meetings or performing some activities at local level. Be sure that you can show a distinction among the activities to follow up a concrete event (for example, preparing a publication with the results), and the activities planned to follow up the whole project (which are expected to be done after the lifetime of it).

When selecting the dates of your project in the application form, be careful on the calculation of the months, as failure to respect the maximum set by the EC for this concrete action will make your project ineligible. Dates selected must fall into the **eligibility period**: the dates in between the project must start and/or finish. For those actions of a programme having several deadlines in a year, you will find the eligibility period connected to the deadline. In the Europe for Citizens programme this is the case of the actions 1.1.1 and 1.1.2, which proposals can be presented more than once a year and depending on this, the project must start on a determinate date after the deadline⁵⁷.

Qualities for a good application

A crucial issue about the content of your proposal is the existence and visibility of a link from the beginning to the end of the application. This main theme or key principle will guide you throughout the writing of the application. It is the origin and basis of everything which is stated in it. Using the same words to name the same things or being sure about the

⁵⁶ *In the Europe for Citizens programme it varies from 21 days (for a single meeting under action 1.1.1) to 24 months.*

⁵⁷ *Europe for Citizens programme guide, p. 12.*

coherence among objectives, timeline, results and target groups involved may help you in that sense.

A simplified example of the coherence among all these parts is:

- Need: lack of European identity and awareness among pupils in European schools because of the lack of lessons and activities about Europe;
- Objective: to raise the awareness about Europe and European identity within pupils thanks to the development of supporting tools for teachers;
- Activities and methodology: development of a training course and tools for teachers to include transversally Europe in their lessons. The tools will be developed responding to the identified needs of pupils and teachers;
- Results: tools for teachers, a training course, new knowledge acquired among teachers about how to include Europe in their lessons and new knowledge and awareness raised by pupils (initial need reached);
- Impact: short-term: European identity will be developed among pupils thanks to the realisation of activities related with Europe; long-term: other pupils will raise their identity and awareness thanks to the dissemination and exploitation of the tools developed by other schools in Europe.

Your application has to be both clear and synthetic. The summary must describe clearly the main parts of your proposals in an appealing way, so it can catch the attention of the evaluators. Don't forget that the person who will read your project has to read also hundreds of others ones when evaluating your proposal, and also that he or she has not read anything about your proposal before. The evaluator does not know the work of your organisation or partners, so clearly state information in a format that is easy to understand. Make your point clearly, with only the necessary words, and go straight to the point. Within the Europe for Citizens programme and many other calls under EACEA programmes, a

limit of characters in the application form helps (or force!) you to be synthetic.

Furthermore, your idea should be accurate, innovative and creative, but also realistic. The more your idea respond to the award criteria set up in the application, referring also important policy developments, and includes innovative approaches or methodologies, the more it will attract the attention and have more possibilities to reach a high score. You must be convincing, and demonstrate that your project can work and be effective, and that you and your partners have the capacity to carry out the activities.

2.3 The roles and responsibilities of partners

How to find international partners?

First thing is refer to your existing network. Even if all of your partners are located in the same country as you, maybe some of them know organisations abroad and can put you in contact.

We suggest that you contact an organisation in your area and participate to European training courses or study visits: this is one of the best means to meet organisations and the people who work in similar fields than you. The EACEA and national agencies often organise contact seminars or “Info Days”, both events in which you can meet a number of potential partners. For the Europe for Citizens programme, you can ask directly your national Europe for Citizens Point about potential organisations in your country or other European ones.

Today, Internet offers great possibilities to match with partners having similar interests and aims than you! Websites like SALTO or Twinning.org⁵⁸ provide the meeting with potential partners, thanks to databases of available partners for projects. You can also look up in Facebook, Yahoo or LinkedIn groups, which are becoming day by day

⁵⁸ <http://www.salto-youth.net/tools/otlas-partner-finding/> or http://www.twinning.org/en/find_a_partner.html

key tools for networking. **Thematic groups** offer you the possibility to find organisations working in similar fields, while **groups targeting concrete European programmes** guide you on the identification of suitable partners under a concrete action. On these groups you can also find opportunities of participation: if you are new in the field, entering as a partner in a proposal can offer you the possibility of gaining expertise before becoming the applicant. There are plenty of local organisations willing to find European partners like you!

Experience required by partners

Before everything, you must ensure your partners are eligible for the considered programme. They must have the financial and operational capacity (human resources) of handling their financial and operational responsibilities. Involving a partner with limited financial or human resources might be challenging or even avoid the correct implementation of the activities at local and international level.

Partners have to be experienced into the specific topic addressed by the project and with the groups targeted. It might be relevant but not essential that your future partners already took part in the implementation of projects, European or not. EC often checks partners' capacity and experience in the field by looking through the list of projects they have realised in the past. But don't worry if it is your or their first time: some programmes like the Europe for Citizens, Youth in Action and Lifelong Learning Programme encourage the inclusion of partners without transnational experience through actions which can be easily managed if they prove their experience in the field.

Be fully associated to the project conception

Designing a project is not easy, but having the correct partner might help the work and might prepare the field for the correct implementation of the project. Knowing their local situation, cultural specificities and resources available will help you to be realistic in the

activities planned. We advise you to maintain a constant communication with them from the very beginning of the project, making them feel part of it and responsible of the developments that might occur. Organising online meetings or sending a questionnaire with the information you might need for the preparation of the application is a good practice. If partners share same aims, needs for the selected target groups and experience in the field, the project will surely have more opportunities to be a success.

Be reliable

You need to trust your partners. To set up this mutual confidence make sure that they are available and easily reachable (they answer mail quickly, give accurate answers to your questions, etc.). Try to determine the most appropriate contact person from the partner organisation. It is the best way to build mutual confidence and empathy, and ensure work is both efficient and enjoyable for everyone.

Assume local tasks

The local involvement of the partners is decisive regarding the success of a project. Although your project is European and transnational, it will not make sense if it does not have a local impact. That is why it is strongly recommended that the partners tackle these local tasks.

When writing your application, think about all the preparation activities at local level for your partners, for example, looking for local participants (or other local partners organisations), to take part to the project, responding to the target groups and needs. Also they will have to communicate about the project, to contribute to the dissemination and visibility of it. Take advantage of the local or national resources they might have, for example, a local radio with which they work or a national network on the topic to which they make part through which they can contribute to give visibility to the project. It is necessary for you and for the success of your project that the outcomes of it get wide-spread all

over Europe. Foreseeing a good communication plan which includes actions in all partner countries and cities will definitively give an added value to your proposal.

3. PROJECT MANAGEMENT Skills: THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Your project has been approved, congratulations! Now it is time to realise it. On this chapter we will analyse the main steps in the process of implementation of an approved project.

3.1 Contract with the EC

Apart from the financial rules outlined in chapter. 2.2, there are other General Conditions applicable to all EC subventions⁵⁹. Depending on the programme, you will receive a **Grant Decision** or a **Grant Agreement**. For example, under the Europe for Citizens programme, if you are an organisation established in the EU, you will receive a Grant Decision (not needed to be signed by you), but if you are from a country outside the EU you will sign a Grant Agreement that needs the signature from both sides before starting the action. Another example is the LLP Programme, where the Grant Agreement can be multi-beneficiary (signed by all members of the consortium through for example letters of mandate) or mono-beneficiary (only between EC and the single beneficiary).

No matter the form it takes, the contract will contain, among others, the obligations of beneficiaries (i.e. reporting, see chapter. 3.6) and the **contractual dates** which indicate the eligible dates for you to implement your project. As mentioned before, if any delay occurs regarding the award decision, the EC will respect the months you foresaw in the application form. In any case, these dates will indicate the limit in between the activities, and therefore the expenditures, will happen. Falling into respecting this limit will consequently make the expenditures ineligible.

In order to facilitate the implementation of the actions, EC allows normally the pre-financing before the beginning of the implementation.

⁵⁹ *General conditions for grant decisions of FACEA:*
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/about/eacea_documents_register_en.php

For instance 50% for Europe for Citizens programme or 80% for Youth in Action programme. The Commission contract might request you a financial guarantee (from yourself or an external warrant), to ensure the financial viability of the project. Be sure that you fulfil the requirements to receive the pre-financing, and that you provide all the documents needed (for example, the bank account data from your organisation).

Contractual changes

The contract sets not only financial issues, but it refers to the proposal you submitted and that lead to the approval. Therefore, unless any change has been already requested on the planned activities, the original application must be respected in terms of activities, timetable, methodologies, number of participants, etc.

Substantial changes must be requested to the EC with enough time to allow officers to take a decision and give you an answer. The specific rules regarding **the amendments (modifying the contract)** and **the changes (without contractual consequences)** are specified in the contract. The most common circumstances are the necessity of changing the date of an event or to extend the duration of a project (which implies an amendment). In both cases, if you don't have the approval from the EC you will fall into serious rejection of the activities undertaken or the costs declared.

3.2 Partnership Agreement

Taking part in a European project implies some administrative and financial responsibilities, which partners must undertake to respect the rules and reporting obligations towards the EC.

If the type of contract with the EC doesn't require the signature from partners, one way to ensure the commitment among all is to sign a bilateral agreement between you and every partner: this can ensure all partners understand their role by declaring tasks, duties and agreed budget. This contract will not have the EC as a third part, but is highly

recommended by this institution for the grants delivered under the European programmes.

Requesting the signature of the partnership agreement is not a sign of mistrust; it is just a way of ensuring the good implementation of the project, by stating for once the role and responsibilities of everyone. Also, this agreement is the tool that will allow you to anticipate the case of unexpected events and know what to do if such things happen.

Format and content

If EC don't oblige you to make this agreement, it will neither provide any concrete format. If this is your case, you can create a document in which you outline the roles, the responsibilities and the rights of partners. For example, it can contain the list of activities to be realised (preparation of events, selection of participants, visibility and evaluation actions, etc.), reporting obligations and financial aspects: which costs will be reimbursed under the presentation of which documents.

This agreement might not be too long (2 or 3 pages), but has the advantage of stating clearly a general frame for the project, especially about financial issues. In order to guarantee both parties it should be made in duplicate and signed by the legal responsible of both organisations represented in the agreement.

3.3 Implementation

If your proposal is approved, then the implementation is the moment when your project will be realised, following the different steps you have imagined.

Fix timetable and dates

The basis is to set a detailed working schedule of the different stages, accepted by you and your partners. Make sure it is respected by the partners, and above all by yourself! The interest of setting up this is to ensure at most the success and achievement of your objectives. That is

why you should define the schedule according to the objectives you want to reach through your project. Thus, pay attention to the local context, to the availability of your partners, to external events at local or European scale (i.e. celebrations, elections, etc.). You should be very precise in the way you fix the dates of the activities, since a big part of its success depends on the choice of them realistically balancing the time allocated to each tasks. Remember that any substantial change must have previously the permission from the EC.

Share delivery responsibilities to maximise skills

The same tips mentioned in the application stage are pertinent here: for the correct implementation of your project, your partners must show a commitment with the idea and the activities, being reliable and assuming the responsibility at local and international level. This often brings to many challenges and issues to face that can be logistical, content-based, legal, etc., but also can bring many different skills to the project contributing to one of the aims of European cooperation: learning from and exchanging with other European realities.

Sometimes you would like your partners to get more involved? Few tips:

- Talk and take care of them: the more you communicate about the different steps the more the partners will feel important (which they are!), and willing to get involved. Even if they are not responsible of some activities, it is good to keep them informed about the development of these. As a result, they will feel owner of the project and its results. Nowadays, a very diffused way of ensuring communication without economical charges are the Skype calls and conferences⁶⁰.
- - Show consideration and interest: don't inform about things at the last moment, showing your partners how essential is their participation to the project. Valorise the skills and expertise of

⁶⁰ *If you are new using Skype, this guide might help you: <https://support.skype.com/en/user-guides>*

partners in the topics or tasks of the project, even if at the application stage you didn't know them. For example, if a partner has demonstrated to be really efficient at campaigning using social networks, then ask for their support in the development of the project Facebook page

- Support them in case of difficulties: partners might experience problems when recruiting participants for their activities, when realising the tasks within the planned timeline... Following their work, anticipating the challenges and giving advices on how to overcome the problems will surely help them.

The importance of a cohesive partnership

Creating and maintaining the spirit of a consortium implies to highly involve and motivate your partners during all stages of the project. Through this partnership you will maximise skills learning and knowledge transfers.

Delivering a project is not only the responsibility of the coordinator, but it is true that a strong management is needed. Partners might call for a reference point to carry out their activities, and without it, challenges might have consequences in their motivation. It is their sole responsibility to accomplish their local tasks, but don't forget that the achievement of your objectives depends on the active collaboration of all actors.

Since your project responds to European needs and pursue European objectives, it is necessary that the European dimension is achieved , through the active participation of all partners. It is also an excellent way to prepare a good and effective dissemination. You also obviously maximise the impact of the project, by making it effective on a wide transnational scale, and thus reach more beneficiaries.

Involvement local communities

Highly recommended in the moment of implementing any activity is taking into consideration that it will maximise its impact if it not only involves the identified target groups, but it also makes a wider audience are aware and have potential to benefit from participation. For example, if you organise an international workshop there might be activities such as conferences, intercultural evenings or final performances which can be open to the local community. This will surely enrich the whole group of participants, by getting to know better the local reality, while it will raise the European awareness and participation of external visitors.

Local communities can be easily involved if you engage your local network of partners: each of them is surely able to reach a part of the community that might not be part of your usual target groups. Apart from this, celebrating activities with your local partners will make new organisations aware about the possibilities of European cooperation, thus multiplying the forecast impact of the project.

3.4 The communication strategy

How to ensure a good and effective communication?

The first thing you should do is to think about are the target groups of your visibility and dissemination actions. According to these, you will choose diverse means and tools (visual supports, Internet, press relations, etc.) which will make reach the different goals you will establish: for example, making local communities aware about an event, or reaching national stakeholders to widely share a publication.

Always keep in mind that the first step is to be seen! That is: attract people's interest and make them want to know about what you're saying to them, to maximise the impact of the project.

Key elements

Communication is delivering a message that you want to share to a variety of people or organisations. Whatever support you will choose for it, keep it mind four key words, which should guide your communication strategy.

It has to be: **simple** so that it will be understood easily and quickly; it has to be **clear** so that people got all the information at once, **creative** by using innovative ways or format to reach the target, and **attractive** so that people get caught, surprised and willing to know more!

Visual identity

Even if the project you are managing is small in terms of budget or duration, you might think that having a visual identity will make others easily recognise it. This can be defined also as corporate identity, namely, to create a “brand” which is uniquely identifying your project. Departing from this visual identity⁶¹, all the visibility elements and tools will be created coherently: logo, website, posters, letterheads, covers, etc. Normally the visual identity is meaningful as it is related to the history of the project, the name or any other relevant element that you might find interesting to use to create this brand. Use your imagination and be creative!⁶²

Visibility

Sometimes due to characters restrictions, visibility actions are not entirely defined in the application form. Thus, in the moment of implementing your project, you can choose many supports and tools to make other aware about the existence of your project (flyers, brochures, posters on the streets, website and social networks, blogs, mailing lists and RSS, advertisements on media...).

In all cases you want to:

⁶¹ You might find useful to know about the new the visual identity of the EC:
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/services/visual_identity/index_en.htm

⁶² Need inspiration? Visit this blog: <http://abduzeedo.com/inspiring-visual-identity-construction-guides>

- Attracts the attention (make people want to know more),
- Give essential and basic information (what, when, where, who...),
- Give links and contact to know more

Press relations

A press release is a document which describes any particular event or activity that you want to be mainstreamed. If visual communication costs money, press relation is time and energy. But it can be extremely efficient especially if you reach mass media or the ones with a large audience.

Your goal is to make yourself important to the journalist: make them feel they MUST talk about you!

Few tips for that:

- Enter the head of journalists!

They lack time, that's why you make their work easier. They will often copy paste the text you provided... They lack the detailed information of your project and of course they cannot know everything, since they write on so many different subjects: make it simple and understandable for newcomers.

Moreover, they have editorial constraints: if you have "explicit content" to offer, make sure it can fit into the editorial policy. If not: just adapt the way you're describing your event/initiative.

- Do Persevere

They might forget about you: remind them you exist through emails, and even better phone calls if you manage to have their numbers.

Another very efficient element to be successful with the press relations will be your personal network and inventiveness and - let's dare the word - audacity...

How to compose a nice press release

A press release is a **one page document** in which you say the essential facts about your event or initiative. It will sum up in 3 or 4 paragraphs the background, one or two key facts, and why not some internet links. Be precise, accurate, say a lot with few words and simple sentences.

Don't forget to write the contact of **only one person**, and make a nice layout if possible. You can send it to your press contacts one or two weeks before the date you have chosen, and a second time few days before it.

How to compose a nice press kit

It is a more detailed document about your event or project. You can feel free to give wider information for anyone willing to know more about the context of your project, the detailed programme, the outcomes and results, the future prospective, etc. It can be 10-15 pages, exceptionally more. Add a contact page at the end (always only one contact person).

Dissemination and exploitation

This process must to be much more specified in the proposal than visibility actions, because this is a key element to meet the initial goals. Without dissemination, we cannot ensure that a wider audience will know the results and be able to exploit them in the future. EC cares very much about this because this is the best way of ensuring that, even if a small part of the population is directly receives a grant the benefits can potentially touch everywhere and everybody in Europe.

Apart from the target groups of your project, you might think about concrete actions that can bring stakeholders close to your results, and interested in using them in the future.

We reproduce here the **EU five-stage model**⁶³ which we consider relevant when planning your dissemination and exploitation actions:

⁶³ *The dissemination and exploitation process:*
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/valorisation/process_en.htm

- A clear rationale for and objectives of dissemination and exploitation
- A strategy to identify which results to disseminate and to which audiences – and designing programmes and initiatives accordingly
- Determining organisational approaches of the different stakeholders and allocating responsibilities and resources
- Implementing the strategy by identifying and gathering results and undertaking dissemination and exploitation activities
- Monitoring and evaluating the effects of the activity.

Tools for dissemination can vary, depending on the target groups and resources available, for example paper publications, audiovisual tools, online brochures, etc. Dissemination actions can take different forms: stakeholders' conferences, mailing lists, use of the project website, social networks, thematic groups in Internet, etc.

3.5 Financial Management

Coordinating a project has a key element which is the financial management. As in this guide we are dealing mainly with proposals that fall under the EACEA, we highly recommend the Financial Information Kit which was published in 2012⁶⁴. In this guide you will find a complete practical guidance on accounting, cash and bank management, documentation, filing and record keeping, modifications to the grant agreement, no profit, payroll and time management, travel and subsistence, control and audit visits.

Who's in charge?

Financial management is, in first place, the responsibility of the organisation having a contract with the EC. If you are the beneficiary of a

⁶⁴ *EACEA's Financial information kit: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/about/documents/fik_1202.pdf*

grant it is a requirement that your financial record keeping enables you to show how the EU budget has been expended during your project activities.

However, the rest of partners have also a responsibility, as they have often a budget to be spent in their activities. Establishing clear rules of financial management and supporting the whole consortium will make easier the reporting phase.

One of the main concepts under the Financial Regulation of EC is the **sound financial management**⁶⁵. This implies that the beneficiaries have the obligation to spend EU budget in accordance with the principles of **economy, efficiency** and **effectiveness**. Let's see how to ensure each one of these points with some examples:

- efficiency: is related to the best relationship between resources employed and results achieved. For example, is the planned number of expected publications necessary to ensure the impact or would a reduction have consequences on the effectiveness of the project?
- economy: costs shall be defined in due time, in appropriate quantity and quality and at the best price. For example, is there an alternative printer who offers a best price for the printing of a publication?
- effective: attaining the specific objectives set and achieving the intended results. For example, is the printing of a publication the best way to reach the target, or would an online version be enough?

The Very Important Things

The mentioned Financial information kit has a long list of tips which we highly recommend. Here you can find the most important things we

⁶⁵ *The sound financial management is based on the Financial Regulation of the EC. This description reproduced here can be found LLP Programme guide 2013, part 1, p. 42:*
http://ec.europa.eu/education/llp/official-documents-on-the-llp_en.htm

consider that you have to keep in mind for a sound financial management:

- identifiable and verifiable expenditures: independently of the kind of system of calculation of your grant, you have to ensure that all the expenses reported under one project can be easily linked to the activities (human resources involved, materials, travel costs, etc.) and above all, verifiable. Therefore keep all the proofs of expenditures of any cost because they might be requested under an inspection up to **a period of five years** after the ending of the project;
- eligible dates and expenditure: it has been already mentioned the importance of expending the EU grant within the eligible dates of the project. Consequently, revising periodically the state of the expenses of the project and ensuring that payments are done by the last day of the project will ensure that you have used the budget at disposition in accordance with the activities forecast. However, expend the money according to the planned budget: in no case the EC will accept a raise on the approved budget and grant.
- working across currencies: when having to convert one currency to another, few basic rules have to be applied: you should apply the EC exchange rate⁶⁶ whenever you need to do a conversion. But keep in mind that you should apply the rate of one specific month, which is stated in the contract (for example, the month of the reception of a pre-financing or a mid-term payment).

3.6 Reporting

Set internal reporting system

Reporting means giving information and demonstrating the way the activities have been realised and the expenses undertaken. Establishing

⁶⁶http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/infoeuro/infoeuro_en.cfm

an internal way of reporting activities and finances in your organisation and by your partners is essential. This will ensure that you can have a control on all the stages of the project in its different locations and it is, above all, the previous step to reporting to the EC as part of the contractual obligations assumed.

Be sure when you establish your partnership that all have the human and financial capacities to respond to these tasks such as sending of timesheets (the document which proves the number of hours worked by staff of projects) or filling signatures sheets when organising local activities. As mentioned before, being clear on reporting obligations in the partnership agreement can help partners to accomplish with their duties.

Narrative report

As pointed out, one of the main obligations of the contract with the EC is the fulfilment of a technical and financial report. As in the case of the application forms, using the correct document put at disposition by the EC is essential, so make sure that you use the ones of your contractual year. If you are not sure about this, look at the decision or contract number of your project: the year is indicated there.

The technical report will include the description of the real activities realised during the whole lifetime of the project. You have to demonstrate that the objectives of the action have been reached, and for so it might be useful for you to show the evaluation results of your project.

This report is usually also important to describe any change that might have happened during the lifetime of the project, as well as any difficulty encountered, which may help EC officers in their future support to other beneficiaries or to modify rules of the programmes.

Financial report

Reporting finances is a very important part of the closing of your project. You must have the collaboration of your partners in order to collect all the necessary documents to prove the expenses.

Connecting to the system of calculation of the grant, you will find different ways of reporting the expenditures:

- **Flat-rate system:** under this system it is really easy as you have only to demonstrate the actual number of participants, tools and partners, together with the final narrative report.
- **Budget based system:** cost declared in the final report must be duly justified, even if proof of expenses are normally not requested at the time of presentation of the report, but might be subjected to an in-depth evaluation by the EC or auditors. Therefore you must be sure that you have all the proofs of expenditures of the costs you are reporting in the form. A deep coherence among reported costs and activities described in the narrative report must be ensured.

According to the financial report and in case of approval, you will receive the final payment of the grant. If the number of variables is inferior to the one foreseen at the beginning (in the case of flat-rate) or you have not expended all the budget foreseen (in the case of budget based system), the final payment from the EC will be reduced accordingly. In the last case, please note that the approved percentage of co-financing will be respected and so you will receive the agreed percentage of the real final costs.

Finally, don't forget to annex all the compulsory documents, which might vary from programme to programme, i.e. list of participants in an event, boarding passes, dissemination tools, etc. In order to avoiding any last minute surprise, check the reporting documents **before starting your project**. For example, you might need to use a specific sheet for the signature of participants in an event.

4. SURVIVAL KIT FOR THOSE NEW TO TRANSNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

4.1 International and cultural issues

Working at an international level is really thrilling but also sometime destabilizing if you're not used to it. Here we have collected some tips that might help you.

Recognise cultural and linguistic diversity

It is obvious but necessary to point out the fact that a lot of differences might exist between you and your partner countries. Be aware of it and never judge anybody of anything through you own way of thinking: that would be the worst thing. Cultural differences can be perceived on the way of understanding time management and deadlines, or in the aesthetic decisions regarding the visual identity.



Another consequence of cultural diversity is the language: make sure you choose one that everybody speaks and understands. In case of activities involving participants not knowing the main language, ensure that these people can have the support from translators or peers speaking the same language.

Be modest and open-minded regarding other cultures

Remember that a lot of your convictions are mental constructions based on your culture... Erase your stereotypes, especially the ones that will separate you from other countries or cultures. On the contrary always try to find explanation to what you don't understand, instead of having cultural-based judgements. That means: never believe that one is right and one is wrong.

Share intercultural background and local situation

Don't forget that your partners will also not have all the answers regarding intercultural issues and may lack confidence in this area... Do share about this cultural diversity and richness, by talking and explaining about your culture, customs, identity, etc. The mutual understanding will get so much easier if you make the first move on this issue.

Also talking about your local situation is strongly recommended, not to say mandatory. Understanding the local context on social, economical, demographical or political issues is unavoidable before starting to think about a project that will of course have a local impact. This will also enrich the focus of all your partners, and lead to the effect of making others aware about your local situation, contributing to the European construction.

4.2 Before the project realisation

Tips to ensure your partners are reliable

We already saw what your partners are supposed to do and care about. To double-check if you can rely on them you can also: search the web and see what kind of projects they have handled so far, who are their funders and ask others partners who might know them about their professionalism.

Where to go if you need assistance

When confronted to a problem you can't solve: don't panic! To every problem is a solution, the only boring part is the search for it.

First thing you can do is: look on the web for answers to your questions. For example, many European programmes include FAQ, tutorials⁶⁷, etc. that might answer your questions. One of the ways of constructing the partnership can be to share your doubts with your partners who maybe have more experience and can support you.

And finally, don't be afraid of contacting the funding body or support structures, for example, EACEA or the ECP: the most trustful information is the one coming from the original sources.

Communication methods to maintain regular contact

A good internal communication is the key to the success of a project. Set an effective and definitive communication mean at first (email, Skype, telephone...), which won't change at the different stages of the project. Maintain regular contact with your partners, always to know how well they are carrying the tasks you asked them, etc.

Sometimes the communication with your partners will not be so formal, because you know them well, you have the same age, etc. However you

⁶⁷*Here you can find the Europe for Citizens FAQ and tutorial:*
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/tools/faq_en.php and
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_en.php#mascot_modal

might also find partners caring about formal relationships with you. Be smart and use common sense!

4.3 During the project realisation

Planning your project meetings

You might meet your partners before, but surely during the project realisation. For this, set-up a relevant meeting calendar in advance, so that everyone is available for it. Organisations might have several activities and projects to be carried in a year, and respecting the timeline of meetings of the project will be fundamental if you want to deliver all the activities.

The typology of meetings can vary from programme to programme. For long-term projects and bigger budgetary resources, a kick-off meeting (the first meeting that launch the project and allows the first gathering of partners) is essential. Small projects might count with only one meeting which can take the form of a training course, study visit, workshop, conference, etc.

In many projects, it is better to change countries for the different meetings. You can choose for instance one different country for every planned meeting or event.

Make all in your organisation aware of the European work

When starting with European or transnational projects, you should spread the word in your office, so that everyone knows about it and get into it. This way will make easier to involve your colleagues on present or futures European projects.

For this, you have to explain why European projects are important to your organisation and be persuasive. Tell how much those match with the general objectives of your organisation, even if they are mostly local, and share all the benefits that could result from European programme.

Host all or part of a meeting in your own office

Firstly, that will be a way to make your local work known abroad, and secondly, it will make possible to involve your colleagues into European actions by meeting your transnational partners. Contributing to European awareness start by your own office!

Use non formal education

Many European meetings are using non-formal learning methods every time there is team work involved. Non formal learning is the basis of most of organisations working at European scale: this is the conviction that learning and education is possible out of school/university and at all stages of life. Learning and education is an everlasting process which should be encouraged through various ways, including non-formal methods. Those have three main advantages: they can make you learn or work through fun or enjoyable activities, they are new and very attractive to anyone, they make memorisation and knowledge acquisition more natural and thus more efficient.

As an example, in a kick-off meeting activities can take the form of ice-breakers (first activities to make people feel confident and start to get to know each other), team-building games (supporting the development of trust and collaborative positive attitudes among the team), energizers (waking up the group!), etc. If you are not familiar to these, visit the pages we suggest to get ideas⁶⁸: One tip: these methods can work also for who is not a youngster, so don't be afraid!

⁶⁸ <http://www.salto-youth.net/tools/toolbox/>

Appendix: NETWORKING AND USE OF ICT

The use of ICT tools is nowadays widely admitted and recognised. They are part of most of the population lives and are broadly spread within the professional world. However, it is always important to be in line with those tools, and stay updated on them. There are two main reasons for this:

1. Very often, ICT have unknown possibilities for us that can be very powerful in our work
2. ICT are changing and being renewed every day and it is really important to have the most accurate knowledge about them to maximise our benefit.

I. Agree on the use of ICT within the partnership

For what use?

Nowadays, application processes and project management can't be imagined without the use of ICT: project planning and conception, communication with partners, application writing and presentation, project implementation, evaluation, etc. As we will see later, you will need them also for your communication needs.

Gain time and efficiency

No need to mention how much time and energy can be gained from ICT tools. ICT simplify processes and actions, reduces physical distances and multiplies the possibilities of realising a collaborative project. Think about a questionnaire to be distributed among a large community of teachers in different European countries: distributing and collecting hard copies can be hard and time-consuming, while tools as Google forms⁶⁹ allow you to send an online questionnaire to all the teachers you might want to reach, as they only need to have Internet connection (and not a

⁶⁹ *You can create word processors, questionnaires, spreadsheets, presentations and drawings which are then compatible with the main office suites: <https://drive.google.com>*

Google account). The same technology permits to work in the contents development of a single document contemporarily by different computers connected to Internet.

Maybe some of your future partners are not yet familiar with these tools. That is why it is important to identify your partners level of knowledge , and if needed agree on a ICT-based work methodology. The kick-off meeting can be also a good moment of sharing expertise and peer training on the use of the most useful tools for the partnership.

Stay in the loop with ICT tools

In the non-profit field, ICT tools are crucial for a number of relevant reasons. For various reasons , non-profit organisation often have to reach quickly a massive number of persons, for that reason ICT are particularly accurate. A rapid check on the web will show you how the biggest organisations use them and which benefits they get from it.

But this is not only a matter of private organisations: public authorities are becoming more and more aware that a way of informing citizens and receiving feedbacks on their policies is by using ICT. Just think about local councils and politicians using Twitter to announce events or launching projects.

As said before, a new ICT based tool is developed every day , or a new way of using them. Stay updated will help you to make the best use!

II. Which tools?

Most of them are widespread and known by most of us:

- Use **email** to keep in touch and receive information on daily basis. You can also manage your emails with software like **Eudora**, **Thunderbird**, **Microsoft Office Outlook**⁷⁰ ...

⁷⁰ *Some email readers are free and/or open source, check a list here:*
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_email_clients

- Search on **Internet** the information you need, through different searching engines such as **Google or Bing**. Use the "", +, - tools to refine your search. Search for specific content (images, videos, news) on search engines.
- Using **Facebook** is not allowed at work, right? Restrictions in public and private organisations are widespread. However, it is extremely useful for dissemination and networking... Same thing for its instant messaging service.
- **Cloud**: this system allows the use of different computing resources in a network (for example, your home PC, smartphone and professional laptop), typically for the storage and the sharing of resources. **Dropbox** is a very useful tool allowing you to upload content on a distant server (up to 8Go free) and share folders of documents with other users (check also: **Sugarsync, Ubuntu One** and the already mentioned **Google Drive**).
- **Skype**: already mentioned, this instant messaging and free call service can be the solution for keeping constant communication with partners and colleagues.

III. Social Networks

Social networking is a central part in the SOLE project, because we intend to take advantage of its efficiency, its impact, and its innovative character. It is very often heard that social networks are a free way to make the greatest communication. Of course those tools are free, but nobody should consider them as totally free of cost. Indeed to make the most efficient use of them it is necessary to spend enough time and energy on them.

Online resources to communicate outside of your organisation are various (website, blog, newsletter, emailing...). We will not explicit them here (see chapter 3.4 The communication strategy), but will rather focus on social network issues.

A social network is basically an online tool, so to say a web page, on which you can add a lot different contents: text, status update (few words about what you're doing, thinking, willing to share...), images, video, links to other pages, etc. The whole thing will constitute your "profile". The difference with a classical webpage is that readers can just check it but also "follow" and be notified every time you make a change on it. They will become "users" or "followers" and will they will be updated about your recent changes or ongoing news whenever they do connect.

Why and how use social networks

The potential of social networks

On the private field you are obviously free to use them or not. But on public activities, social networking remains unavoidable. The new thing with other online ways of communication is that the messages and information are both given AND received, in a constant back and forth and interactive movement.

Through social networks it is possible to reach and connect people together, on a very fast and sometimes informal way. Social networks give the opportunity to reach certain audiences that might not be reached through traditional online tools. Many of them are free, instant, fast and offers huge possibilities of reactivity.

Facts and figures

In 2012, Facebook monthly active users were total nearly 850 million, of which 27,5% were from Europe⁷¹. Posts received 2.7 billion "likes" per day. There were 175 million tweets sent from Twitter every day, while the

⁷¹ <http://www.jeffbullas.com/2012/04/23/48-significant-social-media-facts-figures-and-statistics-plus-7-infographics/#e5fZgwTPL4wacMHt.99>

Google +1 button was used 5 billion times per day⁷². And numbers are increasing day by day.

How to maximise benefits of social networks

The first step when starting using social networks is evaluate your presence online. By searching on Google, Twitter or Facebook, you can find out how often and in what context the name of your organisation appears. It will help you define more precisely your online and social media strategy. But pay attention! Cookies are used by companies to adapt the results to your choices and apparent desires⁷³, so it is probably that results will change from one computer to another in your office.

Then, choose the right social network for the purpose you want. Of course some are unavoidable, but other smaller ones might be very effective on specific topics.

When creating your page or your profile, don't forget it will be the first impression people will have of your organisation... Make it as enjoyable and pretty as possible, in terms of visual and written contents. If possible, translate the main contents into at least another language, mainly English or French.

This done, be aware that things will not just grow by themselves. Devote time to your social networks, be active on them, post contents and comment/reply to what your followers or fans post or messages. This is the best way to keep your community active.

At last, beware of legal issues if it is a concern to your organisation. Privacy policies of websites are sometime not clear and social networks are often criticised about privacy policies, occasional cooperation with governments, censorship, etc.

⁷² http://www.huffingtonpost.com/brian-honigman/100-fascinating-social-me_b_2185281.html

⁷³ <http://www.google.com/intl/en/policies/privacy/key-terms/#toc-terms-cookie>

The existing social networks

The most relevant ones

Facebook: the pioneer biggest network of all. Share text and multimedia contents, status updates, news about you and your organisation and your project(s). You can create the profile of your entity to talk about your latest news, which will be followed by “friends” (Facebook page). It will be more likely viral (that is, with a very high capacity to be shared and diffused), because people don’t have to become friend with it but just “like” the page. Do create also a group page, which is rather a place where your community gathers to share and discuss topics. Facebook groups are very often used at the end of a project to allow participants to keep in contact and realise follow up activities.

When using Facebook, you should be careful about privacy policy. Do not hesitate to spend time on reading and studying the privacy information, and change your account settings in the most appropriate way according to your needs and modality of use. Note that Facebook claims to own all content uploaded on their servers, which is an unavoidable thing to be aware of when dealing with copyright and intellectual property.

Twitter: share content through “instant messaging”, that is, any text with no more than 140 characters. Very useful for short and impressive information (links to other pages are allowed). You can have followers and follow your favourite people and organisations (names followed by the @ symbol), but you can also use *hashtags* (keywords followed by the # symbol) to introduce a topic and look for other users talking about it (i.e. #Europeanproject).⁷⁴

Linked In: is a professional network for individuals willing to promote their skills and professional abilities, but also for organisations that want to establish new contacts or recruit new members through profile and group pages (just like Facebook). Like many of other resources on the

⁷⁴To know more about how to use Twitter visit: <https://support.twitter.com/>

web, Linked In has been transformed and shaped by its own users according to their needs. Essential if you are looking for partners and/or projects.

Google+: the growing social network aiming at being “closer to real-life”. It offers a lot of different functions. For instance, Google+ allows user to define different levels or circles of “friendship”, in order to choose which kind of content to share and with whom.

Other relevant social networks:

Some of these networks are mostly spread in USA, but you might like to know all of them before the other when the wave will reach Europe.

Wiser: global village for sharing and kinship-building for people who believe in a more just and sustainable world.

Socialbusinessworld: the social network for those interested in social entrepreneurship, which allows exchange of projects, ideas and experiences, find relevant contacts, etc.

Pinterest: a very esthetical and design-oriented tool to share pictures and content.

Foursquare: Inform your follower about where you are now.

Flickr: share high-definition pictures through your profile, linked to Yahoo (similar to **Picasa**, also linked with a Google account).

Expert: talk about your expertise in specific fields, and get in touch with people who share the same skills or knowledge as you (only available in French).

Ning: create your own social network.

IV. Stay tuned!

Social networking is not the only way to receive and share information. The following are not strictly social networking websites, but allow you to share and disseminate information relevant to your project or organisation, as well as to be informed about what happens on the web!

Wikipedia: based on the technology of wiki, it is the main online encyclopedia worldwide created (and controlled) by users. Has your organisation already a Wikipedia entry?

YouTube: easily create your profile and share video content only. Just one fact: more than 4 billion videos are watched on Youtube everyday... (see also: Dailymotion).

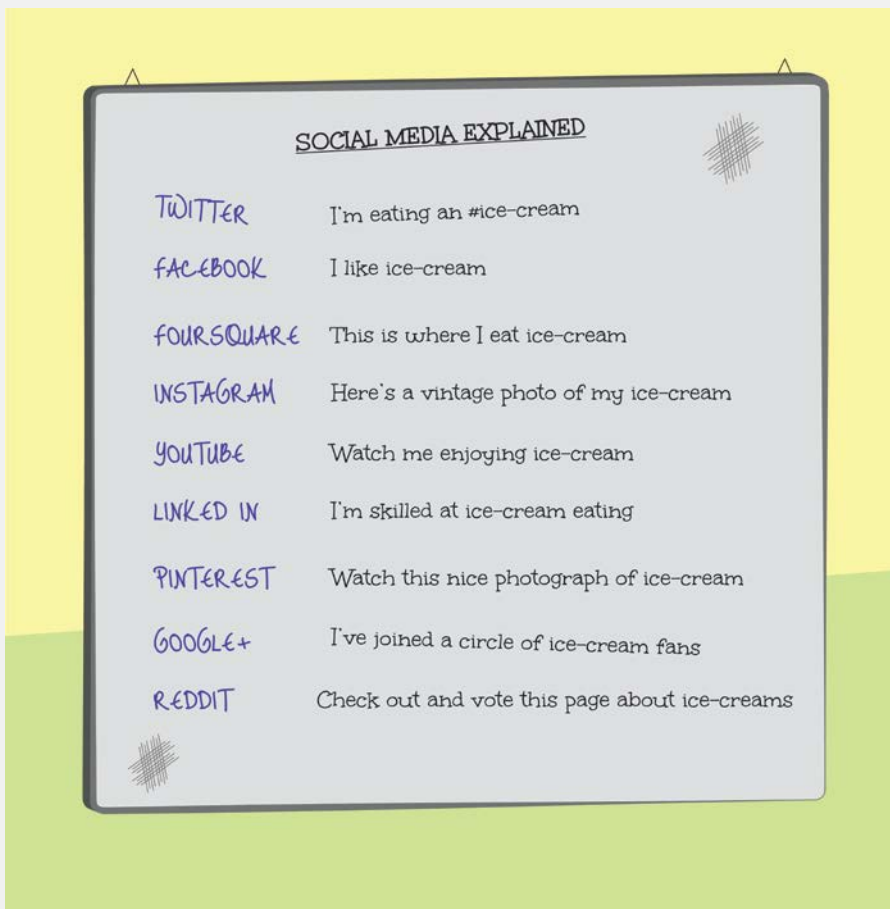
Vimeo: after Youtube, the second video-sharing website most famous. Video categories include activism and non profit, art, etc.

Tumblr: is a free blog hosting platform share online content on the most basic and simple way. You can create a blog for your project, and share it with the rest of the World.

Slideshare: share and disseminate slides and presentations.

Digg: make users vote on relevant pages or contents.

Del.icio.us, or Reddit: share, bookmarks and save a collection of links and other contents.



The meme

An Internet *meme* is a virally-transmitted cultural symbol or social idea. It can be for instance a picture that Internet users will transmit, share and widely spread mostly on social networks but not only. Most of *memes* are humoristic and makes fun of a current actuality fact. It is usually a meaningful picture with a funny message on it⁷⁵. Although it might not be the smartest content on the web, it has the great interest of being

⁷⁵ For example: <http://www.tumblr.com/tagged/obama-meme> and <http://www.quickmeme.com/Mitt-Romney/?upcoming>

funny, attract attention, being remembered, and able to reach thousands of people in a very short time. Non profit organisations are starting to understand the huge power of it and began using it lately. Remember that you would better not do too obvious advertisement on a meme, or it will not be shared by the internet community.

A successful meme⁷⁶ is smart, creative, attract the attention, and arouse curiosity. The only difference between usual memes and message-oriented one, is that the latest are seeking a strong reaction of the viewer in the purpose of unveiling an actual high quality content or message⁷⁷.

The meme can be the start point of a successful communication campaign regarding your idea or your project.

⁷⁶ <http://www.netsquared.org/blog/joesolomon/7-steps-make-all-star-meme-your-nonprofit/> or http://osocio.org/message/im_sorry_we_could_have_stopped_catastrophic_climate_change/
⁷⁷ <http://www.smallact.com/blog/its-time-for-nonprofit-social-media-memes/>

Conclusion

Own it and share it!

We surely hope this small Guide will help you realising the projects you want, and we also it will contribute somehow to transnational cooperation. Our deepest wish is that it will be only a basis on your future transnational work, and that you will define your own way of conceiving and implementing projects.

Since the most important thing is about networking and sharing knowledge, please feel to share the content of it on the widest scale possible! Thanks!

Give us feedback!

Please let us know about the implementation of your future project, with Europe for Citizens programme or not! Also we will be very honoured if you could tell us what you like and dislike and how it could be improved.

By email:

Angela Martinez: angela.martinez@cesie.org

or visiting www.project-sole.eu

By completing the permanent survey:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1u-ad9qwWT6lrXUIZQyFWITBBCL7LM-Oiszm36DfrGQA/viewform>

Webliography

European project writing and management

EACEA “Helping you grow your project”:

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/about/documents/publications/eacea_ebrochure_110426_en.pdf

Twining - Council of European Municipalities and Regions:

www.twining.org/

EU website:

<http://europa.eu/>

EC website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/>

EACEA website:

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/index_en.php

DG EAC website:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/index_en.htm

DG Development and cooperation website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/>

Search for Common Ground organisation:

<http://www.sfcg.org/>

SALTO- Youth:

www.salto-youth.net

Information, dissemination, ICT and social networks

EVE Platform – DG EAC:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/eve/

Abduzeedo- Design, inspiration and tutorials:

<http://abduzeedo.com/>

Social Media Marketing and Blogging:

www.jeffbullas.com

Huffington Post newspaper online:

www.huffingtonpost.com

Skype:

www.skype.com

Dropbox:

www.dropbox.com

Ubuntu One:

<https://one.ubuntu.com/>

Sugarsync:

<https://www.sugarsync.com/>

Google Drive:

<https://drive.google.com>

Thunderbird:

<https://www.mozilla.org/EN/thunderbird/>

Microsoft Office Outlook:

www.outlook.com

Facebook:

[*www.facebook.com*](http://www.facebook.com)

Twitter:

[*www.twitter.com*](http://www.twitter.com)

Linked In:

[*www.linkedin.com*](http://www.linkedin.com)

Google +:

[*https://plus.google.com/*](https://plus.google.com/)

Dailymotion:

[*www.dailymotion.com*](http://www.dailymotion.com)

Wikipedia:

[*www.wikipedia.org*](http://www.wikipedia.org)

Vimeo:

[*http://vimeo.com/*](http://vimeo.com/)

Wiser:

[*http://en.wiser.org/*](http://en.wiser.org/)

Social Business World:

[*http://www.socialbusinessworld.org/*](http://www.socialbusinessworld.org/)

Digg:

[*http://digg.com/*](http://digg.com/)

Ning:

[*http://www.ning.com/*](http://www.ning.com/)

Tumblr:

[*http://www.tumblr.com/*](http://www.tumblr.com/)

Slideshare:

<http://www.slideshare.net/>

Del.icio.us:

<https://delicious.com/>

Reddit:

<http://reddit.com/>

Pinterest:

<http://pinterest.com/>

Foursquare:

www.foursquare.com

Flickr:

<http://www.flickr.com/>

Google Picasa:

<https://picasaweb.google.com/>

Expeert:

<http://expeert.com>

Glossary

Action: this word has multiple definitions, but has been mainly used within this guide to define the separate kinds of interventions under an European programme (for example, the action 1 of the Europe for Citizens programme) and also as a synonym of project, therefore, the set of activities of a proposal foreseen to respond to a determined call.

Activities: every different step of your project, leading to the reaching of the objectives.

Applicant: the organisation in charge of submitting the application. Normally it is also coordinating the implementation, but under some programmes both figures can be different.

Award criteria: the different elements upon which the experts will evaluate your project (they are both quantitative and qualitative).

Budget-based system: system in which the grant depends on a balanced budget including all expenditure needed for the project realisation.

Call for proposal: the document in which a funder express a need for projects applications, within specific frames linked to administrative and content elements.

Consortium: in project management, it is used as a synonym of partnership, so the group of partners that are part of a project.

Dissemination: all activities intended to spread the results of a project among target groups, stakeholders and/or the general public.

Eligibility date: the dates in which the project can be implemented.

Eligibility of the applicants and partners: knowing if organisations are allowed to apply or become partners, according to various criteria.

Europe 2020: the European strategy when looking at 2020 which 3 key issues: smartness, inclusivity and sustainability⁷⁸.

European added value: characteristics that make the project will be richer in terms of benefits for being implement at European level rather than at local or national level

Evaluation: to assess before, during and/or after the project the situation or the target groups focus of your project, on an internal and external level, in order to get better and to demonstrate the achievement of your objectives.

Flat-rate system: system in which the grant is calculated on the basis of a fixed amount depending on: number of participants, number of communication tools and number of partners.

Follow up activities: all activities implemented after the project realisation, to increase its effectiveness, dissemination and/or exploitation of results.

Guiding-light: the common theme unifying the different activities and outcomes of your project, ensuring its coherence and accuracy.

Impact: the mid or long term **effects** on target groups (and possibly on final beneficiaries), systems and/or practices

Implementation (or delivery): the actual and effective realisation of the project, trough different activities.

Method: the range of activities kind you will be using during your project (simulation games, group building, debates, project planning...).

Methodology: the educational philosophy behind your project or activities.

⁷⁸ <http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/>

Needs: the lacks, the specific facts or situation to which a project should provide an answer. They can be local or transnational, and depend on precise facts and figures.

Objectives: what you want to achieve through a project, the changes you want to bring about to a situation, by being relevant toward the needs.

Outcomes (or results): the changes and improvements that have occurred since its implementation of the project.

Participant: any person taking part in one or more activities your project on an active basis. Participants are normally part of the target groups.

Partners: the organisations which will take part on the implementation of the project, which can be from the same country than yours or from another different one.

Priorities: EC defines some topics specific for programmes or transversal for all European actions. Your project should respond in these priorities.

Submission deadline: the last date and hour in which you can submit you project to the EC (no delay allowed).

Visibility: the objective of making your project known by the most numerous persons and organisations.

PARTNERSHIP

CESIE (COORDINATING ORGANISATION)

Palermo, Italy



CESIE – European Centre of Studies and Initiatives – is a non-profit and independent European non-governmental organisation. It was established in 2001 inspired by the life and work of the leading Italian sociologist Danilo Dolci (1924-1997). The organisation works towards the promotion of cultural, educational, scientific and economic development at both local and international levels through the employment of innovative and participative tools and methodologies including the Reciprocal Maieutic Approach developed by Danilo Dolci and Creative Thinking tools.

www.cesie.org

cesie@cesie.org

YOUNG PARTNER FOR CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

Bucharest, Romania



YPCSD is a not for profit organization (NGO), established in 26/04/2004 and has more than 2500 members. The association mainly works on organizing workshops, local initiatives, seminars, training courses, camps, volunteer actions and other activities for young people, actively on local national level and in implementation of international projects. One of YPCSD main aims is to promote and

encourage intercultural cooperation among the young people from Romania and the other countries from Europe.

www.youngleaders.ro

julianghinoiu@yahoo.com

DACORUM COUNCIL FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE

Hemel Hempstead, Great-Britain



Dacorum CVS is a not for profit organisation that provides advice and support to other NGO's covering a range of areas to ensure a thriving NGO sector. We deliver practical services such as minibus hire, a furniture reuse warehouse, linkages with local businesses and have a diverse programme of training opportunities, in the field of leisure and work related. We work with people of all ages and in particular focus on those facing barriers or lack of confidence. We support them to improve their quality of life and employability and to be engaged in initiatives relating to active citizenship.

www.communityactiondacorum.org.uk

mark@communityactiondarorum.org.uk

Biēdrība "Pozitīvā Doma"

Pozitīvā Doma

Positive Mind is non-profit organization established in March, 2007. The aim of organization is to promote mutual understanding and tolerance of individuals and society groups with different cultural, religion, national, race, social and economical background and health condition. Positive Min" realizes and participates in different local and international projects. Our activities are tended to new experience and

possibilities. Positive Mind is for positive changes and equal opportunities.

www.pozitivadoma.lv

pozitivadoma@pozitivadoma.lv

PROGRESIT

Piešťany, Slovakia

Progresit

Progresit is a non-profit organization composed of mainly young people who contribute with their study or professional experience earned abroad. The members of Progresit have studied or worked in Italy, Austria, Germany, Spain, and the USA. Some of them work as professors at universities in Slovakia, Germany, and in the USA. The young staff working for Progresit is primarily interested in a professional presentation of projects on the national as well as international level.

www.progresit.sk

klapica@progresit.sk

PISTES SOLIDAIRES

Pau, Marseille, France

pistes solidaires

Pistes Solidaires is a no-profit organization (NGO) born in 2002 to promote cultural diversity and understanding between youth and adults from different background, nations, and religions. More than 120 people are members of Pistes Solidaires: young people, social and youth workers, municipalities, adult learners and senior. 72% of them are under 30 years old, and coming from different backgrounds. Since our beginning, we developed expertise in Youth in Action Programme,

through the implementation of various Youth Exchanges and Training Courses. We are hosting, sending and coordinating organization for European Voluntary. We are also experienced in LLP Programme, Leonardo and Grundtvig projects based on promoting lifelong learning for all and intergenerational dialogue.

www.pistes-solidaires.fr

mathieu@pistes-solidaires.fr

Crossing Border

Humlebæk, Denmark



Crossing Borders (CB) is a non profit NGO that provides impartial dialogue space and empowering skills training for youth, media people and educators to participate actively in the present and future development of the society. CB offers global studies and training courses in communication, conflict management and media skills and publication of a youth magazine and educational materials for dialogue. CB also trains climate ambassadors to develop the awareness and capacity to use the climate challenges as a common ground for dialogue and cross cultural cooperation.

www.crossingborders.dk

leah@crossingborder.org

CENTRE FOR INFORMATION SERVICE, CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Ljubljana, Slovenia



Zavod Center za informiranje,
sodelovanje in razvoj nevladnih organizacij

CNVOS – Centre for Information Service, Co-operation and Development of NGOs was established in early 2001 as an

independent, non-profit and non-governmental organisation. The aim of CNVOS' 27 founding organisations was to empower NGOs in Slovenia, promote their role as an important part of civil society, and ensure the realisation of their objectives. Since its establishment, over 200 organisations have joined CNVOS. The Centre thus welcomes all NGOs interested in active cooperation, creative implementation and effective realisation of the CNVOS objectives to join its network.

www.cnvos.si

tina@cnvos.si

Sozial.label e.V.

Berlin, Germany



sozial.label

Sozial.label e.V. is a registered Berlin based non-profit organisation, part of the Dpw and who's declared aim is to provide administrative and financial support and funding to social projects. In addition to this, project management, in the sense of organisational planning and execution, is also part of Sozial.label's service provision. We have excellent contacts to partners in the social and cultural field; our aim is to bring European people and projects together on a working base.

www.soziallabel.de

herbert.spindler@gmail.com

CENTER FOR DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

Tetovo, FYR of Macedonia



Our vision is that the FYR of Macedonia should become a modern, law based, democratic society, based on social justice and respecting multi-ethnicity, where all human rights are respected,

and the rule of law is a dominating principle. CDD wants to promote interethnic tolerance, intergenerational and inter-gender understanding, being aware that the youngsters of today will be the elderly of tomorrow and nothing but the spirit lasts forever. CDD also acts as an intermediary between citizens and the institutions of the country, trying to promote mutual understanding between the local ethnic groups, different age groups as well as between rural and urban communities, in order to understand the past and learn from past mistakes and put societal values on common footing.

www.centerdd.org.mk

kocsislaszlo1@yahoo.com

A.R.S.E. PROGETTO LABORATORIO ONLUS

Rome, Italy



A.R.S.E. Progetto Laboratorio is a non-profit organization (NGO) that since 1997 has been working in the realization of educational, recreational and cultural spaces using new experimental methods in favour of young people with particular attention to training activities. The Association promotes and manages projects to give a concrete answer to the needs of the territory where it operates in order to contribute to solve cultural and social exclusion and support communitarian development. The association works in network with the other local realities in promoting the active and direct citizens' participation.

www.progettolaboratorio.org

info@progettolaboratorio.org



THE do-it-YOURSELF EUROPE

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This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



www.cesie.org



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www.project-sole.eu



www.facebook.com/soleproject



www.cesie.org



Co-financed by APQ Giovani protagonisti di sé e del territorio



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.