
Strategic Partnerships

1. Project formats

Strategic Partnerships support a wide and flexible range of activities in order to implement innovative practices, promote development and modernisation of organisations, and support policy developments at European, national and regional level.

Depending on the objectives of the project, the participating organisations involved, the expected impact, and other elements, Strategic Partnerships can be of different sizes, and adapt their activities accordingly. In simplified terms, this action enables participating organisations to gain experience in international cooperation and to strengthen their capacities, but also to produce high quality innovative deliverables. The quality assessment of the project application will be proportional to the objectives of the cooperation and the nature of the organisations involved.

The section below provides ideas on the types of activities that can be carried out within a Strategic Partnership either promoting a cross-sectoral cooperation or addressing a given field of education, training and youth. This section is purely illustrative and does not prevent participating organisations planning their project in a different way.

Activities

- curricula, courses, joint study programmes, common modules (including e-modules), integration of a greater variety of learning modes (distance, part-time, modular learning);
- learning, teaching, training, youth work materials and methods, pedagogical approaches and tools;
- project-based collaboration, peer-learning, workshops, virtual laboratories, virtual collaboration spaces;
- capacity building and networking activities;
- elaboration and implementation of strategic cooperation plans;
- information, guidance, coaching and counselling activities;
- surveys, comparative analyses, evidence-gathering, studies of real life cases;
- definition of qualitative standards and competence-based/occupational profiles;
- improvement of qualifications frameworks, credit transfer, quality assurance, recognition and validation;
- learning, teaching and training activities (see paragraph 2 below).

Furthermore, all Strategic Partnerships will be expected to undertake a targeted and wide dissemination of their results so as to encourage their wider use and increase their impact beyond the organisations directly participating in the project. The requirements for dissemination will be proportional to the objective and scope of the project.

Organisations, institutions from different fields of education, training and youth, as well as from other socio-economic sectors can jointly cooperate in order to achieve – through their projects – the objectives in one or in several fields of education, training and youth. The following typologies of activities are particularly meaningful in each given field to achieve the policy objectives described in

Part B of the Guide, within or across sectorial boundaries.

Cross-sectoral cooperation

Develop, test, adapt and implement innovative practices relating to:

- Strategic cooperation between different educational sectors and local/regional businesses, for example to investigate employability or ease of transition into the workforce or between educational levels;
- Joint research projects carried out through partnerships between higher education institutions and other educational levels, for example on assessment or learning outcomes related to transversal competences;
- Strategic cooperation between formal and non-formal/informal educational providers, for example related to ICT-based teaching or the enhancement of digital integration in learning;
- The investigation and analysis of coherent pedagogical approaches and methodologies especially those delivering transversal competences (such as entrepreneurship) which are developed across educational sectors;
- Project-based transnational cooperation between partners from different education sectors (for example, early years paired with upper secondary) investigating the use of CLIL¹ or reciprocal learning to increase language competences among learners of all ages from various fields of education, training and youth including those with migrant background;
- Cooperation and exchange of practice between staff responsible for support services at different educational levels (such as guidance counselling, coaching methods and tools, development of systems that help track student progress); or those involved in student support services, to increase quality and coherence across educational sectors;
- Partnerships across educational levels which promote access to and learning through Open Educational Resources (OER) through the sharing of best practice and through development of OER at different levels;
- Joint research projects involving partnerships across education and youth sectors exploring the potential of learning analytics and crowd-assessment to increase the quality of learning;
- Cooperation between schools, VET providers and higher education institutions to investigate activities aimed at promoting stronger coherence between different EU and national transparency and recognition tools;
- Cooperation between youth sector and higher education institutions in order to facilitate the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning and its permeability with formal education pathways as well as permeability with different fields.

Higher education

- Develop, test, adapt and implement innovative practices relating to:
 - joint study programmes and joint curricula, intensive programmes and common modules - including e-modules - between partnership members from different countries, disciplines and economic sectors (public/private), ensuring the relevance towards the needs of the labour market;
 - project-based transnational collaboration between enterprises and students/staff at higher education institutions to study real life cases;
 - pedagogical approaches and methodologies especially those delivering transversal competences, entrepreneurship mindset and creative thinking, including by introducing multi-, trans- and interdisciplinary approaches, building learning mobility more systematically into curricula ('embedded mobility') and through a better exploitation of ICT;

- the integration of a greater variety of study modes (distance, part-time, modular learning), notably through new forms of personalised learning, strategic use of open educational resources and virtual mobility and virtual learning platforms;
- new approaches to facilitate permeability between education sectors (i.e. through validation of prior learning and possibility of flexible learning -modular studies, blended learning etc.);
- professional guidance and counselling and coaching methods and tools;
- the engagement of HEIs with local/regional authorities and other stakeholders based on a collaborative work in an international setting to promote regional development and cross sectoral cooperation to build bridges and share knowledge between the different formal and informal education and training sectors;
- cooperation and exchange of practice between staff responsible for support services, such as guidance counselling, coaching methods and tools, development of systems that help track student progress; or those involved in student support services, to increase quality (i.e. attract and retain non-traditional learners, e.g. adults, and underrepresented groups in higher education);
- Facilitate recognition and certification of skills and competences at national level through effective quality assurance based on learning outcomes and by referencing them to European and national Qualification Frameworks.
- Develop flexible pathways for HE students and graduates, including validation of their prior learning;

Vocational education and training

- Develop, test, adapt and adopt/implement innovative practices relating to:
 - re-/definition of competence standards according to learning outcomes; adaptation or development of VET curricula and courses accordingly, also of accompanying learning material and tools;
 - VET learning and teaching methodologies and pedagogical approaches especially those delivering key competences and basic skills; language skills; focusing on the use of ICT;
 - new forms of practical training schemes and study of real life cases in business and industry; development and implementation of project-based transnational collaboration between enterprises and students/staff at VET institutions;
 - development and delivery of new VET teaching and training materials and methods, including work based learning, virtual mobility, open educational resources and better exploitation of the ICT potential, e.g. setting up virtual laboratories/workplaces adapted to labour market needs;
 - professional guidance and counselling and coaching methods and tools;
 - tools and methods for professionalization and professional development of VET teachers, trainers and staff; particular focus on improved initial education and in-service training for VET teachers and trainers;
 - management and leadership of VET organisations;
 - strategic cooperation between VET providers and local / regional business communities, including economic development agencies;
 - cooperation for developing creativity and innovation between VET providers, HEIs and design, art, research and innovation centres;
- Facilitate recognition and certification of skills and competences at national level by referencing them to European and national Qualification Frameworks and using EU instruments; develop flexible pathways for VET students and graduates, including validation of their prior learning;
- Implement credit transfer (ECVET) and quality assurance (EQAVET) by VET providers.

School education

- Develop, test, adapt and adopt/implement innovative practices relating to:
 - new curricula, courses, learning materials and tools;
 - learning and teaching methodologies and pedagogical approaches, especially those delivering key competences and basic skills, language skills, and focusing on the use of ICT;
 - new forms of practical training schemes and study of real life cases in business and industry;
 - new forms of learning and providing education and training, notably strategic use of open and flexible learning, virtual mobility, open educational resources and better exploitation of the ICT potential;
 - guidance, counselling and coaching methods and tools;
 - tools and methods for professionalization and professional development of teachers, trainers, and other staff, with particular focus on improved initial education and in-service training for teachers;
 - management and leadership of education and training institutions;
 - outreach activities between organisations in different education, training and youth sectors;
 - strategic cooperation between learning providers on the one hand and local/regional authorities on the other hand;
- Exchange experiences and good practice, carry out peer learning activities and workshops;
- Carry out joint research, surveys, studies and analyses;
- Facilitate recognition and certification of skills and competences at national level by referencing them to European and national Qualification Frameworks and using EU validation instruments.
- Promote cooperation between local and/or regional school authorities from different Programme countries in order to support strategic development through projects involving schools and local private and civil society organisations active in the labour market or in the fields of education, training and youth.

Adult education

- Develop, test, adapt and adopt/implement innovative practices relating to:
 - new curricula, courses, and accompanying learning materials and tools for adult learners;
 - learning and teaching methodologies and pedagogical approaches for adult learners, especially those delivering key competences and basic skills; language skills; focusing on the use of ICT;
 - new forms of adult learning and providing adult education, notably strategic use of open and flexible learning, virtual mobility, open educational resources and better exploitation of the ICT potential;
 - guidance, counselling and coaching methods and tools for adult learners;
 - tools and methods for professionalization and professional development of adult education teachers and staff; particular focus on improved initial education and in-service training for adult education teachers;
 - management and leadership of adult education organisations;
 - outreach activities between organisations in different education, training and youth sectors;
 - strategic cooperation between adult learning providers on the one hand and local/regional authorities on the other hand;

- Providing flexible pathways for adult learners including validation of their prior learning:
 - comparative analysis of management or implementation models and approaches
 - practical application and testing of methods for valuing knowledge and competencies acquired through informal and non-formal learning
- Improving the accessibility of learning opportunities for adults:
 - promoting the development of multi-purpose learning centres and regional networks of learning providers
 - measures to develop the learning dimension of organisations not primarily concerned with education (e.g. cultural organisations)
 - development of training courses to improve the availability and quality of European training courses available to adult education teachers, managers or other adult education staff
- Facilitate recognition and certification of skills and competences at national level by referencing them to European and national Qualification Frameworks and using EU instruments.

Youth

- Youth work cooperation activities for the development, testing, adaptation and/or implementation of innovative youth work practices. These activities may concern:
 - methods, tools and materials aimed at fostering young people's key-competences and basic skills as well as language and ICT skills;
 - methods, tools and materials for the professionalization and professional development of youth workers (e.g. curricula, training modules, resource materials, good practices, validation instruments etc.);
 - new forms of delivering youth work and providing training and support, notably strategic use of open and flexible learning, virtual mobility, open educational resources and better exploitation of the ICT potential;
 - youth work programmes and tools aimed at combating social exclusion and early school leaving
 - strategic networking and cooperation among youth organisations and/or with organisations in education and training fields as well as in the job market;
 - strategic cooperation with local/regional public authorities;
- Recognition and certification of skills and competences at national level by referencing them to European and national Qualification Frameworks and using EU validation instruments.
- Trans-national youth initiatives: cooperation activities, fostering social commitment and entrepreneurial spirit, jointly carried out by two or more groups of young people from different countries (see below).

Focus on

- creativity, innovation and modernisation;
- strategic use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) methodologies and virtual collaboration;
- open educational resources (OER);
- quality of education, training and youth work;
- entrepreneurship education (including social entrepreneurship);
- equity and inclusion;
- basic skills and transversal skills (language skills, digital skills and entrepreneurship);
- recognition and validation of learning outcomes across formal, non-formal and informal learning;

- promotion of flexible learning pathways;
- professionalisation and professional development in education, training and youth work;
- management and leadership skills;
- active participation of young people in society;
- inter-institutional cooperation;
- inter-regional cooperation;
- synergies between policy and practice.

Targets and participants

- practitioners;
- staff active in education and training;
- youth workers;
- experts, specialists, professionals;
- students, trainees, apprentices, school pupils, adult learners, young people, volunteers;
- NEETs (people not in employment, education or training);
- young people with fewer opportunities;
- early school leavers;
- decision-makers;
- researchers.

Partners that may be involved in the same project

- education, training and youth organisations;
- organisations that work across a range of fields and sectors (e.g. skills centres or chambers of commerce, etc.) public sector bodies;
- enterprises, companies, representatives of business and labour market;
- community organisations;
- research and innovation bodies;
- civil society organisations;
- social partners.

2. Training, teaching and learning embedded in Strategic Partnerships

Strategic Partnerships may also organise training, teaching and learning activities of individuals, in so far as they bring added value in the achievement of the project's objectives. Some of these activities are particularly relevant in one or more fields of education training and youth, and notably

Type of activity	Particularly relevant for
Blended mobility of learners	All fields of education, training and youth
Short-term exchanges of groups of pupils	School education, VET
Intensive Study Programmes	Higher education
Long-term study mobility of pupils	School education
Long-term teaching or training assignments	Higher education, VET, School and Adult education
Long-term mobility of youth workers	Youth
Short-term joint staff training events	All fields of education, training and youth

The sections below, provide additional descriptions of the activities listed above.

Learners

Intensive Study Programmes (students: 5 days to 2 months; teaching staff/invited teachers: 1 day to 2 months)

An Intensive Study Programme (ISP) is a short programme of study which brings together students and teaching staff from participating higher education institutions as well as other relevant invited experts/specialist/professionals in order to:

- encourage efficient and multinational teaching of specialist topics;
- enable students and teachers to work together in multinational and multidisciplinary groups and so benefit from special learning and teaching conditions not available in a single institution, and to gain new perspectives on the topic being studied;
- allow members of the teaching staff to exchange views on teaching content, new curricula approaches, to test innovative teaching methods that could eventually become part of a newly devised joint course or curriculum in an international classroom environment.

Desirable features of an ISP are the following:

- ISPs should provide significantly new learning opportunities, skills development, access to information and to state-of-the art research results and other knowledge, etc. for the participating teachers and students;
- the workload of participating students should be recognised through ECTS credits (or equivalent system);
- ISPs are expected to use ICT tools and services to support the preparation and follow-up of the ISP, thereby contributing to the creation of a sustainable learning community in the subject area concerned;
- the ratio of staff to students should guarantee active classroom participation;
- a balance should be kept between the participation of transnational and national students and staff;
- the ISP should present a strong multidisciplinary approach, fostering the interaction of students from different academic disciplines;
- in addition to the learning outcomes on subject-related competences, ISPs should favour the transfer of transversal competences.

The selection of ISP participants (teaching staff and students) is carried out by the Strategic Partnership consortium.

The number of teaching and training hours must ensure that the majority of time spent abroad is related to education and training and not to research or any other activity.

Blended mobility of students, trainees, adult learners, school pupils, young people (5 days to 2 months of physical mobility)

Activities that combine one or more short periods of physical mobility (up to 2 months in total) with virtual mobility (i.e. the use of information and communication technologies such as collaborative workspaces, live streaming, videoconferencing, social media, etc. to complement or prolong the

learning outcomes of physical mobility). It can be used to prepare, support and follow up physical mobility. It can also be organised to address people with special needs or with fewer opportunities to help them overcome the barriers to long-term physical mobility.

Short-term exchanges of groups of pupils (3 days to 2 months)

Short-term exchanges of groups of pupils (including VET learners) can be organised between schools from different countries participating in the same Strategic Partnership. During such events, pupils work together in one of the partner schools and can be hosted in each other's families. Joint project work during the visits should be linked to the aims of the Strategic Partnership. Please note that the cooperation between schools in a partnership should not be limited to such events but also include common online and local activities. Schools are encouraged to use eTwinning in order to work together on the project before and after the mobility events.

Pupils undertaking short-term exchanges should always be accompanied by adults to ensure their protection and safety, as well as their effective learning during the mobility experience.

Joint project work events during the visits should give pupils and teachers in different countries an opportunity to work together on one or more topics of mutual interest. They help pupils and teachers to acquire and improve skills not only in the topic or subject area on which the project is focused, but also in terms of teamwork, intercultural learning, social relations, planning and undertaking project activities and using information and communication technologies (ICT). Participating in joint project work with groups of pupils from partner schools from different countries also gives pupils and teachers the opportunity to practice foreign languages and increases their motivation towards language learning.

Project activities should ideally be integrated into the regular activities of the schools and be included in the curriculum of participating pupils. Pupils should be able to be involved in all phases of the project, including the planning, organisation and evaluation of activities.

Long-term study mobility of pupils (2 to 12 months)

The aim of the activity is to strengthen the cooperation between the schools involved in the same Strategic Partnership. The mobility activities should be linked to the aims of the Strategic Partnership and need to be embedded in the project design. Schools are encouraged to use eTwinning in order to work together on the project before, during and after the mobility activities of pupils. These measures should help in maximising the impact on participating schools. The activity also allows pupils to develop their understanding of the diversity of European cultures and languages, and helps them acquire competences necessary for their personal development. The schools involved in the partnership should work together on developing learning agreements, recognising the studies undertaken at the partner school abroad and strengthening the European dimension in school education. This activity should also be a valuable international pedagogical experience for the teachers involved in the organisation and implementation of the mobility.

Participants are selected by the schools. They need to be pupils aged at least 14 and be enrolled full-time in a school participating in the Strategic Partnership. Selected pupils can spend between 2 and 12 months in a receiving school and a host family abroad.

A reciprocal exchange of pupils between schools/host families is encouraged but is not compulsory.

All actors involved in the study mobility - schools, pupils, their parents and host families - should consult the specific Guide to Study Mobility of Pupils which aims to help them in implementing the

activity and ensure the safety and well-being of the pupils involved. The Guide specifies roles and responsibilities, gives guidance and provides the necessary templates and forms for participants. The Guide is available in English at the Europa website and in translation at the website of the relevant National Agency.

Online linguistic support

Participants in long-term mobility activities (2 to 12 months) within a Strategic Partnership can benefit from linguistic preparation. In this regard, an online linguistic support will be gradually implemented in the course of the Programme. Such online support is made available by the European Commission to selected pupils, with a view to assess their competence in the language they will use to study abroad. This tool also offers them, where necessary, the possibility to improve the knowledge of the language before and/or during the mobility period.

When implemented for schools, the online linguistic support will be provided as follows:

- National Agencies allocate online licences to schools according to general criteria specified by the European Commission.
- Once selected all pupils (except native speakers) benefiting from the online service will carry out an online test to assess their competences in the language they will use for studying. The results of this test will be communicated to the pupil and the school.
- Based on the number of online licences available for language courses, schools will distribute licences according to needs.
- At the end of the mobility period, pupils will carry out a second assessment to measure the progress made in the foreign language.

Further details on the online linguistic support are made available on the websites of the European Commission and National Agencies.

For languages not covered by the Commission's service, a specific grant for "linguistic support" may be provided for that purpose.

Staff in education and training and youth workers

Short-term Joint staff training events (3 days to 2 months)

Joint staff training events allow the participating organisations in the Strategic Partnership to organise short training events for education and training staff or youth workers linked to the topic or scope of the Strategic Partnership. These should be organised for small groups of staff from different countries in order to maximise the impact on each participating organisation.

They can have various formats, i.e. study visits combining on-site visits to relevant organisations, presentations, discussion workshops, training courses, etc. A balance should be kept between the participation of transnational and national participants.

Teaching and training assignments (2 to 12 months)

The aim of the activity is to strengthen the cooperation between the organisations involved in the same Strategic Partnership. The activity allows staff to develop their knowledge and understanding of European education and training systems, and helps them share and acquire professional

competences, methods and practices.

This activity allows teachers/professors and other educational staff in general school education, higher education, VET or adult education working in an educational institution participating in a Strategic Partnership to undertake an assignment of 2 to 12 months abroad, teaching in a partner institution or engaging in professional activities in another partner organisation related to the field of their expertise. The activity may consist of work in an educational institution/centre or other relevant organisation (e.g. enterprises, NGOs, school authorities, etc.), participation in structured courses or seminars (e.g. in teacher training colleges or research organisations), placements or observation periods in a company or organisation in the field of education, training or youth. The sending institution has to ensure a fair, transparent and open selection process, to develop the content of the activity with the participant and to ensure an internal and as far as possible external recognition of this long-term mobility abroad.

As regards teaching and training assignments in higher education, the following types of sending and receiving organisations are eligible:

- For long-term staff mobility for teaching, the sending organisation can be any participating organisation while the receiving organisation must be a participating HEI.
- For long-term staff mobility for receiving training, the sending organisation must be a participating HEI while the receiving organisation can be any participating organisation.
- The sending and receiving organisations must be located in different countries and the receiving country must be different from the country of residence of the participant.

The organisations involved in the Strategic Partnership work together on developing mobility agreements, recognising the work undertaken at the partner organisation abroad and strengthening the European dimension in education and training. This activity should also be a valuable international experience for those involved in the organisation and implementation of the mobility activity at both the sending and the receiving organisation.

Mobility of youth workers (2 to 12 months)

This activity allows youth workers to experience a different working reality than the one in their home countries, increasing their professional, personal and intercultural competences. Youth workers have the possibility to work abroad for a period from 2 to 12 months actively contributing to the daily work of the receiving organisation, at the same time enriching their profile as professionals in the field. These activities also aim at strengthening the capacities of the organisations involved, benefiting from new perspectives and experiences. Mobility activities can be carried out either as individual activities (i.e. one youth worker being sent to a receiving organisation) or in pairs, as a mutual exchange of youth workers (simultaneously or not) between the two partner organisations.

Online linguistic support

Participants in long-term mobility activities within a Strategic Partnership can benefit from linguistic preparation. In this regard, an online linguistic support will be gradually implemented in the course of the Programme. Such online support is made available by the European Commission to selected staff and youth workers, with a view to assess their competence in the language they will use to study abroad. This tool also offers them, where necessary, the possibility to improve the knowledge

of the language before and/or during the mobility period.

When implemented for staff and youth workers, the online linguistic support will be provided as follows:

- National Agencies allocate online licences to organisations according to general criteria specified by the European Commission.
- Once selected all participants (except native speakers) benefiting from the online service will carry out an online test to assess their competences in the language they will use for studying. The results of this test will be communicated to the participant.
- Based on the number of online licences available for language courses, organisations will distribute licences according to needs.
- At the end of the mobility period, participants will carry out a second assessment to measure the progress made in the foreign language.

Further details on the online linguistic support are made available on the websites of the European Commission and National Agencies.

For languages not covered by the Commission's service, a specific grant for "linguistic support" may be provided for that purpose.

Transnational youth initiatives

Strategic Partnerships in the field of youth also support the development of transnational youth initiatives fostering social commitment and entrepreneurial spirit, jointly carried out by two or more groups of young people from different countries.

For example, these initiatives may concern:

- the establishment of (networks of) social enterprises, associations, clubs, NGOs;
- the development and delivery of courses and trainings on entrepreneurship education (notably social entrepreneurship and use of ICTs);
- information, media literacy, sensitization actions, or actions stimulating civic commitment among young people (e.g. debates, conferences, events, consultations, initiatives around European topics, etc.);
- actions for the benefit of the local communities (e.g. support to vulnerable groups such as elderly people, minorities, migrants, disabled, etc.);
- artistic and cultural initiatives (theatre plays, exhibitions, music performances, discussion fora, etc.).

A Youth Initiative is a project initiated, set up and carried out by young people themselves. It gives young people the chance to try out ideas through initiatives, which give them an opportunity to be directly and actively involved in planning and carrying out a project. Participation in a Youth Initiative is an important non-formal learning experience. While implementing a Youth Initiative, young people have the opportunity to address specific challenges or problems encountered in their communities. They have the opportunity to discuss and reflect their chosen topic in a European context, to contribute to the construction of Europe.

A Youth Initiative must be transnational: a networking of local activities jointly carried out by two or more groups from different countries. Cooperation with international partners in transnational Youth Initiatives is based on similar needs or interests, in order to share practices and learn from peers.

Youth initiatives enable a large number of young people to become inventive and creative in their daily life and to speak out on their local needs and interests but also on the challenges faced by the communities they live in.

Young people can try out ideas by initiating, setting up and carrying out a project affecting various areas of life. Youth Initiatives can also lead to the self-employment or setting up of associations, NGOs or other bodies active in the area of social economy, no-profit and youth fields.

Young people carrying out transnational Youth Initiatives may be supported by a coach. A coach is a resource person who has youth work and/or Youth Initiatives experience to accompany groups of young people, facilitate the learning process and support their participation. S/he plays different roles depending on the needs of a given group of young people.

The coach remains outside the Youth Initiative but supports the group of young people in the preparation, implementation and evaluation of their project based on the needs of the group. Coaches support the quality of the learning process and they provide an on-going partnership designed to help a group or individuals produce fulfilling results in their projects. A coach is not: a project leader; a consultant/adviser; a member of the group carrying out the project; a professional trainer/expert providing only a technical support in a specific field; the legal representative of the project. If the Youth Initiative is carried out by minors, the support of a coach is compulsory.

3. Examples of Strategic Partnerships

Promotion of flexible learning pathways

Integrating practical and theoretical knowledge in higher education institutions' curricula can provide opportunities for students to gain the skills needed now and in the future on the labour market, and thus improve their future employability. A Strategic Partnership will support a project-based collaboration between enterprises and students and staff at HEIs, to develop, test and adapt a joint curriculum between participating HEIs, based on an exhaustive needs analysis and focusing on a "real-life" transnational approach. This will also imply teaching/learning activities, including exchange of personnel between HEIs and enterprises, and integrated ("embedded") mobility, in which students follow a joint programme, the components of which are taught by different partners and on different locations. The final result is the delivering of the joint curriculum and the dissemination to organisations beyond the partnership. The partnership consists of HEIs and enterprises, including SMEs and social enterprises, to ensure the necessary competence as well as the adequacy of the skills developed within the joint curriculum.

Integrated local/regional development

The elaboration of integrated local/regional development plans can hugely benefit from the involvement of all the relevant stakeholders. A Strategic Partnership will develop, test and implement innovative course packages enriching each curriculum of the partner HEIs in view of delivering double certificates or double degrees. The project will involve key stakeholders and rely on their continuous supervision in particular via a specific Steering Group to ensure that the needs of local/regional actors are conveniently met. The project will also imply teaching/learning activities, including exchange of personnel between HEIs and student "blended" mobility. The final result is the integration of these course packages into the curriculum and the delivery of a double certificate/degree. The partnership includes higher education institutions, as well as local actors and

local level public authorities.

The involvement of less experienced partners in the activities carried out can be gradual, ensuring that, at the latest in the last year of the project, all partners are integrated into the whole package of activities.

Creativity and innovation

Small and medium-sized enterprises face the challenges of skill development and innovation without necessarily having adequate resources or the strategic vision to cope with fierce market competition. A Strategic Partnership supports the spread of a creative and innovative culture inside small businesses by transferring and implementing methodologies, tools and concepts that facilitate organisational development and product creation. Partners from the creative sectors and higher education institutions help the other partners to learn how to apply creative thinking successfully in their organisations and to develop the capacity for innovation and change.

One tangible outcome is the production of tailor-made action plans for creativity and innovation development based on previous analyses of success cases and methodologies. The partnership includes creative sectors, small-and medium-sized enterprises, employers' associations, chambers of commerce, industry or craft.

Quality of education

Local school authorities in Sweden, Denmark and UK partner up to propose a Strategic Partnership. The local authorities have identified a need to improve the quality of education in science, maths and technology, and have designed a project aiming to develop a joint framework for supporting pupils' involvement in learning. The objectives of the project are to improve the quality of education in maths and the natural sciences, and to increase the take-up of these subjects in upper secondary and higher education. The project is led by the two local authorities, and involves all primary and lower secondary schools in the respective areas. In addition, the local authorities have involved other partners from their local communities: universities, a media centre as well as several enterprises and business associations in the fields of technology, science and the environment. The project activities involve staff exchange between the participating organisations, with the aim of exchanging experiences and good practice. The partners share materials and resources, and develop units of cross-curricular work in maths, science and technology that are tested/implemented in primary and secondary schools. The business partners invite school classes for study visits to give pupils insight into the various practical applications of the topics they are working on. University students contribute as "study buddies" for pupils, providing additional one-on-one help with the subjects as well as serving as role models, motivating pupils to study science and technology. The project results in university cooperation on initial teacher education as well as further pedagogical cooperation and new projects between the schools involved.

Increasing education attainment

Increasing the level of tertiary attainment, widening access and facilitating completion of higher education studies are major challenges in many countries. A Strategic Partnership will support the

development of better progression routes into higher education and to graduation, with a specific focus on non-traditional learners, such as students from under-represented groups or with disadvantaged backgrounds, by transferring and testing innovative approaches. The Partnership will test how upper secondary students with specific backgrounds are prepared and guided before entering into higher education via collaboration between HEIs, schools and institutions active in the field of VET. Monitoring and support of this student population will also be tested, in particular via tailor-made services (guidance, counselling, coaching etc.) that aim at preventing drop-out and encouraging graduation within the expected time. The project will involve HEIs as well as upper secondary general and vocational education schools, ensuring that the services offered are adequate and match the identified needs. The project will also imply teaching/learning activities, including "blended" student mobility. The final result is the adaptation of the model, its implementation by participating HEIs and the dissemination to organisations beyond the partnership, aiming in particular at other education providers and key policy-makers.

Innovation

A Strategic Partnership will support the development of new pedagogical approaches and in particular e-learning tools and on-line collaborative platforms where pupils, students and teachers will be able to learn, teach and co-create content of courses. The Partnership composed of universities, schools, research organisations and/or enterprises will develop together the tools that schools and higher education institutions will use to teach and learn specific disciplines at different levels. Research organisations and/or enterprises will have a key role either to develop the tools or to make the content more relevant and concrete. In addition, intensive study programmes will be organised to test the tools developed by the partnership with students and teachers. Joint staff training events will also allow training the teachers in using the tools.

Language skills

A cross-sectoral Strategic Partnership aiming to support those families where more than one language is spoken, by developing languages resources for children to show them the benefits of having two or more languages, both in terms of its intrinsic value and in view of concrete use they can make of it. This project addresses all stakeholders that work with bilingual families so that they can disseminate the project resources to them. Research is carried out to test the efficiency of the pedagogical approaches used to strengthen the language competences of multilingual children, both in the classroom and through informal learning. Partners include a university, several schools, a small and medium-sized enterprise (SME), an NGO and an association of adult learning institutions.

Information and Communication Technologies

A cross-sectoral project aiming to develop a shared vision on how ICTs can help making lifelong learning a reality for all based on real-life scenarios and insights. The use of ICT for learning in Europe is gaining ground, but to unleash its potential as a driver of change for our economies and societies, there is a need to move from fragmentation and piloting to articulation and system adoption. Partners include a range of higher education institutions, skills organisations that work across a number of different educational fields.

Cooperation between regions

A Spanish, a Portuguese, an Italian and a Czech local authority partner up to explore the causes of early school leaving in their regions, and to develop new solutions to address it. They involve the secondary schools in their respective regions, as well as two teacher education institutions. Looking at the problem of early school leaving in a wider perspective, they want to address several aspects of young people's lives. Therefore, local youth organisations and parent associations are also invited to join the Strategic Partnership. The local authorities themselves are involved on a broad, cross-sectoral basis, including education departments, youth and social services.

The aim is to establish a permanent network in each region, bringing different actors and services together to create an effective support mechanism for young people.

The partner institutions work together through regular project meetings as well as an online community. First, they want to establish the extent of early school leaving in their area and explore its causes. Then they aim to find and implement effective ways of supporting young people at risk of exclusion. As part of the project activities they conduct surveys for pupils, teachers and families to investigate the reasons for early school leaving in their local context. They also organise workshops and seminars exploring a range of topics, for example the impact of informal learning opportunities.

As a result, they develop a common methodology which is implemented in the two regions. A guide for teachers, trainers and local authorities is published to support this. All results and materials are shared on the project website, through paper publications, and through a conference in each of the regions. In this way, the methodology and resources developed by the project are introduced to other schools and local authorities.

Equity and inclusion

Youth organisations, institutions, schools, VET providers and authorities in the youth field working with NEETs ("Not in Education, Employment, or Training") and drop-outs, come together with the aim of improving a methodology to have more young people back to education or work. In the frame of their Strategic Partnership they organise transnational meetings of staff to exchange practices and design the project, as well as carry out job shadowing and professional development activities of youth workers. At the same time, a research compilation in the field is conducted, and discussed during a transnational meeting where a final handbook is developed and plans the testing and evaluation of the improved methodology. To ensure sustainability and dissemination of project results, the Strategic Partnership foresees conferences at local, national and European level, as well as designs jointly a follow-up strategy.

Open educational resources (OER)

Fire fighters can be killed or injured when responding to fires inside burning buildings. Practical training tailored to address critical situations inside burning buildings could prevent lethal accidents. A Strategic Partnership creates a learning package based on state-of-the-art methodology and technology. The final result is a blended e-learning programme that provides supplementary training in firefighting strategy and tactics to address the initial phase of an intervention to create

capability for early, efficient emergency response. The e-learning is combined with practical exercises. The Strategic Partnership includes fire and rescue services, public authorities responsible for public safety and of course VET providers.

Active participation of young people in society

Three upper secondary schools from Finland, Germany and the Netherlands find each other on the eTwinning platform because they are all interested in developing a project on democracy in school. The three schools decide to apply for funding for a Strategic Partnership. The aim of the project is to develop school leadership by involving teachers, pupils and also parents in the school decision-making. The project lasts three years and each year the participating schools look at how each of these groups is currently involved in the school decision-making and how their participation could realistically be improved on the basis of what they learn from their partners. The project is supported by and actively involves the school management, teachers and parents. Participating pupils develop their autonomy and critical thinking skills, as well as their understanding of concepts such as freedom, rights and obligations. They also reflect on how they can contribute to make their school more relevant for them. Throughout the project activities, pupils are given the opportunity to express their opinions, to listen to the opinions of others, to discuss using relevant arguments, and to explain decisions using valid reasons. The project activities take place both through the project TwinSpace on the eTwinning site and face to face in two meetings where a group of pupils from each school participate with their teachers. School management and representatives of parents also participate in the meetings. In between project meetings, the partners also use the eTwinning site to collaborate on developing the project activities, discuss and share resources. Pupils write a collaborative blog where they post pictures and updates on project activities, as well as opinions and reflections on the topics they are working on. The blog, the teaching plans and learning materials developed in the project, as well as some of the pupils' work, are published through eTwinning and made available as a resource for others who want to conduct a similar project.

Transversal skills / basic skills

With an aim of improving numeracy and financial literacy competences of disadvantaged adult groups (migrants, low-skilled, socio-economically disadvantaged, etc.), adult education organisations, in cooperation with local/regional authorities and social partners develop up-to-date training provisions by using new and adequate training methodologies and resources. Outputs, such as curricula, handbooks for trainers, kits/toolboxes for adult learners are tested by the partner organisations and validated by the relevant stakeholders. A targeted dissemination activity is a prerequisite for an impact not only on adult learners' competencies but at local/regional level as the project may offer tailored learning opportunities to disadvantaged groups leading to their integration into local society.

Recognition and validation of learning outcomes

Partner organisations may give significant input to the process of validation of non-formal and informal learning. Considering the different situation in the partners, the exchange of ideas and experiences the Strategic Partnership may analyse the current state and propose recommendations for validation in their countries.

Professional development and professionalisation in youth work

Inspired by the priorities of the EU Youth Strategy, a group of experienced youth workers establish a Strategic Partnership with people responsible for youth work at institutional level, youth think tanks, educational institutions specialised in youth work, and researchers, in order to come up with a set of reference documents supporting youth workers in their activities dealing with mental health of young people. In the frame of the project, all partners come together to map and analyse key concepts as base for their research. They organise seminars with experts, meetings and study visits to document their work, as well as bring together young people and youth workers with experiences in the area of mental health in order to exchange good practices and ideas, with the final aim of publishing a book once the project is concluded and disseminating it among practitioners in the field.

1. Content and language integrated learning

