



A practical guide for school leaders

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Erasmus+ is for all schools, including:

- Pre-primary
- Primary schools
- Secondary schools

Changing lives, opening minds

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About

What is Erasmus+?

Erasmus+ is the European Union (EU) programme for education, training, youth and sport (2014-2020).

What is the purpose of this guide?

This guide is for school leaders (head teachers, school principals, team leaders, coordinators, etc.) who want to know what the programme has to offer in the fields of pre-primary, primary and secondary education. Moreover, it demonstrates how, with careful planning and committed leadership, Erasmus+ can advance the short-term and long-term interests of participating schools, their staff and their pupils.

Why is Erasmus+ needed?

Europe is changing quickly, with technological advances, increasing globalisation and widespread migration creating both new opportunities and challenges. School systems can play a key role in meeting these challenges by driving education forward and being at the forefront of change and innovation. Erasmus+ allows any school leader motivated by the prospect of working across borders to help transform curricula and advance education and training in Europe.

How do I use the guide?

The guide is in two parts:

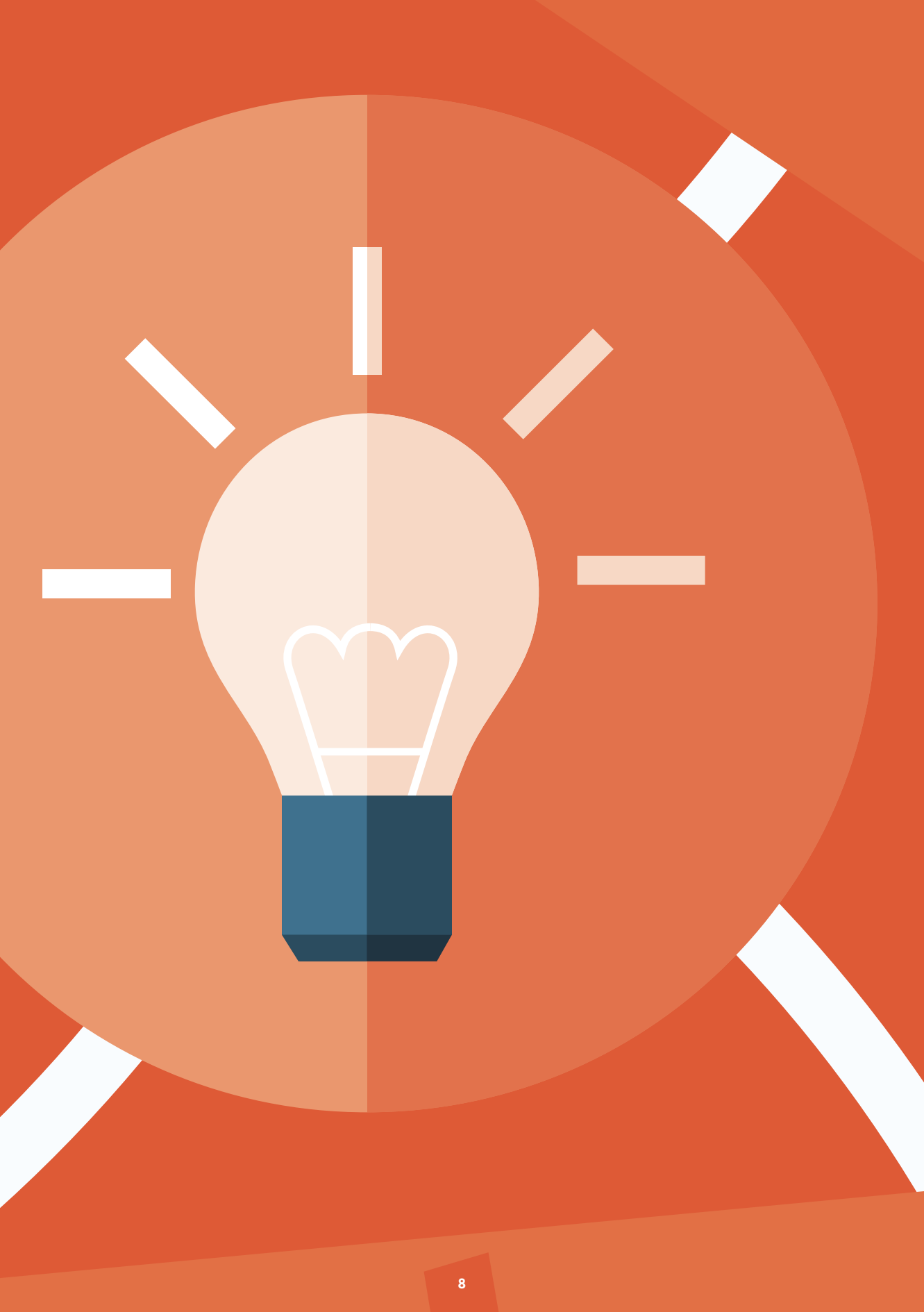
Part 1 demonstrates benefits your school can derive from applying for Erasmus+ and reviews the opportunities available. You will also discover the advantages of linking up with other schools online through eTwinning.

Part 2 provides step-by-step advice on developing a successful application, finding the right European partners and building upon your experiences to expand your Erasmus+ ambitions. It also offers real project examples to inspire you, help generate ideas and showcase what can be accomplished under Erasmus+.

We hope you find this guide useful and informative.

Please share it widely throughout your school.

Note: This publication was developed shortly after the launch of the Erasmus+ programme. Therefore, some of the case studies and testimonials presented throughout the guide refer to equivalent opportunities funded under the former Lifelong Learning Programme (2007-2013).



Part 1

An introduction to Erasmus+ for schools

The first part of the guide provides an overview of the opportunities available to your school under Erasmus+.

It begins by reviewing the wide-ranging benefits available to participating schools, before presenting the following three kinds of activity on offer:

- **Staff Mobility (Key Action 1)** allows teachers (including student teachers) and other school staff to attend training or job shadowing in another country, or deliver lessons at a school abroad. It also allows schools and other organisations to provide these activities for visiting teachers. Staff Mobility is part of Key Action 1 – the strand of Erasmus+ devoted to European placements and development opportunities.
- **Strategic Partnerships (Key Action 2)** allow schools to work with other schools and organisations to improve teaching and learning approaches, and the quality and relevance of education and training. Strategic Partnerships are part of Key Action 2 which aims to foster cooperation for innovation in education.
- **eTwinning** is an online community of schools. It provides a forum for school staff and pupils to collaborate across borders and can be used on its own or to enhance other Erasmus+ projects.

This guide will help you to find out about the key features of each activity and how they can benefit your school, your pupils and your staff. Please note that when preparing an application, you should also read and refer to the relevant parts of the official Erasmus+ Programme Guide, which will provide you with the detailed criteria and requirements for applying.

The Erasmus+ Programme Guide can be found here:

<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/discover/guide>

1.1 Five reasons to dive into Erasmus+

Erasmus+ can provide your school with funded opportunities to engage in international activities with lasting benefits for you as a school leader, your pupils, teachers, the school and the wider community. Funding is available in the form of grants which aim to contribute to activities supporting education and training within your school.

Here are five ways in which your school could benefit:

Five benefits of Erasmus+

- Improve teaching and learning
- Expand pupils' horizons
- Provide professional development
- Raise your school's profile
- Connect with stakeholders

#1 Improve teaching and learning

Whether the aim is to improve teaching or curricula, foster interdisciplinary learning, develop new curricula, or integrate technology in the classroom – **you can achieve it with Erasmus+**. European activities provide opportunities for staff and pupils to develop and reflect on learning and teaching together with staff and pupils from other schools and organisations (such as universities, libraries, museums and science centres).

‘This project has had a strong impact on the pedagogical approach of my school... As the educational content was related to the partnership project, motivation was continually reinforced for all aspects of learning.’

Jean-Pierre Marcadier, Teacher, France

#2 Expand pupils’ horizons and raise their aspirations

An Erasmus+ project can enable staff and pupils to work with partner schools on learning activities and learn from visiting teachers and pupils.

Through collaborative activities with peers in other countries, pupils can move beyond the textbook and explore data, knowledge and experiences in a direct and immediate way. In this way, pupils develop intercultural understanding and gain new perspectives on their own learning.

Pupils can also collaborate online through eTwinning activities, which provide a real audience for their work, as well as opportunities to improve ICT, linguistic and interpersonal skills.

#3 Provide unique professional development experiences for school staff

Giving staff the opportunity to get involved with international professional development opportunities is a great way to invigorate your team. The activities enable teachers and other school employees to acquire new learning and teaching methods and tools, and explore a variety of learning and teaching practice across Europe. Often the Erasmus+ activities are a catalyst for change – for participants and the whole school.

‘The school staff were linked by joint activities, and their newly acquired competencies contributed to their personal and professional development. Teaching methods were improved...Thanks to the project, students have been able to learn effortlessly and with joy.’

Lucija Puljak, School Principal, Croatia

#4 Raise your school's profile

Being part of international activities signals that your school is ambitious, with bold expectations for pupils and staff. By sending employees and pupils abroad, and working with schools and other organisations through Erasmus+, you will show that your school is a desirable place to study and work. Furthermore, many schools apply to Erasmus+ in order to develop new curricula, or implement new ways of working, all of which increase your school's standing and influence.

Establishing links with stakeholders such as town councils, local organisations and NGOs meant bridging the gap between the school and the real world. It offered a great opportunity for our pupils to see that what we were working on had a connection with the organisations' proposals, aims and so on.'

Marta Pey and Marta Noguera, Teachers, Spain

#5 Connect with stakeholder organisations, policymakers and the community

Erasmus+ provides the means to extend learning and teaching beyond your school environment. School leaders, staff members and pupils can benefit through participation in activities that enable them to engage with local businesses, policymakers and community members. Such stakeholder engagement can help tackle challenges in school (e.g. pupil motivation, low achievement, truancy, drop-out rates) through forging links with parents and social services, as well as businesses and other organisations that may help improve the relevance of learning. Stakeholder engagement may also help raise your school's profile locally, improving teaching and learning by providing opportunities in real world settings.

Learning from real-life experiences can only be done through contact with stakeholders outside of school.'

Annemie Laurysens, School International Relations Coordinator, Belgium



1.2 Erasmus+: what's on offer?

Next we will look at the specific funding options open to your school.

Before we do, try to avoid the temptation to approach Erasmus+ as a 'menu' of one-off opportunities. It is a flexible programme with a variety of options and the capacity for supporting both large- and small-scale projects. So instead focus on your school's development objectives and consider how each of the opportunities available through Erasmus+ might contribute towards them. This mindset will expose you to a broader range of potential benefits than you may have anticipated, and is the basis for the 'whole school approach' supported in this guide.

A whole-school approach

A successful Erasmus + project is one that becomes central to school life and is considered highly beneficial to your school, your staff and your pupils. Therefore, your project should be part of the development/strategic priorities of the school and be supported by everyone within the school.



Suggestion

To stay up-to-date with application deadlines and Erasmus+ news, it is a good idea to visit the website of your National Agency and subscribe to their news bulletins. You can also follow them on social media.

The details of all the Erasmus+ National Agencies can be found here:
<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/tools/national-agencies>

At the end of the section, Table 1 presents some of the typical objectives of European projects and illustrates how they may be supported across Erasmus+.

1.2.1 Staff Mobility (Key Action 1)

A visit abroad to learn from another school or educational organisation can offer your staff career-changing opportunities to develop their learning and teaching.

Schools can send professionals in pre-primary, primary, or secondary/vocational school education on Erasmus+ Staff Mobility (Key Action 1) activities to expand their knowledge and skills, or improve their language competencies.

Mobility activities provide an opportunity for exchanging knowledge and working methods, as well as a broader perspective on education.

How can my school benefit from Staff Mobility?

Schools can benefit from the following kinds of Staff Mobility:

- There are **teaching assignments**, which enable teachers or other school education staff to teach at a partner school in another country. This is an excellent way for staff to gain knowledge of other European education systems and to develop their professional knowledge and skills.
- Staff Mobility also supports **training**, such as structured courses and training events, job shadowing and observations in a partner school or other relevant organisation. All school staff can benefit, not just teachers.

All activities last between two days and two months and are funded within a Staff Mobility project, lasting either one or two years. This means several members of staff can participate in mobility during the funding period.

How is Staff Mobility organised?

There are two ways to be involved in a Staff Mobility project:

- As an **applicant/sending organisation** – in charge of applying for projects, reporting on outcomes, and selecting staff to send abroad.
- As a **receiving organisation** – responsible for hosting teachers, student teachers or other school education professionals. This can involve providing activities for your visitors or benefiting from teaching activities provided by them.

Receiving organisations' roles will vary according to the activity. For example, they might provide a structured course or training event, or organise job shadowing or teaching assignments for visiting staff. The receiving organisation is not funded directly by the Erasmus+ programme.

How can my school participate in Staff Mobility?

Further information, including how to apply, can be obtained from your National Agency website: <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/tools/national-agencies>

What do school professionals think of Staff Mobility?

‘As a result of the training course, I started using new teaching methods in the classroom, I felt ready to organise my own informal English language courses, and I improved my classroom management skills. The course gave me – and through me the whole school staff and colleagues in neighbouring schools – a wider range of teaching approaches and methods to choose from, as well as a set of ready-made materials for everyday teaching, thus improving teachers’ professionalism and self-confidence.’

Tamara Pavlova, Teacher, Latvia

‘My experience impacted my life personally, academically and professionally. I had the opportunity to improve my French and learn more about French culture, while working in a friendly environment with a fantastic team... I really believe that without my experience, I would not have had the academic, personal and professional success that I have had.’

Jessica Gough, English Language Assistant, Ireland

1.2.2 Strategic Partnerships (Key Action 2)

Your school could lead or join a Strategic Partnership (Key Action 2) involving organisations across Europe. Strategic Partnerships are collaborative projects with specific objectives, which aim to raise standards in teaching and learning.

A wide variety of collaborative activities are possible. You could organise workshops and other knowledge-sharing activities, develop and implement new working methods, tools or resources, or run a joint research project on an issue affecting your learners.



Suggestion

Most National Agencies run information activities to help organisations apply for funding.

Ask when the next event is taking place in your country.

What kinds of Strategic Partnerships can we build?

You can build **Strategic Partnerships between schools and other organisations**, including schools, businesses, local authorities or services, etc. The partners you choose will depend on what you want to do. For example, you could share approaches/exchange experiences with other schools. Or, you could develop pupils' entrepreneurial spirit and skills through cooperation with a business. Or, you may wish to design new teaching methods in cooperation with a university.

Some Strategic Partnerships are **school-only projects**. This is ideal when you want to share an innovative pedagogical approach, or develop teaching practices – for example, if you want to engage pupils from the partner schools in decisions about their learning. Please note that there is a specific application form for this type of Strategic Partnerships.

Strategic Partnerships may also include mobility activities for learners and staff, provided they clearly contribute to your project's objectives. For example, learners or staff may attend joint learning events organised during the project, school staff may undertake teaching assignments at a partner school, and older pupils may spend some time studying at a partner school.

How are Strategic Partnerships organised?

Your school could be either the lead (applicant) or a partner.

Most Partnerships require **a minimum of three organisations (including the applicant) from three programme countries**.

Some kinds of Strategic Partnerships have different requirements:

- **Strategic Partnerships between regions** must consist of at least two local or regional authorities in two programme countries. In addition, they must include at least one school and one other local organisation in each participating country (this could be any kind of organisation – a business, a museum, a sport club, etc.).
- **School-only projects** require a minimum of **two schools from two programme countries**.

How can my school participate?

Help and guidance, along with information about events and how to apply for funding, can be obtained from your National Agency website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/tools/national-agencies>

What do schools say about collaborating in partnerships?

“Our recent projects have performed very well...This has led to a real snowball effect and nowadays, individuals and institutions regularly approach us wanting to collaborate or to support us.”

Christa Brokate-Golinski, Headmaster, Germany

1.2.3 eTwinning

By joining the eTwinning online platform, your school will be entering a network of over 250 000 school staff members from across Europe.



Suggestion

The eTwinning Cookbook is a comprehensive guide to using the platform and getting the most out of its many features.

You can find it on the eTwinning website:

<http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/discover/publications.htm>

What are the benefits of eTwinning for my school?

Through eTwinning your teaching and non-teaching staff (management, counsellors, librarians, etc.) can connect with other schools to set up online activities involving pupils and staff. The platform is also an excellent way to communicate with other schools and share ideas. It is often used alongside other Erasmus+ projects to stay in touch with partners.

How are eTwinning activities organised?

No formal application is required to start eTwinning; simply register your school on the eTwinning platform. There are four main kinds of activities for your school:

- Your staff can set up or join **Teachers' Rooms**. Rooms are areas where teachers can share their opinions, experiences and practice on something of general or specific interest.
- For longer term collaboration, members can set up or join **eTwinning Groups**. These private spaces allow members to work together in a more structured way – for example to discuss teaching and learning methodologies and find support to further their personal and professional development.
- eTwinning even allows members to host or participate in **Learning Events**, which are short, intensive online courses. Events are led by an expert and include active work and discussion among teachers across Europe. Learning Events offer teachers an introduction to a topic, in-depth learning modules to share ideas and support to help develop skills. Each event consists of 4-5 days of active work and discussion, followed by 4-5 days of reflection and personal work. The materials are online and participants can access them in their own time.
- **eTwinning Projects** involve pupils and staff in international online collaboration i.e. teachers learn new ways of working from fellow professionals, while pupils get to interact with their peers from different cultures, traditions and backgrounds.

Getting involved in projects is very straightforward, because eTwinning offers 'ready-made' project kits (a full project 'recipe' to follow) and short activities (which can be incorporated into your project or into everyday classroom work).

How can my school sign up to eTwinning?

Simply register your school at www.etwinning.net to explore the opportunities available.

What do schools say about eTwinning?

...I have been involved in fifteen projects with different countries such as Scotland, Poland, Norway, Slovakia and France. Every project was always well integrated into the National Minimum Curriculum and the school year syllabus. Nothing was done outside the curriculum or syllabus, but only delivered in a more stimulating way, which children really enjoyed and which meant they probably remembered better what they had learned.'

Maria Antoinette Magro, Teacher, Malta

I was amazed to learn that...thousands of teachers from all over Europe had joined and had started all kinds of interesting projects. I put a few ideas of my own on the eTwinning portal and pretty soon I had started communicating with other teachers.'

Helgi Hólm, Teacher, Iceland




1.2.4 Erasmus+ opportunity navigator

Table 1 presents some of the typical objectives of European projects and illustrates how they may be supported by Erasmus+.

What do you want to do?

You will see that the opportunities are actually quite fluid. For example, while Staff Mobility (Key Action 1) is a funding opportunity in its own right, many Strategic Partnerships (Key Action 2) include a mobility component. Furthermore, eTwinning brings benefits as a standalone activity, but can also enhance all Erasmus+ opportunities.

Table 1: Erasmus+ opportunity navigator

Erasmus+ pathways	Work with other schools	Work with different kinds of organisations
<p>Key Action 1:</p>  <p>Staff Mobility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School staff can provide or attend training activities at other schools. ▪ Staff can share or transfer practices between schools by undertaking teaching assignments at other schools. ▪ The school can develop long-term relationships with mobility partners which can lead to further European projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School staff can attend training activities at any relevant organisation (e.g. NGOs, training centres, universities, careers advice bodies, counselling services, etc.). ▪ Schools can follow up Staff Mobility activities with larger scale collaboration (see Strategic Partnerships).
<p>Key Action 2:</p>  <p>Strategic Partnerships</p>  <p>eTwinning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Schools can share innovative policies, teaching practices, learning materials and tools or technologies with other schools. ▪ Schools can host or join online Projects, Teacher Rooms, Groups and Learning Events. No formal application is required for schools to get involved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategic Partnerships can include any public, private or non-profit organisation, including local and regional bodies (e.g. involving businesses or employment services to improve career guidance). ▪ Schools can find other schools with strong links to different kinds of organisations (businesses, local authorities, further/higher education, etc.) when seeking partners for Staff Mobility or Strategic Partnerships.

Provide opportunities for staff and pupils in other countries

- School teaching and non-teaching staff can benefit from professional development abroad.
- Pupils can benefit from new and improved teaching practices provided by visiting or returning staff.

Develop and enhance cooperation through eTwinning

- Schools can find partner schools for mobility activities.
- Education professionals and pupils can communicate before, during and after a mobility activity through eTwinning.
- Schools can enhance staff mobility through linked eTwinning activities.
- Staff can supplement training activities with an online component.

- Staff or pupils can take part in learning/teaching/training activities in a partner organisation.

- eTwinning is an ideal place to find partner schools for Strategic Partnership activities.
- Schools can publish and deliver training modules, curricula and other materials developed by the Partnership.
- Partners can communicate carry out online collaborative activities before, during or after a Strategic Partnership through eTwinning.

- School staff and pupils can connect across Europe through virtual mobility.
- Pupils and staff can participate and help develop eTwinning projects.
- Teacher Rooms, Groups and Learning Events support professional collaboration and networking for school staff.

- Schools can follow up eTwinning with funded Erasmus+ ventures.
- Partners can maintain and develop lasting relations through eTwinning.
- Schools can access an extensive range of tools to supplement all Erasmus+ projects.

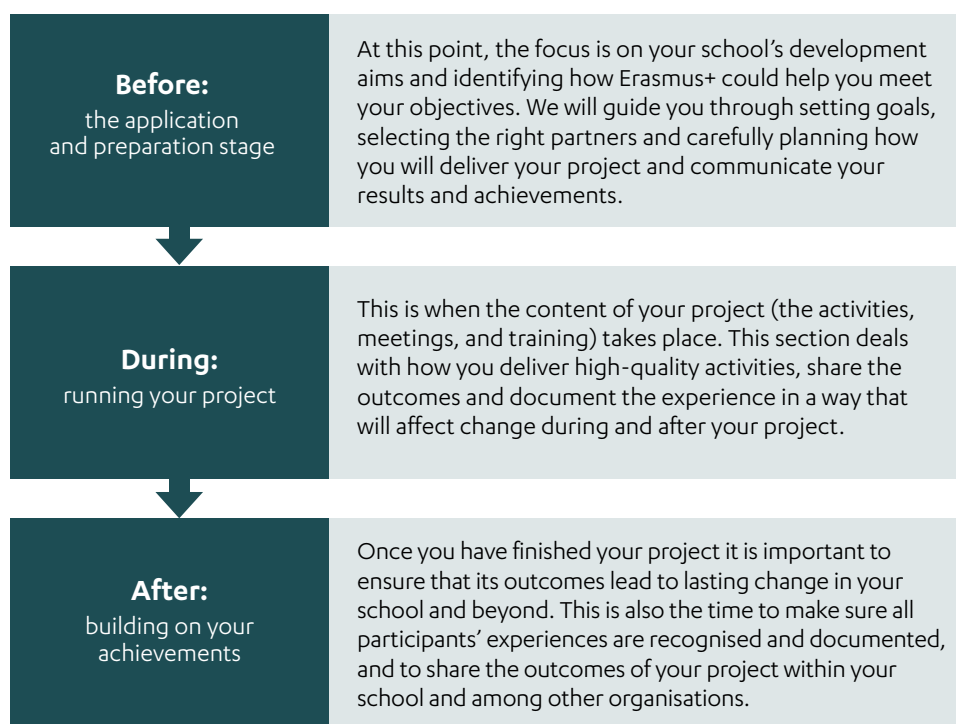


Part 2

Erasmus+ guide for schools

This section will help you plan and lead your school's involvement in Erasmus+. You will find suggestions about how to design and manage successful projects.

The guidance has been structured around the three stages of a European project:



If you are new to European programme activities you may wish to work your way through this guide from beginning to end. Alternatively, if you already have experience of implementing EU funded projects you may wish to skip to a specific section.

2.1 Before: the application and preparation stage

In this section we will review some important ways in which you can position your school to benefit fully from the broad range of Erasmus+ opportunities.

2.1.1 Setting the agenda: a whole school approach to Erasmus+

Your Erasmus+ project will really benefit if you establish clear leadership from the very beginning. A good way to do this is to include European activities as an integral part of development planning within your school, rather than as an 'add-on'. This means ensuring that all members of staff know about the objectives of your Erasmus+ project(s) and how they are contributing to your strategic objectives.



Reflective question

What impact do you want your school's involvement in the EU programme to have on pupils' learning?

Involving school staff, pupils, parents and other stakeholders in this key question will help ensure Erasmus+ meets pressing learning needs in your school. Moreover, if you can convey the benefits of Erasmus+ and show how the European activities will be integrated into your day-to-day school operations, Erasmus+ will be perceived as an indispensable opportunity rather than a burdensome 'extra'.

After consulting widely, it is time to develop a clear set of objectives linked to your school's ongoing improvement plans. Sharing the objectives, benefits and expected learning outcomes with everyone, including parents and other school stakeholders, will provide a common vision for engagement in your European project.

 We recognised that one of the most important factors in a successful project is to have a clear plan that integrates the European project targets into the school curriculum.'

Ricarda Geidelt, Teacher, Germany



Practical example

A whole school approach to a European project

A German elementary school has been participating in European projects on a regular basis since 2005. Here are a few examples of the implications of their whole school approach to Erasmus+:

Identifying opportunities

The school leader holds quarterly meetings with senior teaching staff to set and monitor the school's European development objectives and discuss related project ideas. When possible projects are identified, a questionnaire is circulated to pupils, asking for their preferences. Pupils' views are considered when preparing Erasmus+ applications.

Sharing responsibilities

All staff are required to update their Europass CV regularly. The coordinator uses these CVs to identify teachers and other employees who meet the needs of specific projects. She then approaches relevant individuals. In this way, the school's internal project team can be mobilised very quickly.

Effective communication within the school

Parents are informed about projects through the school news bulletin, parents' evenings and school events. Project outcomes are shared throughout the school building on digital boards.

Organisational learning

When tabling an idea for a new project, the project coordinator is required to specify how lessons learned from previous activities will be incorporated into the new project application, so as to ensure continuous improvement within the school.

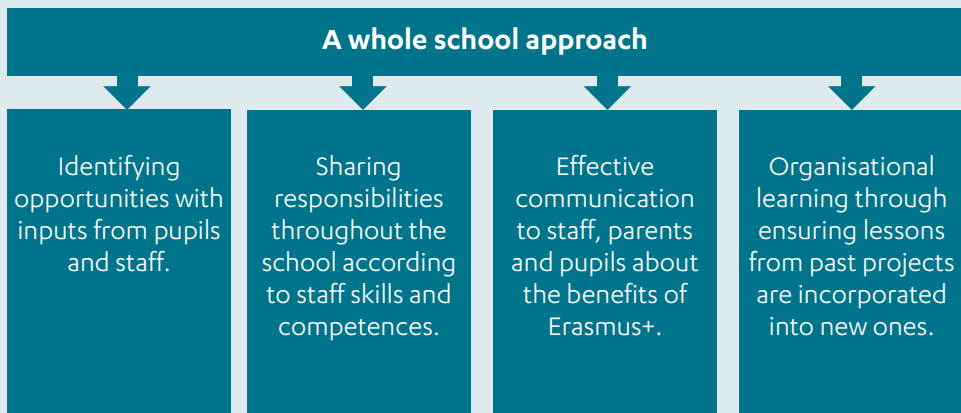


Figure 1: A whole school approach at a German elementary school

2.1.2 Identifying how Erasmus+ could support learning and teaching

To incorporate Erasmus+ throughout the whole school it is useful to bring decision makers from across all curriculum areas together in order to discuss how the programme can enhance:

- specific areas or subjects in the curriculum (e.g. literacy, including ICT);
- interdisciplinary learning (e.g. Content and Language Integrated Learning – learning a subject through the medium of a foreign language);
- school values, culture and interpersonal skills (e.g. entrepreneurship, intercultural understanding, democratic principles, global citizenship, anti-bullying, environmental sustainability, teamwork);
- learning and teaching approaches (e.g. sharing and implementing a more pupil-centred approach to learning).

This holistic perspective will enable your staff to identify a wide range of potential benefits for pupils and staff, irrespective of their academic discipline or professional role.

“ The project was developed by a multidisciplinary team of teachers and non-teachers who designed the activities so that they could be integrated into pupils’ mandatory courses, with a direct link to the curricula.”

Jean-Pierre Marcadier, Project Coordinator, France



Practical example

Using Erasmus+ to support ICT based learning and teaching

A school in Ireland had the objective of becoming 'e-mature', by harnessing ICT to improve teaching and learning.

Accordingly, management and teaching staff created a school action plan to apply new technologies throughout the school. International projects have been important in order to resource the school's ambitions, and staff prioritised two aspects of European funding in this regard:

Mobility opportunities

The first step was to identify teachers and support staff, with varying levels of competencies in ICT, to undertake a variety of staff mobility activities. For example, teachers were sent to job shadow colleagues abroad, at schools specialised in this area. Other staff attended ICT training courses, hosted by a European training provider. Today, these opportunities are available under Staff Mobility (Key Action 1).

European partnerships

A partnership project was planned in order to establish a Virtual Learning Platform using open source Moodle software, available to all school departments. The platform will be a space in which pupils and teachers can collaborate on common projects and engage in extra-curricular courses to support and reinforce their learning. Today, these opportunities are available under Strategic Partnerships (Key Action 2).

The inclusive 'whole school' approach ensured a wide range of staff and pupils felt the benefits of Erasmus+ opportunities, to improve the use of ICT in teaching and learning.

2.1.3 Creating a European Development Plan (EDP)

A European Development Plan (sometimes called a School Development Plan*) is a requirement if you are applying for Staff Mobility (Key Action 1) and is recommended for any school interested in long-term involvement in Erasmus+.

Your EDP should cover:

- your school's needs, in terms of plans for the development of high-quality education and internationalisation (e.g. new learning and teaching methods or tools or professional development) and how the planned activities will help meet your needs;
- the impact you expect Erasmus+ to have on pupils' learning, teachers, other staff and your school;
- how your school will integrate the competences and experiences acquired by your staff into curricula and organisational practice.

Most school leaders find it useful to consult widely in order to define the purpose of introducing an international component in teaching and learning. Involving colleagues early on will help you identify how to distribute roles and responsibilities for European activities.

If discussions are grounded in approaches to improve the quality of education for pupils, the time is well spent and will ensure all staff understand the relevance of international activities to their work and the pupil experience.

“The long term objective was the integration into the bilingual Content and Language Integrated Learning programme of the school... Our School's Development Plan* helped us in emphasising the importance of an international education towards a European employment market and studying in Europe.”

Dieter Wlcek, School Principal, Austria

An EDP also helps school leaders to monitor progress and hold team members accountable, since short-term and long-term goals for the whole school are clearly specified in one document.



In focus

A model for developing a European Development Plan (EDP)

If you have never developed an EDP, it may seem difficult to know where to begin. One flexible approach is to consider how you might evaluate and develop your current curriculum around three simple propositions. Where and what are the opportunities in your school curriculum to:

- enable pupils to learn about Europe?
- prepare pupils for learning, life and work in an international environment?
- enable pupils to learn through an international context?

With these questions in mind, you can begin to identify opportunities to create and enhance these aspects of learning.

So, as an example, **enabling pupils to learn about Europe** might be supported with a Staff Mobility project (Key Action 1) that aims to develop an understanding of European history, institutions and current affairs among staff and pupils. The objectives would be to up-skill staff so they improve their knowledge of teaching and learning methodologies and strategies about Europe in the 21st century. This could be done by sending staff on job shadowing to observe how others are teaching relevant subjects. Such a project could then form the basis for staff and pupils to feel empowered and inspired to become part of the larger European community.

Similarly **preparing pupils for learning, life and work in an international environment** may be supported with a Strategic Partnership (Key Action 2). The aim could be to help pupils develop their basic and interpersonal skills (such as entrepreneurship, language competence, problem-solving skills, cultural understanding, etc.) or for teachers to develop learning modules to support learners with CV development or interview techniques. In this case your school could develop curricula on this theme, in collaboration with European employers or careers services.

In much the same way, tangible objectives can be set to **enable pupils to learn through an international context** across your curriculum. For example, you might design a range of **eTwinning** activities to enable your pupils to practice foreign languages with learners at partner schools.

You can include targets in your EDP for implementing such measures across your school.

2.1.4 Matching school objectives to Erasmus+ opportunities

Having agreed your objectives for European projects, your next step is to decide which Erasmus+ opportunities are most relevant – Staff Mobility (Key Action 1), Strategic Partnerships (Key Action 2) or eTwinning (remember, you are not restricted to applying for only one Erasmus+ opportunity).

The scenario below gives you an idea of the kinds of opportunities you could choose, depending on your objectives. In this example, the objectives relate to fostering inclusion in education:



Practical example

Fostering inclusion through Erasmus+ projects

A Staff Mobility (Key Action 1) project

A school in Ireland wanted to introduce evidence based intercultural education methodologies into the school curriculum. The main aim was to support teaching staff to engage and motivate the 20% of pupils who were born abroad, and to foster a sense of European identity throughout the school.

The school applied for funding to send teaching staff to schools in Slovenia and Turkey, which had earned a reputation for excellence in this area. The visitors job shadowed colleagues at the host schools and received comprehensive training in the schools' methodologies for teaching intercultural education.

A Strategic Partnership (Key Action 2) project

A German university sought to bring together schools and stakeholder organisations in countries faced with particularly high levels of early school leaving, in order to reduce this trend. They forged a partnership with organisations including NGOs, schools, and training providers in Germany, Hungary, Romania, Croatia and Turkey.

Together they conducted empirical research to identify the principal needs in this area. Based on their findings the partners created an online, 10 month, learning course for teaching staff in order to deepen their professional skills in working within diverse class rooms. The course also trained education professionals to run a range of activities to reduce early school leaving, such as mentoring, homework clubs and parents' cafes.



Suggestion

It is always wise to have an alternative option in case your project is not selected for funding. Remember that eTwinning is always available for online learning opportunities and cooperation with your partners.

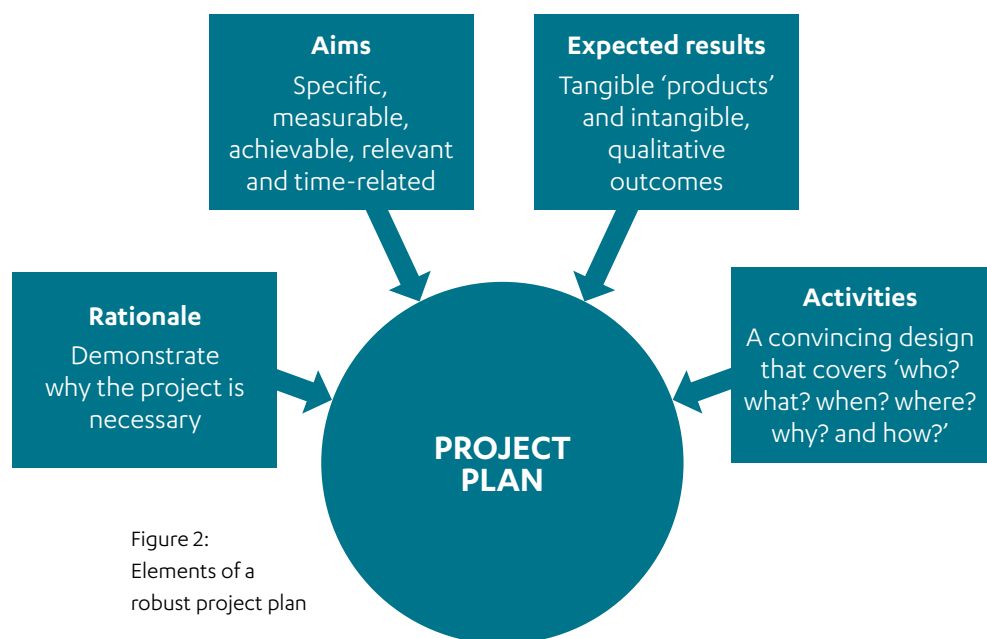
Both projects in our practical example helped to foster inclusion in education, albeit in different ways and with different objectives. Clearly, the Staff Mobility example presented was mainly focused on the specific challenges faced by the school, while the university led partnership was more concerned with addressing a European policy priority. The kind of opportunity, or combination of opportunities, you apply for will be dependent on your goals.

If your school hasn't participated in European activities before, you may wish to begin by taking part in eTwinning with the aim of undertaking Staff Mobility and Strategic Partnerships in the future.

It is important to point out that the application process for funded activities is highly competitive, and your school may not be among the lucky ones who get selected. If you are not selected, don't give up! Continue to improve your application and try again next time.

2.1.5 Planning the content of your project

It pays to avoid shortcuts when planning the content of your project. This will help you write a comprehensive Erasmus+ application and allows you to develop a detailed action plan that may help you avoid common problems during your projects.



“Planning the project should be done by all participants. Good planning is the key to a good project and to a successful application.”

Heidi Ahlers, Teacher, Germany

A solid project plan should address the following four components:

Rationale

The rationale should explain why your project is necessary in the first place, with reference to your organisational objectives and the Erasmus+ priorities (see the Erasmus+ Programme Guide: <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/discover/guide>). It may be appropriate to cover how your project will meet the specific needs of the participants or how it will contribute to education and training policy and practice more generally.

If you are planning a large project, you might wish to conduct a needs analysis at the start of the planning process. In particular, it is often useful (particularly with Strategic Partnerships and eTwinning projects) to research projects undertaken by other schools. This will ensure that you are building on past achievements rather than starting from scratch.



Suggestion

The SMART system is useful when setting learning targets that can be evaluated easily. In this way, targets should be:

Specific – Make sure everyone knows exactly what is to be achieved.

Measurable – Define indicator(s) of progress. If possible, quantify in some way what you will achieve.

Achievable – Make sure you have the resources and capacity to achieve the objective. Specify who will do what.

Relevant – Make sure the targets are directly relevant to the Erasmus+ programme priorities, your project's purpose and the European Development Plan.

Time-related – Make sure everyone knows the timetable and deadlines.

Aims

Clearly defined aims are a pre-requisite for determining the success of any activity, so it is essential to set out what changes you want to see as a result of your project. Aims can be two-fold, comprising overall 'global aims' which are general in nature (e.g. foster civic responsibility among pupils) with more specific sub-aims (develop a teaching module on the topic of citizenship).

Expected results

While planning your project, make two lists of all the tangible and intangible results you envisage.

Tangible results include everything produced by your project such as reports, websites or training materials. Intangible results may include new ways of working, insights gained, or changes in attitudes. Physical results can more easily be shared and used well beyond the lifetime of your project. However, you should document your project's achievements whenever possible, and make sure you include plans to evaluate the intangible results as well. For example, if pupils are expected to 'be more knowledgeable about the partner country' after an eTwinning activity, why not plan a quiz to test this?

This critical appraisal of your expected results will help you fine-tune your plans and ensure the long-term impact of your project.

Activities

When planning activities, it is helpful to specify the people, tasks, timetable, results and resources required to deliver them.



In focus

Six simple questions will help you plan robust project activities:

1.

What is the aim of your project? And why?

Define the main aim of your project clearly and explain why this project is necessary.

2.

Who is responsible?

Outline the specific roles and responsibilities of your organisation and of your partners for organising and delivering your project.

3.

Who will participate?

Who is eligible to participate in your project activities and what are your selection criteria?

4.

What will happen?

Try to outline the content of your activities (training assignment, job shadowing, etc.) as comprehensively as possible.

5.

When/where will it take place?

Define the specific timing and place of your project activities.

6.

How?

How will your activities contribute towards your specific project aim?

2.1.6 Selecting partners

You don't have to identify partners for Staff Mobility (Key Action 1) at the application stage, although it is helpful to consider what kind of partners you are looking for.

You do need to choose your partners before you can submit a Strategic Partnership (Key Action 2) application.

Your partner search criteria should be underpinned by your school's aims for participating in a European project. If, for example, you are pursuing capacity-building then the focus should be on identifying partners that have expertise linked to the skills you seek to develop. This is particularly important if you are looking for a structured course or training event abroad for staff development.

Remember, if the aim is to form a partnership then it is important to consider (and show) how your organisation could contribute towards the potential partners' objectives and not only how they might support your own.

You can partner with all kinds of organisations. Eligible partners include schools, universities, municipalities, businesses, libraries, museums, science centres, voluntary or charitable organisations, etc. Think about which organisations best fit your school's development objectives and needs.

Try to consult widely with relevant staff, stakeholders and, where appropriate, pupils while developing your partner search criteria. It is always better to take the time to clearly agree your needs at the beginning. Otherwise you might begin a project, only to discover that the organisations you are working with can't properly meet your requirements.



Reflective questions

What kind of expertise, skills and specialisations might partners contribute to the objectives you have for your pupils, your staff and your local community?

What is unique about your school, and how would you articulate those qualities to potential partners?

In terms of the aims you want your European project to achieve, how would you describe your ideal partner?



In focus

Examples of partner selection criteria might be:

- expertise and experience relevant to your project idea;
- similar development goals to your own;
- the capacity to assist with the financial management and administration of your project;
- expertise in publicising project outcomes;
- the ability to communicate in specific languages;
- enthusiasm and commitment!



Practical example

A few useful tips to find partners for your project are outlined below by an Austrian coordinator (Strategic Partnership):

Step 1: Ask partners you have already worked with.

Step 2: Allow your former partners to suggest new partners.

Step 3: Put your idea on eTwinning and wait for teachers to contact you.

Step 4: Ask the language assistants in your school to provide contacts from their former schools.

Step 5 (and the best): Attend meetings or information events organised by National Agencies (in your country or abroad) to make contact with other teachers interested in international cooperation.

Step 6: Look for suitable schools on the internet and contact them if they are interested in cooperating.

‘An organisation needs a partner with a willingness to learn, an appreciation of culture and heritage, a familiarity with ICT tools and a commitment to education...We [also] wanted pupils from a diverse range of cultures and we wanted committed teachers with specialised skills so that we could learn from each other.’

Brendan O’Dwyer, Teacher, Ireland

If you have never engaged in a European project, you may want to find a partner with experience of Erasmus+ or the previous generation of European programmes (e.g. Comenius).

It can also be an advantage to have geographical diversity in the partnership and a range of pedagogical approaches. In this way, each partner’s involvement benefits the project as a whole, and all partners feel they learn a lot from each other.



Suggestion

Useful resources for partner finding and inspiration for project ideas

There are different ways to find project partners or ideas for your project. These include:

eTwinning

The eTwinning portal offers online partner-finding tools and a network of thousands of participating schools, making it the ideal place to start your search.

<http://www.etwinning.net>

Using existing contacts, networks and links

Individual staff, pupils and parents at your school may have developed European links that you are unaware of. Invite people in your school to share their contacts.

Contact schools, and school leaders

There may be schools and school leaders in your area who have already been involved in European projects. Helpful sources include the European Shared Treasure site (see www.europeansharedtreasure.eu) and the newly developed Erasmus+ dissemination platform (see <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects>). The experiences of schools like your own can be an extremely useful source of ideas and inspiration for your own projects.

“The entire partner-finding process took about a month. I used a few partners from previous projects that I knew I could work well with, but also had to find many new partners. I was able to research schools on the new [eTwinning] portal and contacted a good mix of experienced eTwinners and those new to the programme – I received quick and encouraging responses!”

Michael Purves, Teacher, United Kingdom



Suggestion

Why not try a Strategic Partnership with organisations other than schools?

Under Erasmus+ you are not restricted to collaborating with other schools only. Your partners can be from any public, private or non-profit organisation.

A Strategic Partnerships might involve:

- working with employers to develop new curricula, tailored to employment market needs;
- linking with careers advice services to improve pupils' employability;
- collaborating with museums to reinvigorate history curricula;
- working with art galleries to exhibit pupils' work;
- collaborating with local authorities to raise your school's profile in the community.

Depending on your project objectives you may wish to select partners from local businesses, libraries, museums, arts or youth organisations, children's services, universities, science or research centres, etc.

2.1.7 Recruiting and selecting participants

If you apply for mobility activities, either through Staff Mobility (Key Action 1) or as part of a Strategic Partnership (Key Action 2) you will need to indicate how many of your staff and/or pupils will participate within the funding period, the kind of activities they will engage in and how these activities will be followed-up after their return. You should also decide on how staff or pupils will be selected to take part in your project activities, and what the destination organisations and countries will be.

When applying for Staff Mobility, you will need to show that your participant selection process is transparent and linked to your school objectives, by presenting clear selection criteria.

Whether you are organising a Staff Mobility project or Strategic Partnership with a mobility component, it pays to plan in detail how you intend to communicate mobility opportunities to potential participants. Publicising your school's mobility opportunities as widely as possible, among eligible pupils and staff, will help ensure that as many suitable candidates put themselves forward for selection as possible.

It is a good idea to create a standard procedure for promoting mobility opportunities in your school, and to update and improve it periodically.



In focus

Some selection criteria you could use include:

- To what extent will the experience contribute to your participant's learning needs?
- To what extent will the experience lead to improvements in teaching and learning at your school?
- How motivated is the individual to participate in the activity?

Some ideas for recruiting participants for mobility activities include:

Promoting to staff:

- presentations at teacher meetings;
- promotional emails, letters, or intranet notices;
- posters in staff rooms.

Promoting to pupils:

- during school assemblies;
- in your school's news bulletin;
- by SMS or email to parents;
- in lessons during relevant subjects;
- posters around your school;
- tweets from your school's Twitter account.

Try to promote the activity in more than one way, to ensure the message is not missed.

You will find that including a link to a detailed flyer or webpage in all publicity materials will help people to 'self-select' before contacting your project team. The linked information can set out the requirements and the deadline for expressing an interest. This will help reduce the administrative burden of responding to ineligible candidates.

2.1.8 Crafting a high-quality application

Having chosen your preferred Erasmus+ opportunity and identified your project team, the next step is to draft the application. There is plenty of advice and material available to help you with this process – simply contact your National Agency for guidance.

The good news is that the financial requirements of the application process are relatively straightforward under Erasmus+. The grant is almost entirely based on unit costs and will be calculated automatically as you fill in your application form, according to the activities you specify.

Before you start, we recommend that you read more about the type of project you will apply for, and that you carefully read the information about the Key Action you intend to apply for in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide. This includes the eligibility and quality assessment criteria, as well as application procedures and formal requirements.

- **Eligibility:** In order to be eligible for funding, your organisation or partnership must meet the criteria outlined in the Programme Guide for the specific Key Action you are interested in. Check that you meet all the eligibility criteria.
- **Assessment criteria:** The Programme Guide sets out the criteria against which your application will be assessed. Make sure that you address all the relevant quality criteria in your application. It is also useful for you to consult the Erasmus+ Guide for Experts on Quality Assessment so you understand the assessment process and scoring used by the experts who will evaluate your application.
- **Application procedures:** Please note that both the applicant organisation and any partner organisations must register on the European Commission's Participant Portal before completing an Erasmus+ application form. You can consult the Participant Portal User Manual which contains detailed guidance on how to complete these steps.
- **Formal requirements:** It is important that you read and review what is required from applicants, so you can demonstrate that your organisation has the adequate organisational and financial capacity to successfully deliver and implement your Erasmus+ project.



Suggestion

Most National Agencies run information activities to provide guidance to organisations on how to apply for funding. Make sure you attend their events and ask for advice.

Whichever aspect of Erasmus+ you are applying for, you will need to demonstrate the **relevance, quality** and **impact** of your activities. A good starting point is to present the activities you have agreed in your project plan around these key criteria.

Meanwhile, keep in mind that both Key Action 1 (Staff Mobility) and Key Action 2 (Strategic Partnerships) of Erasmus+ have some very specific requirements, so it is important to consult the Erasmus+ Programme Guide carefully as you complete your application.

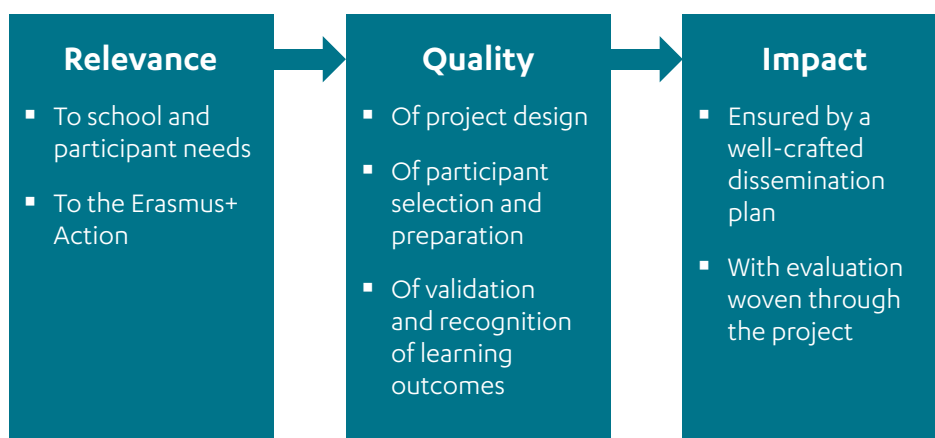


Figure 3: Elements of a strong application

There are other key success criteria to consider, i.e. **does your project demonstrate:**

- the background and experience of the partnership?
- a robust evaluation strategy?
- clear plans for preparation, implementation and follow up?
- good value for money?
- clear links to EU policy?
- innovation?
- added value?

Relevance of your project

Naturally, your project should be relevant to the needs and objectives of your school and your participants. It should also be linked to relevant objectives of the Erasmus+ Action you wish to apply for (see the Erasmus+ Programme Guide). Try to focus carefully on demonstrating that your project aims are clearly aligned to your school's objectives and participants' needs, and on designing and adapting your activities to fit with the relevant Key Action priorities.



Reflective question

Staff Mobility

Is your project design clear for all phases of the project, with attention paid to the individual quality areas that have been identified (consistency, European Development Plan, staff selection processes, language development, etc.)?

Strategic Partnerships

Have you clearly demonstrated the scope and structure of your project?

Do the skills of your project team members match the requirements of your project?

Have you shown how the partners will communicate and work together throughout your project?

Quality

Quality requirements differ, depending on whether you are submitting an application for Staff Mobility (Key Action 1) or Strategic Partnerships (Key Action 2).

Staff Mobility applications need to convey high quality project design and implementation, which means showing a convincing plan for all phases of your project (preparation, implementation and follow-up).

You need to show how reporting and project management will be organised and demonstrate consistency between your project objectives and proposed activities. You will also need to show that fair and considered procedures will be in place for selecting, preparing and supporting participants while abroad.

Furthermore, you should demonstrate how participants' learning outcomes will be accredited or validated upon their return. It is important to present a high-quality, comprehensive European Development Plan too.

Strategic Partnership applications also need to convey high quality project design and implementation. These requirements are similar to the ones for Mobility projects, but there are a few important differences (see the Erasmus+ Programme Guide).

You are also required to demonstrate the quality of your project team and the cooperation arrangements. Try to present, in detail, your partners' specific responsibilities and how tasks will be distributed. In addition, try to explain clearly how the partners intend to maintain regular communication and work together.



In focus

Essential elements of a strong application

- A clear, long-term strategy for integrating European activities in your school's operations (a European Development Plan will help you to demonstrate this).
- Project activities that complement the priorities and objectives of the Erasmus+ Action you are applying for.
- Clearly addresses the evaluation criteria (also referred to as award or assessment criteria).
- A fair and transparent procedure for recruiting and selecting participants.
- Roles and responsibilities that are specified and demonstrate a fair distribution of responsibilities across the partnership, as well as an effective use of available skills, competencies and resources.
- Robust strategies for evaluation, dissemination and exploitation of project results.

Impact and dissemination

It is essential to demonstrate convincingly how you intend to evaluate project outcomes. You should also show how you will raise awareness about the outcomes of your project within and outside the participating organisations through a dissemination plan. Bear in mind that the criteria for assessing applications for Staff Mobility projects (Key Action 1) and Strategic Partnerships (Key Action 2) are slightly different (see the Erasmus+ Programme Guide for details) and outcomes are proportionate to the level of funding.



Suggestion

Questions and prompts that may be used in order to develop a dissemination plan:

- What are the purpose, aims and objectives of dissemination?
- Who is the target audience(s)?
- What will be disseminated?
- What dissemination strategies will be used?
- What will the messages and dissemination strategies for different audiences be?
- When will dissemination take place (during and after your project)?
- Who will take responsibility for the coordination of the dissemination plan?
- Who will be involved in the dissemination plan?
- How will dissemination be implemented, monitored and evaluated?
- What are the costs of dissemination activities?

You will need to set out a detailed dissemination and exploitation plan in your application.

2.1.9 Setting up monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

Two important processes are essential in order to assess the quality of any Erasmus+ project:

- **Monitoring** can be defined as a continuous process of assessing the progress made towards stated objectives, and identifying gaps between the original project plan and the actual achievements.
- **Evaluation** is the systematic application of methods that aim to assess and improve the planning, implementation and impact of a project.

You will need to demonstrate a convincing strategy for both when you write your application.

As is implied, monitoring and evaluation are two sides of the same coin because evaluation is largely dependent upon the data collected during monitoring activities.

Your partners are responsible for gathering monitoring data when delivering activities. Normally, they supply this information to your project coordinator in the form of internal status reports. Monitoring and evaluation is usually included as an agenda item at partner meetings too, to allow time for partners to discuss, where appropriate, how to adapt future activities in response to the findings.

Therefore it is important to answer the following questions in writing:

- Who will be responsible for monitoring and evaluation at each partner organisation?
- What will be monitored and evaluated throughout your project?
- What information will your partners need to collect in order to make monitoring and evaluation possible (participant feedback, attendance figures, etc.)?
- When will the evaluation be carried out (e.g. at key milestones of the project activities or throughout the project)?
- How often will participants need to provide monitoring and evaluation data?
- What will be the means of monitoring and evaluation (status reports, project meetings, etc.)?



In focus

What should be monitored and evaluated?

The precise nature of your monitoring and evaluation will vary depending on the aims and objectives of your project. Some typical evaluation points for all projects include:

- the impact on your school, staff and pupils (how will your project improve knowledge and skills, confidence, motivation, learning and teaching methodologies; how will your project reshape school systems, organisational structure or curricula?) and other organisations involved;
- the local, national and international impact (for example, will there be any impact outside of the partners themselves, e.g. on the local community, or even nationally or internationally?);
- your project's contribution towards the objectives of the Erasmus+ Action.

To ensure efficiency, try to include monitoring and evaluation within your school's existing performance management procedures. For example, activities designed to develop pupils' knowledge may already be evaluated as part of your school's evaluation process. Other specific evaluations may have to be planned and designed to evaluate the impact of aspects of the European project.

Quantifiable outcomes are the easiest to measure (e.g. all participants to receive over seven hours of linguistic preparation); however, broad outcomes can be evaluated too.

For example, if you wish to evaluate the extent to which 'our pupils have developed as global citizens', the evaluation process will have to involve more than one type of assessment. This means that reaching a consensus about what constitutes global citizenship and what knowledge, skills, values and dispositions are involved is necessary before it is possible to decide on evaluation processes. Pupils could be involved in these discussions too.

Monitoring and evaluation will be addressed further in the 'During' and 'After' sections of this guide.

‘The involvement of each partner and a project coordinator is a must to ensure effective leadership of the monitoring and evaluation process.’

Joseph Vabre, Deputy Mayor, France

‘In each international meeting, we made sure that the activities were achievable. To do that, each partner explained his idea and how to do it. Then we saw how we could link them all together and check if something was needed to achieve the planned objectives.’

Sergio González Moreau, Teacher, Spain

2.2 During: running your project

You and your partners will really benefit if you think beyond implementing the planned content. The most successful projects allocate considerable time and resources to building relationships among the partners as the basis for future cooperation. This section shows how to manage some of the administrative, academic, and cultural aspects of implementing Erasmus+ activities.

The information and advice presented mostly concerns transnational collaborative projects involving multiple partners. While not all of it will be equally relevant to, for example, a small mobility project, much of it can (in a simplified form) be applied to such projects as well.

2.2.1 Project start-up

A significant amount of time will have passed between the submission of the application and the award of your grant. You should re-read your project proposal to familiarise yourself with the project objectives, the planned activities and any agreements you made with your project partners, and re-establish communication with all the participants. You should remind them of the project objectives and determine, with them, the next steps in getting started. The focus will depend on what you have planned and agreed in your application. You should also ask every project participant to let you know if there have been any changes in circumstances (personnel changes, address changes, etc.). It is important to confirm the contact points in case it is necessary to adjust the partnership or project activities. In the start-up phase it is also critical that you are clear about financial arrangements and reporting, as well as the payment process; for Strategic Partnerships in particular the lead organisation will be responsible for project funds.

Involving all partners from the very beginning will help you foster:

- A group identity;
- Shared aims and values;
- Clear lines of communication;
- Complementary expertise and pedagogical approaches;
- Fair and proportionate distribution of roles and responsibilities.

Prior to the first project activity, meeting, or training, it pays to exchange information that will help partners prepare. For example, if you are participating in a Strategic Partnership (Key Action 2) each partner could circulate their aims and objectives.

Typically, projects will organise a ‘kick off’ meeting, either physically or through a telephone or video conference.

In addition, it is worthwhile to set up a collaboration space online. You could create a ‘Twinspace’ on eTwinning, where partners can meet regularly to plan and collaborate on activities. A TwinSpace is easy to set up and use, has many useful functions and can be made private or public depending on your preference.

At the beginning, it is worthwhile to agree in writing how the partnership will communicate during your project or activity.



Practical example

Communicating with partners

A school in the Czech Republic ran a project involving 10 countries. At the first project meeting, the following communication methods were agreed:

eTwinning was used to maintain everyday communication between teachers.

A **Facebook group** was set up for students to enable them to exchange comments and post photographs.

Video conferencing (Skype) was used for meetings, and all partners received instructions about how to use screen sharing features in order to present and collaborate on documents during meetings.

A **cloud storage account** (Google Drive) was created as a repository for project documents (word processing, spreadsheets, presentations). This had the advantage of permitting all participants to edit documents simultaneously and prevented the confusion that can arise when multiple versions of the same file are shared as email attachments.

Some initial communication exchanges can help partners prepare, and get to know one another. You could, for example, share the following on your TwinSpace or other communication platforms:

- The contexts and characteristics of each school or organisation;
- Each organisation's European Development Plan;
- The objectives and project learning outcomes/products;
- The content of your project (project activities, meetings);
- Roles and responsibilities;
- The linguistic support to be provided to participants;
- The administrative arrangements;
- The necessary monitoring, evaluation and dissemination measures required at each project phase.



In focus

Sharing reporting responsibilities

All projects need to report on activities, outcomes and finances. Reporting is very important because failure to submit a report may mean your school is required to partially or fully reimburse the EU grant.

From the very beginning, partners should be tasked with providing your project coordinator with all information required for reporting. This ensures the project coordinator will have the necessary information to draft the reports and share them for comment at partnership meetings.

It is wise to put more than one person in charge of reporting. Sharing this task ensures that when staff leave or fall ill, other colleagues are in a position to complete the report. The dates for report monitoring and submission should be included in your school's calendar, as well as the personal calendars of your school's leadership and other project participants.

Furthermore, it is useful to consult the interim and final reporting templates so you know, in advance, what information you will need to collect in order to report on your activities. Make sure that you complete your report as you go along, and not just before the submission deadline.

2.2.2 Partnership team-building ideas

Take some time to establish a positive working environment among the partners, particularly if it is the first time you have worked together.

Every group member has different ideas, temperaments and schedules. But that is the advantage of these projects.'

Christiane Meisenburg, Teacher, Germany

If you or your staff are participating in mobility activities at a host institution (teaching assignments or job shadowing), it is highly recommended that you establish a mobility agreement before the activity takes place. This agreement should be made between the sending school, the receiving organisation and the participant. It should set out the programme and content of the activity, the learning outcomes to be achieved, the tasks of the different parties, the type of certificate that will be issued to the participant, etc. A template for a mobility agreement is available – ask your National Agency.

It can also be helpful to exchange other information, for example about the experience of the member of staff who is participating in the mobility activity, teaching assignment

or job shadowing. With this information, the receiving organisation can further tailor the activity to specific needs and interests. A pre-mobility questionnaire can be used to collect this information.

If pupils will be undertaking study mobility during your project, careful planning and close communication between sending and receiving schools is especially important. This will help safeguard the pupil's welfare and learning outcomes. A comprehensive guide is available to help you with this process, and following it carefully is highly recommended. Please ask your National Agency for this guide.



Suggestion

What could be included in a pre-mobility questionnaire for participants?

- Name;
- School;
- Current role and responsibilities in school;
- Stage of teaching (pre-school, primary, secondary, vocational);
- Main reasons for participating in a European project;
- Specific learning goals;
- Experience in the areas that are the focus of your project;
- Language expertise – which languages (understanding, speaking to what level);
- Particular interests;
- Dietary needs/food allergies;
- Access requirements (for people with disabilities).

You could circulate links to websites of national or local education authorities to give an insight into national or local systems. It is useful to include fact sheets about the education or training system in the country too – just be careful not to overwhelm your partners!



In focus

Making a good impression – your first activity, training session or meeting with partners

‘I believe the success of the project was based on the agreements made at the initial meeting.’

Robert O’Leary, Principal, Ireland

It is really important to lay a good foundation during your first activity, training session or meeting, whether it takes place online, by teleconference or in person.

An important objective is for all partners to leave the first meeting feeling assured about the quality of leadership and the level of resources available. They should be confident that adequate planning has been undertaken and high-quality activities have been developed. Careful preparation on all sides is vital to ensuring this.

Prior to the activity, training session or meeting, a detailed agenda or schedule should be sent to everyone. The schedule should not only make clear what the activity, training session or meeting will be about and who will attend, but also how the participants should prepare. Such simple steps not only set the tone for the whole project, but will also put participants at ease, particularly if they have not engaged in an international project before.

Some schools use the first meeting to specify meeting ‘etiquette’ such as switching off mobile phones, ensuring everyone has a chance to speak and are listened to, adhering to start times for activities and meetings, and meeting deadlines.

If you, as a school leader, are not participating directly in project activities or meetings, you should set aside time to encourage your own staff in their work. If the first project activity is in your own school, you could attend part of the activity to send a clear message about the importance of the project. If the first activity involves receiving international visitors, they will really appreciate it if you are present to welcome them at the start of the meeting or activity.

2.2.3 Preparing for Erasmus+ activities

The following considerations will help you prepare for any mobility activities (i.e. involving travel abroad). As you have seen, such activities can form part of both Staff Mobility (Key Action 1) and Strategic Partnerships (Key Action 2) projects.

Travel arrangements

Before participants leave home, it is essential that they have a clear travel itinerary and directions to their final destination(s), including hotels and the venue or school. If participants need to travel to an area that is difficult to reach, consider arranging to collect them from the airport, train station or a central location. If several visitors are expected, it might be more economical to hire a mini-bus or large taxi than for participants to arrange their own travel. All participants should have a contact number in case of emergency.

Meals, accommodation and venues

Many European projects involve partner meetings, training and activities that require logistical preparation.

Try to find venues that are easy to reach by public transport (particularly if visitors need to catch a train/flight after the meeting or conference). Otherwise, you may find many participants will want to leave early and this can cause disruption on the final day.

Some participants may be unable to eat certain foods for medical or religious reasons, so it is important to request this information from participants and to take specific requirements into account when booking meals.

Remember to ask participants if they have any access requirements. This way you can ensure your school, the venue and the hotel are prepared to accommodate their needs upon arrival (hearing loops, disability assistance, sign language, etc.).

Participant orientation

At the beginning of a project activity it is a good idea to run through the activity programme with the participants. Whenever someone is undertaking a teaching assignment, job shadowing visit or engaging in a partnership, there may be different interpretations about what will take place. These different expectations can be constructed from what has been written and agreed upon before your project, simply because of different definitions and translations of words and phrases.

A brief orientation session is a simple way to avoid misunderstandings at the start of the activity. The session could involve:

- reiterating the aims, content and information of the activity, and any cultural or social events planned for visitors;
- informing participants about Wi-Fi passwords, hot-desking and other resources available during their stay;
- a tour of facilities (cloakroom, toilets, dining hall, etc.);
- answering questions and responding to specific requirements.

Overcoming cultural and linguistic barriers

Creating an environment and atmosphere that enables openness and reflection on expectations is the key to developing trusting and respectful partnerships.

It is worth considering the potential implications arising when participants from 'direct' and 'indirect' communication cultures work together:

- **Direct communication cultures:** meaning and requests are conveyed explicitly to the people involved (why did you do it like that?).
- **Indirect communication cultures:** meaning is conveyed by suggestion, implication, non-verbal behaviour, and contextual signals. This style limits confrontation or the potential for disagreement (e.g. I'm curious to find out more about that approach - can you tell me about it?).

Those accustomed to indirect communication may feel their expertise is being challenged by a direct question. Alternatively, people who are more used to direct questions can find it hard to understand or interpret an indirect style. Acknowledging these differences can be the theme of a fun and informative 'ice-breaker' exercise or group discussion.

Cultural differences should not be underestimated either. It is helpful to establish matters of school etiquette. For example, school dress codes vary considerably across Europe. In some countries teachers dress informally and wearing jeans is the norm, whereas in other countries it would be considered inappropriate for a teacher to wear jeans to school.

It is good practice to provide participants with a concise information pack before they travel, to help prevent inadequate preparation or embarrassment!



Suggestions

Allow time for networking

Networking is one of the things Erasmus+ participants say they value about European projects. It is also one of the best ways to support linguistic development and intercultural understanding.

Try to allocate time for informal discussions and social activities. Informal settings are particularly helpful for participants to practise their language skills in if they don't feel confident to speak in formal settings.

Help visitors prepare for mobility

Prepare an information pack containing for example:


- the activity programme;
- travel advice and directions;
- dress code;
- access arrangements for people with disabilities;
- school etiquette (e.g. how to address pupils/teachers);
- What to bring for special events or field trips (e.g. if visiting a farm, participants may need walking boots);
- information about the weather and how to prepare for it (e.g. jumpers essential!).

Planned reflection by participants during Erasmus+ activities

Planned reflection can really help participants and organisers monitor and evaluate progress, and adapt activities to changing needs or unforeseen circumstances. A simple structure for planned reflection helps to support dialogue, recognise learning identify gaps in learning. For example:

- What did I learn in relation to the planned learning outcomes?
- Which learning outcomes still need to be addressed?
- Did I learn anything unanticipated?
- What was particularly challenging?
- How can I apply what I have learned in my school, community or elsewhere?
- Who else might benefit from what I've learned and how can I share it with them?

These questions can be used for individual, group or peer learning, or mentoring conversations. Amendments to planned activities may be necessary to provide for any identified gaps in the process of achieving the planned learning outcomes. In some cases, reflection may also lead to slight changes in the initial learning outcomes once participants have a better understanding of the selected project topic.

 Using questionnaires at several points during the project helped us to evaluate the work done and propose activities for monitoring the process.'

Annemie Lauryssens, School International Relations Coordinator, Belgium

Whether you and your staff are involved in a Staff Mobility (Key Action 1) project or a Strategic Partnership (Key Action 2), time should be set aside at regular intervals to review what has been learned. Some time should be allocated to allow participants to formulate personal action plans, as well as contribute to project planning if future meetings or activities have been scheduled. While this may seem like a lot of work, it will actually save time since the experiences documented as part of planned reflection will be useful when completing your project evaluation.

2.2.4 Monitoring and evaluation during implementation

The methods, roles and responsibilities for fulfilling this requirement need to be agreed upon before your project. Therefore, monitoring and evaluation during implementation is normally relatively straightforward.

Some projects are required to report on monitoring and evaluation halfway through implementation (with the interim report), while shorter projects are only required to submit a final report.



Practical example

The evaluation of a European Partnership

A UK school led a European partnership with a school in Poland, in order to create a Model United Nations (MUN) exchange. The main activities were one-day United Nations style meetings for 200 pupils and staff from the partner schools. There were two such activities per year (over two years). Each year one meeting was held in the UK and one in Poland. Mobilities were funded within the partnership grant to enable pupils and staff to attend the meeting at the host school. Mobilities were also arranged to allow Polish and UK teaching staff to attend training on organising and running MUN activities and on teaching citizenship skills.

The partnership had four objectives:

Objective 1: To build the capacity of each partner to create Model United Nations (MUN) programmes.

Objective 2: To enable partners to better understand the causes and solutions of intercultural conflicts.

Objective 3: To equip teachers to support pupils with citizenship skills.

Objective 4: To enable pupils to understand the connections between local and global development issues and problem solving.

Each objective was assessed on four or five indicators. These were concrete outcomes linked to the criteria. In the case of Objective 1, the indicators selected included tangible quality measures such as the extent to which staff demonstrated knowledge of the aims of the MUN programme; the extent to which staff felt confident enough to recreate MUN events in the future; and the number of participants who completed capacity building training sessions.

The evaluation was led by an educational researcher, specialised in MUN programmes who conducted structured observations, participant interviews, and participant case studies. Questionnaires were used to measure opinions regarding the project's success in realising the evaluation goals.

The outcomes were shared at project meetings after each activity, which provided an opportunity to incorporate any lessons learned into subsequent activities. The outcomes were also published as a report at the end of the project and were included in the partnership's final report.

Whatever the requirement, it is important to keep in mind the following to ensure that your monitoring and evaluation is completed to a high standard and on schedule:

- **Make sure you receive the necessary contributions from the partners on time**

Partners should be made aware of the importance, requirements and deadlines for reporting. It is a good idea for your project coordinator to send reminders well in advance of these deadlines.

- **Ensure the monitoring and evaluation data is comprehensive**

If some activities have not been completed or have only been partially completed, it is essential to find out why this was the case and what, if any, alterations/alternative activities were undertaken to compensate for this. This information will be important when reporting to the National Agency.

- **Be proactive if the project is not going to plan**

If there are serious issues, which suggest it is likely or possible that some of the requirements of the grant agreement cannot be met, it is important to be pro-active and communicate this to your National Agency at an early stage. They will do their best to assist you and agree a solution. In some cases they may be able to amend the contract, for example.

- **Don't be afraid to make adjustments**

If your project includes multiple activities, take the opportunity to use monitoring and evaluation data from your activities to make improvements to subsequent activities. For example, if one group of mobility participants found that not enough time was allocated to asking questions during a learning event, it should be straightforward to adjust the programme to ensure subsequent participants do not make the same complaint. Online partner meetings are a good opportunity to raise such suggestions and agree modifications.

You may also want to make changes if it seems likely you will meet your objectives ahead of time. Monitoring and evaluating your progress provides a chance to decide how you could go beyond the original plan within the scope of your grant.

- **Timing is everything**

Remember that even the most advanced evaluation methods in the world will count for little if the evaluation is administered at the wrong time. For example, if participants are asked about some areas of your project or their own learning too soon, they may be unable to provide an answer. Alternatively, if opinions are only solicited at the end, participants may be annoyed that their ideas and suggestions will not benefit them.

Take care to ensure that evaluation activities are implemented at a time when meaningful feedback can be obtained and bear in mind that evaluation can help you make improvements during as well as after your project or activity.



Suggestion

Some widely used evaluation techniques for Erasmus+ activities:

Questionnaires

Questionnaires can be conducted online/by email or in person at an event or activity to obtain information quickly from a wide variety of people. This is an inexpensive method and the data can be easily analysed. Furthermore, questionnaires can be useful if you want to obtain anonymous feedback.

Structured interviews

To obtain a deeper insight into participants' experiences of Erasmus+ activities you could conduct some structured interviews, either in person or by phone/internet call. Interviewees must be asked the same questions. This approach may be useful if you want to compare more qualitative aspects of your participants' experiences. For example, you may want to see how the visiting participants' experiences compare with that of the host participants.

Semi-structured interviews

In semi-structured interviews, some questions are pre-determined and others are spontaneous, and based on the issues arising from the discussion. Questions are mainly open, allowing participants to express their opinions. Semi-structured interviews are used to understand participants' personal experiences and impressions. This method is normally conducted by phone or in person.

Evaluation stories

Evaluation stories are a longer-term evaluation method. This involves documenting instances in which an Erasmus+ activity has made a tangible difference. Examples include changes to the curriculum or the implementation of a school policy.

Example question before your project: *What is the situation at the moment? How could the activity/project improve it?*

Example question after your project: *What was the situation like before the activity/project? How has it changed now?*

Photographic or video legacies

A photographic or audiovisual record can contribute to conveying the visual quality of the activity, and the mood or excitement of participants. This is also useful to illustrate your evaluation and communication materials (articles, blog posts, online photo albums, etc.).

2.2.5 Share the outcomes of your project

In the context of European projects, awareness-raising is normally referred to as 'dissemination'. Your dissemination plans will have been developed before the project; however, new ideas will inevitably arise during implementation.

In fact, many participants like to make 'dissemination opportunities' a regular topic in discussions and meetings between partners.

Getting the word out was essential. We spread the word in lessons, at meetings with the teachers and parents, on the school's website...The same was done on Facebook. Articles were published in the local newspaper, Sõnumitooja... the information boards at school informed the student body about the tasks, achievements, upcoming activities and competitions.'

Krista Kuusk, Project Coordinator, Estonia



Practical example

A project coordinator shares how he developed and implemented a dissemination strategy

Jean-Pierre Marcadier, a modern languages teacher at a French school, was responsible for coordinating a partnership across eight countries. He developed a valorisation plan to share the outcomes of his project inside and outside his school.

We had a robust strategy to disseminate the project through local associations, museums, and local authorities... In my school's case, a prominent museum in our city is working alongside us for European exhibitions... Such partnerships with businesses have been vital, given our vocational curriculum.

We also actively targeted various dissemination channels including specialist publications, social networks and the press. Local and regional dissemination is typically facilitated by the press, which is why we have built close relationships with regional newspapers. One focus of our project was defined through writing activities in a high school newspaper, "The Wall." In addition, we created a special partnership between our project and a related professional journal where we contributed a monthly column in connection with our educational and European activities.

Our website was used to reach all project members and partners, including parents, businesses, and alumni... Social networks were useful for maintaining relations with parents and alumni.

The strong emphasis on dissemination gave our achievements widespread visibility. Implications in terms of image of the institution, the recruitment of future students, and relationships with institutions will be important in the future.'

The following are some popular ways to disseminate Erasmus+ projects:

Radio, TV and newspapers

Local and national media outlets often pick up press releases by EU funded projects, particularly if you can demonstrate the inspiring personal achievements of pupils or teachers. Try to find the ‘human interest’ of your project and be sure to include high-quality photos if you want to secure media coverage. You will find this process becomes easier if you can develop an ongoing relationship with reporters by providing them with a steady stream of high-quality stories.

School events

Give your European projects a platform at events organised or attended by your school, whether it is a teacher conference, school assembly, parents evening or open day. A simple display area or presentation slot for pupils and staff involved in your project is all it takes.

eTwinning

TwinSpace allows you to create websites, blogs, photo galleries, etc. which can be published. Don't forget to update your project summary, which is visible to anyone browsing or searching for projects on the eTwinning portal.

Websites and social media

Many schools dedicate a section of their website to Erasmus+ projects and post regular updates on social media to publicise outcomes. A multi-author blog is a particularly effective way to diarise participants' experiences while abroad.

Parents' networks

You may be surprised to learn how many parents belong to an organisation that can help disseminate the outcomes of your project. Be sure to encourage parents to spread the word at their workplace and through their personal networks.

Stakeholder networks

Local bodies such as libraries, museums, youth organisations and universities may be able to help you access their own dissemination channels.

Your National Agency and eTwinning National Support Service

Find out if the Erasmus+ National Agency in your country or the National Support Service for eTwinning can publicise the outcomes of your project. They may be able to publish an article about you in their forthcoming news bulletin or showcase your project on their website.

Participation enhances the reputation of the school as you have many opportunities to inform the public about ongoing work and the project meetings. In our case, the local media published many articles and video clips, which lead to recognition and awareness by parents and the city council.'

Gisela Gutjahr, Teacher, Austria

Obtaining high-quality photos and videos for dissemination

It is important to ask participants involved in Erasmus+ activities to record their experiences to ensure you have high-quality photos and videos to showcase what your school has achieved. Projects are doing this by:

- lending participants cameras so they can document their experiences as a photo or video diary. If loaning equipment is not feasible, you may find that participants are happy to use their own or to take some shots using their mobile phones;
- asking participants to take plenty of 'work-related' pictures and videos to ensure you have plenty of evidence of project activities;
- asking participants to think carefully about what they film and for how long. Hours of film can take a very long time to edit;
- making sure participants are aware of the national and international laws governing copyright, privacy and consent. Signed consent should be obtained from each individual photographed. Do ensure you have parents' consent before photographing or filming children too. This can be done with a form for parents to sign at the start of your project.

'Exploitation' means using the European project to benefit your school and your community, or to improve education or training at local level or even beyond. The underlying aim of exploitation measures is to ensure that your school's new knowledge, skills and working methods continue to be adopted and shared long after your project has ended.

For example:

- participants could give feedback to school colleagues on the approaches used by others, in order to instigate new ways of working;
- your school could introduce the methods learned during the activity into teaching or management practice;
- your school could promote the foreign language learning in school and among colleagues, students, family and friends;
- your school could grant further students and colleagues the opportunity to participate in similar activities or future projects;
- your project or activity could be used as a starting point for involvement in other European projects.

2.2.6 Concluding steps: how to end your project or activity on a high!

As activities are drawing to a close it is important to signal that the European project does not end at this point. This is the perfect time to encourage participants to share, in writing, how they intend to apply their new learning within school or as part of their professional or academic development.

Furthermore, it is worthwhile keeping lines of communication open with your partners by arranging follow-up meetings or phone conversations, in order to plan a follow-up Erasmus+ project. eTwinning is a natural space to maintain dialogue too.

Sustaining the learning outcomes is a key part of any European project and will be dealt with in the 'After' stage of this Guide.

📖 Erasmus+ makes our school work richer and [more] colourful, and we have changed into a European school forever.'

Ricarda Geidelt, Teacher, Germany

2.3 After: building on achievements

We will now describe how you can enhance your project's impact after all activities have been completed, in order to bring about lasting benefits to your school and your partners.

2.3.1 Recognising achievements

This is the time to ensure that school staff and pupils get the recognition they deserve for their achievements during your project. Usually, formal recognition of what participants have achieved will have already taken place by now.

Recognition may be given by issuing a Europass mobility certificate at the end of the experience. In every country (EU and European Economic Area), a National Europass Centre coordinates all activities related to the Europass documents. It is the first point of contact for any person or organisation interested in using or learning more about Europass (for more information, visit the Europass website: <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu>).

Recognition may also be given by awarding certificates of achievement. These can be produced by the organising school. Certificates normally include the participant's name, the dates of the activity, your project title, organisational logos, the Erasmus+ logo and a list of learning outcomes achieved.

You could enhance recognition by linking it to dissemination activities. For example, you could ask a high profile community figure, such as the town mayor, to present certificates at a celebratory event attended by journalists.

Alternatively, a specific national method of recognising achievements may have been agreed. For example, if your school was involved in a Staff Mobility (Key Action 1) project, the sending and receiving organisations should have agreed how the mobility would be recognised or accredited as some countries have national or regional procedures to award credits for professional development activities. If so, your school would need to seek guidance from the relevant national or regional authority.



In focus

Validation and accreditation essentials

To recognise the value of mobility, it is important to take steps to ensure the validation and recognition of learning, i.e. to demonstrate any new knowledge, skills or qualifications gained by participants as a result of their time abroad.

If participants took part in a structured course, ask the course provider to issue a Certificate of Attendance containing all the necessary information about the content and duration of the activity.

If participants undertook a learning activity or teaching assignment in a host organisation, it is good practice to provide the host with a validation record to sign, containing:

- the Erasmus+ logo, the participating organisations' logos or your project logo (if applicable);
- the title of your project;
- the name of the participant;
- the location of the training or activity;
- the dates of the training or activities;
- the number of hours involved;
- the signatures of the organiser or the training leader.

A transcript of outcomes should also be attached to show what participants have learned.

We encourage the use of Europass to validate participants' experiences. For more information, visit: <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu>

2.3.2 The final evaluation

After your project, you are in a position to review the successes and challenges your school has experienced and identify lessons for future Erasmus+ activities.

When you conduct the final evaluation, you will want to understand the impact of the European project on your school and all those involved against your original objectives. So if, for example, you aimed to increase the number of pupils and school staff involved in international cooperation, you would want to know the number of pupils and staff involved in cooperation activities before your project started and compare it with the number involved after it ended.

The process should be straightforward, provided the evaluation data was carefully planned and collected over the course of your project. It is important to emphasise that the success of the final evaluation is mainly determined before and during your project, when the evaluation is designed and implemented.

The scope of the final evaluation will depend on the nature and size of your project. For example, a small project involving only two schools might conduct a simple self-evaluation.

Meanwhile a large partnership involving schools, libraries, museums, science centres and universities may wish to appoint an external organisation (from a university or consultancy, for example) to evaluate the diverse spectrum of outcomes associated with more complex projects.

Remember, if you can include Erasmus+ monitoring and evaluation within your school's existing performance management practices, it will be much easier to measure the programme's contribution to the whole school's objectives.



In focus

What to evaluate after your project is completed?

A healthy evaluation should identify the outcomes of your project in the following key areas:

Performance against objectives

- Which objectives were achieved?
- Which objectives were not achieved or partially achieved, and why?

It is important to cover not only organisational objectives, but also any objectives linked to the Erasmus+ priorities specified in your application.

The impact of your project

What did people/organisations involved learn from your project? Try to cover all direct and indirect beneficiaries and organisations:

- Pupils;
- School staff;
- Your school;
- Stakeholders;
- Partner organisations.

Can you identify change (e.g. in the community, for individuals, in behaviour, in attitudes, opinions, etc.) as a result of your project? If so, what are the changes?

Successes, barriers and possible improvement

- What worked well during your project?
- What did not work so well?
- What were the main drivers for success?
- What were the main barriers to success?
- What were the key learning points?
- What could be improved in future Erasmus+ projects?

Long-term impact

- Have any specific changes been made in your school as a result of your project (new teaching or management practices, for example)?
- What have you done to ensure long-term impact (publishing new curricula online, running internal training sessions for non-participating staff, publicising and distributing research findings, etc.)?
- What, if any, follow-up activities are planned (perhaps European opportunities will be extended to more pupils, or perhaps you intend to follow up with a larger scale project)?

Try to incorporate the outcomes of your evaluation into your dissemination activities by considering opportunities for sharing your evaluation results as widely as possible.

‘At the end of the project outcomes were reported to colleagues and staff at school: having in place a permanent self-evaluation questionnaire was helpful in this process.’

Annemie Lauryssens, School International Relations Coordinator, Belgium

2.3.3 Reporting

All funded projects need to report on their activities. The plans for project reporting should have been discussed and agreed before your project and refined during its implementation.

Interim or monitoring reports should have been built into your project timeline at key points e.g. after attendance at a specific course, teaching assignment or job shadowing (if engaging in a Key Action 1 project) or after activities, events or meetings (if engaging in a Key Action 2 project). Content from the interim reports will be incorporated into the final report.

The main coordinator is responsible for submitting the final report. However, asking project participants to contribute to the reporting process develops a sense of joint ownership of this important requirement. All contributors should have been identified at the start of the project.

There are some specific reporting requirements for all Staff Mobility (Key Action 1) participants as well as for those taking part in long-term mobility activities in Strategic Partnerships (Key Action 2). They are required to complete and submit a participant report at the end of the period abroad, which will contribute to your project's final report.

It is important to familiarise yourselves with the requirements of the Grant Agreement that was signed at the start of your project. Also, remember that if the final report shows that your project has been poorly implemented, or that agreed activities have not been carried out, your school may have to partially reimburse the EU grant.



Suggestion

Report writing essentials

Be comprehensive

If you have not managed to deliver all of the activities or products you specified in your application, or if certain activities or products have only been partially completed or developed, it is important to make this clear. The best strategy, in this case, is to justify why this was and, where possible, to describe how you compensated for the shortfall in other ways.

Be structured, clear, and understandable

Evaluators are only human and may misinterpret aspects of your report or undervalue your achievements if information is not clearly presented and well structured. Careful preparation and editing will save you from having to provide clarifications and help those assessing your application get a correct picture of your project.

Be balanced

Try not to shy away from presenting aspects of your project that did not go according to plan. The assessors will not look favourably on a final report that reads like a marketing brochure, containing nothing but success stories. They will want to see how you responded to and learned from the inevitable challenges that arise when delivering international projects.

Refer back to your funding application

Your project is assessed based on what was promised in your application for funding. Therefore your report should explicitly address what was promised in your application and explain and justify any deviations.

Demonstrate the benefits of European collaboration

The assessors will want to see evidence that all the partners contributed to your project proportionately. They will also be assessing whether your project effectively exploited the benefits of working internationally. Try to demonstrate the extent to which your project achieved more than would have been possible had you been collaborating only with organisations in your country.

Provide documentary evidence

You will not have to submit detailed financial reporting. However, you must prove that the activities have taken place. If your expenditure is more than the grant, your organisation will be responsible for the additional amount. Bear in mind that the unit costs are designed to cover a large part, but not the entire cost, of your project.

2.3.4 Dissemination and exploitation activities after your project is completed

Dissemination is something that takes place throughout your project and not only at the end. However, at the end of the project, dissemination is especially important since you will have complete information about the outcomes of your project, including:

- the total number of pupils and staff who benefitted;
- participants' feedback;
- links established with partner and stakeholder organisations;
- new products and curricula developed;
- recommendations for practitioners.

These tangible results form the basis for the most compelling communication and dissemination materials, particularly if you have collected testimonials, photos, videos and case studies to help you tell your story.

At this stage, you should re-visit the dissemination plan you designed before your project and implement the activities you specified. There may be other ad hoc publicity opportunities (an unforeseen exhibition or conference, for example), so do pursue these too.



In focus

Examples of dissemination activities after your project is complete

- A school exhibition, hosted by the participants to showcase their work to teachers, pupils, parents, journalists and staff from local schools.
- A promotional video or photo slideshow to show the unique benefits of working at your school, arising from your involvement in Erasmus+.
- An invitation to a local education correspondent to run a feature on your school's European projects – complete with participant interviews and photos.
- Uploading your project's products (curricula, research reports, etc.) to the Erasmus+ dissemination platform.

Bear in mind that other schools and stakeholders are as interested in the process that led to the learning outcomes as in the results themselves. For example, they not only want to learn about what was achieved, but would also like to know about the key things that enabled your school to achieve what you did.

The Erasmus+ Programme Guide also refers to exploitation. This means ensuring that the positive outcomes of your project are extended to as many potential beneficiaries as possible, long into the future. Your reports, presentations and other dissemination activities may need to be tailored for different audiences so that learning can be transferred to new areas within and beyond your school to influence future projects, practice or policy.

For example, you may disseminate different learning messages to teachers, pupils, parents, other school leaders, policymakers, community members, local businesses, museums, libraries and universities.

In all dissemination activities you have an obligation to acknowledge the support received from the EU by including the official Erasmus+ logo and graphic identity. More information about this can be found here:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/services/visual_identity/pdf/use-emblem_en.pdf

A dissemination platform for Erasmus+ projects

A new dissemination platform has been established for Erasmus+:

<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/>

It is designed to be used:

- as an information tool for the public to provide relevant and interesting content;
- as a database of all funded projects (project summaries, work in progress, links);
- as a repository of all project products, for the benefit of schools and other organisations across Europe;
- as a space to showcase exemplary practice by Erasmus+ projects (selected every year at national and European level).

2.3.5 Preparing for future Erasmus+ projects

Now that you have completed your project, re-visit your school's development plan or your European Development Plan and think through how you can ensure that recommendations and lessons learned are implemented, sustained and shared as widely as possible.

One effective way to do this is to regularly monitor and evaluate the extent to which outcomes and lessons from your project are sustained and acted upon, as part of your school's strategic planning activities.

Some schools even appoint a team member who is responsible for ensuring that new ideas and working methods are implemented, and to maintain relations with European partners.

An advantage of using eTwinning to communicate with partners during your project is that you can retain your online space for ongoing dialogue and collaboration, well beyond the life of the funded project.

Now is a good time to reflect on how you might expand your ambitions concerning support from Erasmus+. You may choose to develop a new funded project in relation to another area of school development or expand your networks within the same area of development through eTwinning.

Since all partners made good friends during the project years, the connections are well maintained. Project leaders keep in contact and send their greetings frequently. Plans to organise school visits during the spring break are already being written.'

Krista Kuusk, Project Coordinator, Estonia



In focus

Some possible directions for new projects

Think about how you could develop follow-up Erasmus+ projects or activities to:

- develop new curricula or revise existing teaching materials;
- implement changes to organisational practices;
- extend participation in Erasmus+ to more staff and more departments or subjects;
- experiment with different kinds of activities (e.g. trying Strategic Partnerships or staff mobility after experiencing eTwinning);
- work with different countries/kinds of partner (e.g. schools, businesses, museums, libraries).

Glossary

- Accreditation** Formal recognition of participants' achievements and learning outcomes – usually in the form of a certificate or transcript of activities undertaken.
- Curriculum** The totality of all that is planned and experienced by the pupils – this may include opportunities for learning in and outside the classroom through formal and informal learning.
- Dissemination** Publicising and sharing your project successes and outcomes as widely as possible.
- Europass** A portfolio of five different documents aiming to contain descriptions of the holder's entire learning achievements, official qualifications, work experience, skills and competences acquired over time. These documents are: the Europass CV, the Diploma Supplement, the Certificate Supplement, the Europass Mobility and the Language Passport. Europass also includes the European Skills Passport, a user-friendly electronic folder that helps the holder to build up a personal, modular inventory of his or her skills and qualifications. The aim of Europass is to make mobility easier and improve job and lifelong learning prospects in Europe.
- European Development Plan** A document outlining the organisation's needs in terms of quality development and internationalisation, and how the planned European activities will meet those needs. The European Development Plan is part of the application form for schools applying for Staff Mobility (Key Action 1).
- Evaluation** The objective assessment of an on-going or completed project or activity. The aim of evaluation is to determine the extent to which agreed objectives were achieved and to identify the outcomes of the activity or project.
- Exploitation** To use involvement in a European project to the maximum benefit of the school, the pupils, teachers and wider community.
- Formal learning** Learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (e.g. in an education or training institution) and is explicitly designated as learning in terms of objectives.

- Informal learning** Learning that is not formally organised or structured in terms of objectives.
- Learning outcomes** The knowledge, skills or competences a person acquires or is able to demonstrate after completing a learning process or activity.
- Monitoring** A continual measure designed to provide the management and main stakeholders with early indications of progress towards agreed objectives. Monitoring helps projects track achievements by regularly collecting information to assist decision-making, ensure accountability, and provide the basis for evaluation.
- Partnership** There may be differing understandings about what partnership means. It is important to clarify the meaning of partnership at the planning stage of a European project. One definition of partnership which may be useful as a starting point for discussion is a relationship between individuals or groups that is characterised by mutual cooperation, collaboration and responsibility for the achievement of specific goals.
- School** An institution providing general, vocational or technical education on any level, from pre-school to upper secondary education.
- School leader** The person responsible for leading teaching, learning and the overall management of your school. In some countries this person may have the title of Head Teacher or School Principal. The implied duties may not be identical, for example, in some countries the Head Teacher/Principal may have responsibility for administrative leadership and management, but not leadership of learning and teaching or vice versa.
- Stakeholder** A person, group or organisation interested in your school, for example, parents, a local authority or school governors.
- Validation** The confirmation by a competent body that learning outcomes (knowledge, skills or competences) acquired by an individual in a formal, non-formal or informal setting have been assessed against predefined criteria and are compliant with the requirements of a validation standard. Validation typically leads to certification.

Information and resources

Official Erasmus+ websites and contact points

Erasmus+ National Agencies:

Your National Agency is your first point of contact if you are interested in participating in a funded Erasmus+ opportunity.

<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/tools/national-agencies>

eTwinning

Join the eTwinning platform to connect with other schools, start eTwinning activities and projects, or find partners for other Erasmus+ activities.

www.etwinning.net

eTwinning National Support Services (NSS)

A NSS is available in each participating country to help schools with the eTwinning platform and its features.

www.etwinning.net/en/pub/get_support/contact.htm

Erasmus+ website

The European Commission's official Erasmus+ website contains an overview of all Erasmus+ opportunities, plus news and updates about the programme.

ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus

Resources

Erasmus+ Programme Guide

The Erasmus+ Programme Guide is essential reading for all applicants.

ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/discover/guide

Erasmus+ dissemination platform

Information about all Erasmus+ projects is published on the Erasmus+ dissemination platform. Use it to find partners, get ideas and promote your Erasmus+ projects.

<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects>

European Shared Treasure (EST)

A database of projects funded under the Lifelong Learning Programme (2007-2013), the predecessor to Erasmus+. EST is useful for finding inspiration for projects and good practice, and for identifying schools that can offer advice or perhaps become future partners.

www.europeansharedtreasure.eu

Europass

Free Europass tools are essential for recognising and validating participants' achievements during Erasmus+ projects.

europass.cedefop.europa.eu

Eurypedia

A useful platform that gives a clear overview of different education systems in Europe.

<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurypedia>

European Commission

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