

**IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS**

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR UKRAINE**

**METHODOLOGICAL MANUAL**

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## Part 1: Introduction

**The aim** of the RESOURCE project, the full title of which is RESOURCE – Raising awareness of the EU through familiarisation with its financial instruments, is to support international cooperation of the Visegrad countries (V4) and Ukraine. The project was supported by the International Visegrad Fund in the framework of V4EaP Extended Standard Grant.

The project brought together organisations with wide experience in the main project topic – implementation of projects in the framework of cross-border, international and transnational cooperation.

The following partners joined efforts in the project partnership:

- Institute for Regional Development (CZ) – project leader
- ENVICORP Slovakia (SK) – project partner
- Kistarcsa municipality (HU) – project partner
- Institute for United Europe (PL) – project partner
- Transcarpathian Agency for Investment, Innovation and Development (UA) – project partner

The main goal of the project was to increase awareness of the European Union (EU) through presentation of financial tools, helping institutions and individuals to learn how to use these tools and subsequently how to exploit their benefits. Learning was based on the exchange of experience and examples of good practice.

Educational and information activities focused on obtaining and increasing management and organisational skills in drafting project applications and implementing cross-border

der, international and transnational projects including corresponding networking.

Intentions were twofold: firstly, to transfer relevant knowledge in the field of drafting, submitting and implementation of projects supported from the EU budget, and secondly, to transform relevant information into a methodical manual for implementation of international project dealing with opportunities supporting the engagement of Ukraine. An added value should be networking of project partners' needs resulting in development of common projects.

**International cooperation** brings mutual benefits. Long experience in international cooperation makes it easier to come up with new ideas for projects. Also, cooperating with partner countries is a fairly new experience. It is very useful to meet in person – e-mail messages are easily misunderstood – and to learn what the situation is like in different countries, in order to come to an agreement and to identify shared aims and objectives.

The value of international cooperation is also reflected in the way an organisation and its employees are able to grow as a result of their contact with organisations abroad. Staff skills grow and develop through work on international projects. There is a constant flow of new knowledge and know-how from other countries and the benefits can be reaped.

It should also be kept in mind that different approaches may exist in other countries, so the time it takes to arrive at a decision on continuing participation in a project may differ from case to case. In addition, it is worth noting that language difficulties could mean spending a lot of time developing a good level of communication.

**Why to participate in an international project?** Strengthening ties between European countries brings mutual benefits for institutions and organisations in all participating countries. To enhance cooperation, partnerships between organisations are widely encouraged by the European Commission. In some programmes, project partnerships are mandatory, in others this is voluntary.

The partnerships provide an opportunity for international cooperation that should be of benefit to both sides. The projects should achieve the dual goal of contributing to the objectives of the programme as well as strengthening the relations between the donor and the beneficiary country.

Any international project has to fit under a given programme and contribute to the stated objectives of that programme. Before starting the search for a partner, the following questions should be considered:

- What programme area is of interest to your organization?
- What country would your organization like to cooperate with?

All EU supported projects need to contribute to achieving a set of clearly defined development results. To see if a project idea may be funded, it is necessary to check the defined outcomes of the programme in question and of the relevant open call for project proposals. This information can be found on the programme area websites, which are usually accessible from the programme overview.

The next step is to look at the content of the relevant programme in order to find out:

- Is the thematic focus of the programme relevant for the desired area of cooperation?
- Will your organization be able to contribute to the defined outputs of the programme?
- Will there be a call (or several calls) for project proposals under the programme?
- Will your organization have enough time to prepare a project before the call is launched?
- Are partnership projects particularly relevant under the programme?

Each programme has a designated website with information on the content of the programme, eligible applicants and calls for project proposals.

There are several **target groups** that can benefit from this methodology. The foremost among them is the Ukrainian partner who will obtain knowledge in the EU project development and implementation. The second group are final conference participants in Ukraine. The conference on the main topic of development and implementation of projects (co)financed from the EU's financial mechanism and networking ability was held in Ukraine and open to the wide public. The third group are Eastern Partnership state officials to whom the methodology will be distributed. The last target group to which the methodology is addressed are an open number of interested individuals addressed via various dissemination channels. Information about the methodology will be available through the project webpage, social networks, YouTube, newsletters, leaflets, etc.

## Part 2: EU Funds for Ukraine

This part of the text consists of carefully elaborated European Union funding opportunities for Ukraine. The text represents a comprehensive selection of EU joint programmes where Ukraine can participate. Each joint programme is shortly presented, including its objectives, budget and its websites with information on calls for proposals published in the framework of the programme.

### EU – Ukraine: Increased support and cooperation

On 5 March 2014, the European Commission proposed a series of economic and financial support measures as a part of international efforts in support of Ukraine's economic and political reforms. €11 billion could be available over the next years from the EU budget and EU-based international financial institutions. This is to stabilise the economic and financial situation, assist with the transition and encourage political and economic reform.

The European Commission proposed further macro-financial assistance (MFA) to Ukraine of up to €1.8 billion in medium-term loans on 8 January 2015. This assistance is subject to adoption by the European Parliament and the Council, to be implemented in the course of 2015 and early 2016. The Commission has already disbursed €1.36 billion in support of Ukraine under two previous MFA programmes. The disbursement of the final tranche of €250 million under these programmes was made on 21 April 2015 on the basis of successful implementation by Ukraine of agreed policy measures and a continued satisfactory track record with the IMF programme.

To help the most vulnerable of those affected by the conflict, the EU and its Member States have contributed over €139.5 million in humanitarian and early recovery aid since the beginning of the crisis, including €47.85 million provided by the Commission. In 2014, the European Commission has allocated €17 million in development aid for urgent preparations for the winter and early recovery. A further €4.5 million has been provided from the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace to meet the recovery and integration needs of internally displaced persons and host communities and to promote confidence-building.

The implementation of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, including the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, will bring opportunities for sustainable economic development and prosperity to all regions of Ukraine, as well as to its neighbours.

The EU cooperates with Ukraine in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy and its eastern regional dimension, the Eastern Partnership. The key goal is to bring Ukraine closer to the EU. The EU is committed to supporting Ukraine in its path towards a modern European democracy. The Association Agreement does not constitute the final goal in EU-Ukraine cooperation.

**The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)** governs the EU's relations with 16 of its eastern and southern neighbours. To the South: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia and to the East: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Russia takes part in cross-border cooperation activities under the ENP and is not a part of the ENP as such.

The ENP was launched in 2004 and revised in 2011 following the 'Arab Spring' uprisings. The objective of the EU's revised ENP is to support partners who undertake reform towards democracy, rule of law and human rights, to contribute to their inclusive economic development and to promote a partnership with societies alongside the EU's relations with governments. The renewed ENP is strengthening cooperation in the political and security spheres, supporting economic and social development, creating growth and jobs, boosting trade and enhancing cooperation in other sectors.

Under the new ENP, the incentive-based approach ('more for more') applies. In budgetary terms this means that the more a country progresses in its democratic reforms and institutional building, the more additional support it can expect. The partner countries are supported on their path towards democratic transition, contribution to address their needs in view of economic recovery and efforts undertaken to reduce inequality.

The vast majority of European funding is used for bilateral cooperation, tailor-made to each Neighbourhood partner country. A key element in this context is the bilateral ENP Action Plans (APs) which are mutually agreed between the EU and each partner country. The AP sets out an agenda of political and economic reforms with short and medium-term priorities and serves as the political framework guiding the priorities for cooperation. Priorities of bilateral cooperation include good governance (incl. justice and security), sustainable economic development (incl. trade, transport, energy and environment) and social and human development (incl. education, health, people-to-people contacts and civil society).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Regional Cooperation in the European Neighbourhood. European Commission. Directorate General Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid, published by the EU Neighbourhood Info Centre, 2014

**The Eastern Partnership** is a joint policy initiative launched at the Prague Summit in May 2009. It aims to deepen and strengthen relations between the European Union and its six Eastern neighbours: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The Eastern Partnership represents the eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). It is based on shared values of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law.

The Eastern Partnership has two tracks: (1) bilateral and (2) multilateral.

(1) The bilateral dimension supports political and socio-economic reforms in partner countries to:

- Foster political association and further economic integration with the EU;
- Enhance sector cooperation;
- Support mobility of citizens and visa-free travel as a long-term goal.

Bilateral cooperation programmes contribute to these objectives with focused assistance in the priority areas identified in each country's multi-annual programming document, and complementary support for the implementation of agreements with the EU that builds on the experience of the Comprehensive Institution Building Programme.

Eastern neighbours can also benefit from additional assistance as a reward for progress in building deep and sustainable democracy (umbrella programme).

(2) The multilateral dimension complements bilateral relations with:

- Thematic platforms to exchange best practices on issues of mutual interest: good governance, economic integration and growth, energy security and transport, contacts between people;
- Flagship initiatives, which are regional cooperation programmes in the fields of: energy, environment, response to disasters, border management, support to small businesses.

Regional cooperation programmes support the multilateral dimension of the Eastern Partnership. They also address common challenges and trans-boundary issues (such as energy, transport or environment). The priority areas for multi-country cooperation are identified in the Regional East programming document.

Engagement with civil society is a key element of the Eastern Partnership. It is underpinned by initiatives like the Civil Society Forum, the Neighbourhood Civil Society Facility, and dedicated funding at regional and country level.<sup>2</sup>

## 1. EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD INSTRUMENT (ENI)

The European Neighbourhood Instrument is the EU financial instrument dedicated to the Neighbourhood for the period 2014–2020. It replaces the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) of 2007–2013. In the period of 2014–2020, the ENI is the key EU financial instrument for cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries.

EU assistance to Ukraine takes mainly the form of country Action Programmes funded every year under the ENI. Ukraine

<sup>2</sup> Eastern Partnership – supporting reforms, promoting change. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2013

benefits also from regional and multi-country Action Programmes funded under the ENI.

In the current exceptional circumstances, it remains difficult to identify multi-annual priorities for the EU's bilateral assistance. This is why, for the moment there is no Single Support Framework for Ukraine.

Under the ENI, planned bilateral assistance for Ukraine may total up to €1 billion in the period 2014–2020. This figure is indicative: as for all Neighbour countries, final allocations will depend on the country's needs and commitment to reforms.

In addition, Ukraine can benefit from additional financial assistance granted through the multi-country 'umbrella programme': the incentive-based mechanism that rewards progress in building deep and sustainable democracy with supplementary financial allocations ('more for more').

In 2014, the EU mobilised €365 million for supporting Ukraine's transition. This Special Measure package includes a large State Building Contract (€355 million, out of which €40 million is to be granted through the multi-country 'umbrella programme') and a dedicated funding for civil society (€10 million).<sup>3</sup>

Ongoing programmes (still under the ENPI) concentrate on support for the Association Agreement and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (AA and DCFTA) and on reforms in energy, environment, transport, regional and rural development and migration. Support for public institutions and promotion of EU best practices are important elements

<sup>3</sup> REGULATION (EU) No 232/2014 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 11 March 2014 establishing a European Neighbourhood Instrument

of ongoing and future cooperation across all sectors. Civil society initiatives are supported with the Neighbourhood Civil Society Facility. In 2007–2013, the EU committed €1 billion for bilateral assistance to Ukraine under the ENPI.

Calls for proposals are published at: [http://www.welcomeu-rope.com/eu-fonds/eni-european-neighbourhood-instrument-2014-2020-840+740.html#tab=onglet\\_appel](http://www.welcomeu-rope.com/eu-fonds/eni-european-neighbourhood-instrument-2014-2020-840+740.html#tab=onglet_appel)

## 2. CROSS-BOARDER COOPERATION (CBC)

From 2014, CBC is included within the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), covering the period 2014–2020.

CBC is a key element of the EU policy towards its neighbours. It supports sustainable development along the EU's external borders, helps reducing differences in living standards and addressing common challenges across these borders. It was first recognised as such in the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) Regulation for the period 2007–2013. This was confirmed for the period 2014–2020 in the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) Regulation adopted in March 2014. Under the ENI, support for CBC on the EU's external border will continue to draw on funds from both the external and internal headings of the EU budget, for the pursuit of the CBC activities serving both sides of the EU's external border. More detailed implementation provisions for the CBC programmes are set out in the CBC Implementing Rules in the European Neighbourhood extending the principles of Cross-border cooperation within the EU, which is part of the European Territorial Co-operation (ETC) programmes. CBC in the Neighbourhood receives funding from the European Regional Development Fund as well as from the



## European Neighbourhood Instrument.

CBC promotes cooperation between an EU country and a neighbourhood country sharing a land border or sea crossing. Funding can also be provided for a programme between several EU and neighbourhood countries which, for example, are part of the same sea basin.

The indicative total ENI funding for the period 2014–2020 is between €489 million and €598 million. Indicative funding for the period 2014–2017 is €306,211,021 for the ENI and €262,255,314 for the ERDF.

CBC is modelled on the principles of the EU's territorial cooperation, but adapted to the specificities of the EU's external relations. What characterises the CBC programmes and makes them a unique cooperation mechanism is a strong commitment and ownership by the participating countries based on:

- balanced partnership between the participating countries on either side of a border: Member States and Neighbouring countries have an equal say in the programme decisions, and projects only receive funding if implemented by partners on both sides;
- management entrusted to a local – or national – authority in a member state, jointly selected by all countries participating in the programme;
- common legal framework and implementation rules: For the future ENI period, rules established for the ENPI CBC have been simplified and adapted based on previous experience.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Commission implementing regulation for the implementation of cross-border cooperation programmes financed under Regulation (EU) No 232/2014 establishing the ENI

## CBC has three main objectives:

- promoting economic and social development in border areas;
- addressing common challenges (environment, public health, safety and security);
- putting in place better conditions for persons, goods and capital mobility

Each programme must contribute to at least one of the strategic objectives. In order to increase the impact and efficiency of programmes, within the framework of objectives set out above, each programme will focus on a maximum of 4 thematic objectives selected from a list which will broadly be aligned to the European Territorial Cooperation goal.

Within these thematic objectives, detailed programming will be the task of the programme partners themselves, at the local, regional and national level. These partners will be responsible for preparing and presenting to the Commission for approval a "joint operational programme" including a specific set of thematic objectives and priorities, taking the strategic objectives into consideration, but reflecting the specific circumstances and requirements of their particular area and feeding these into their selection of up to 4 thematic objectives selected from the list.

The promotion of local cross-border 'people-to-people' actions will be an important modality to be deployed in support of any of these objectives. This could include support for enhanced cooperation among local and regional authorities, NGOs and other civil society groups, universities and schools, chambers of commerce, etc.

For the period 2014–20, a total of 12 land border programmes and 1 sea-crossing programme will be financed, as well as 4 sea-basin programmes.

Land border programmes:

Kolarctic/Russia  
Karelia/Russia  
SE Finland/Russia  
Estonia/Russia  
Latvia/Russia  
Lithuania/Russia  
Poland/Russia  
Latvia/Lithuania/Belarus  
**Poland/Belarus/Ukraine**  
**Hungary/Slovakia/Romania/Ukraine**  
Romania/Moldova  
**Romania/Ukraine**

Sea-crossing programmes:

Italy/Tunisia

Sea-basin programmes:

Baltic Sea Regions  
**Black Sea**  
Mediterranean  
Mid-Atlantic<sup>5</sup>

Eligibility is based on the ENI Regulation, but priority should be given to local and regional authorities, civil society, chambers of commerce, and the academic and educational community, as well as to other eligible actors based within the geographical eligibility of the programme and im-

<sup>5</sup> Commission implementing regulation for the implementation of cross-border cooperation programmes financed under Regulation (EU) No 232/2014 establishing the ENI

portant for the realisation of the objectives of the individual programme. Involvement of national authorities will be necessary in all programme development stages and, when this is necessary, in project implementation.

### 3. INITIATIVES OPEN TO ALL NEIGHBOUR COUNTRIES

#### TAIEX, SIGMA

The European Commission's interregional cooperation programmes aim to support the reform and transition processes currently underway in the EU's neighbouring partner countries. They promote approximation of EU law, while enhancing cooperation, economic integration and democratic governance. To achieve these goals, the two key instruments 'TAIEX' and 'SIGMA' are being used.

#### 1 TAIEX

TAIEX is the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument managed by the Directorate-General Neighbourhood and Enlargement negotiations of the European Commission. TAIEX supports public administrations with regard to the approximation, application and enforcement of EU legislation as well as facilitating the sharing of EU best practices. TAIEX was introduced to the Neighbourhood region in 2006 to offer advice to partner countries as they implement their European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plans.

TAIEX's main tasks are:

- To provide short term technical assistance and advice on the transposition of EU legislation into the national

legislation of candidate countries and potential candidates to EU membership and the subsequent transposition, implementation and enforcement of such legislation.

- To bring ENI partner countries closer to the European Union, through increased economic integration and a deepening of political cooperation by sharing the experience gained during the enlargement process.
- To support the convergence of legislation and administrative cooperation with partner countries covered by the Partnership Instrument.
- To provide technical training and peer assistance to partners and stakeholders in public administrations.
- To be an information broker by gathering and making available information.
- TAIEX activities are implemented in different forms and across a wide range of areas. Partner administrations can benefit from TAIEX's flexibility to help meet wider training needs in EU legislation by reaching a significant number of officials through the organisation of workshops.
- Study visits are organised for a limited number of officials of the beneficiary administrations to Member State administrations. They give an opportunity to the partners to work alongside Member State officials, to discuss legislation, experience first-hand administrative procedures and infrastructure and see examples of best practices.
- When more precise needs must be targeted, expert missions provide an opportunity to discuss draft legislation, present examples of best practices and lend assistance where requested. They involve usually one or two Member State experts travelling to partner administrations.

TAIEX is largely needs-driven and delivers appropriate tailor-made expertise to address issues at short notice in three ways:

- **Workshops:** EU Member State experts present specific areas of EU legislation in workshops to a large number of beneficiary officials.
- **Expert missions:** EU Member States expert(s) are sent to the beneficiary administration to provide in-depth advice on the transposition, implementation or enforcement of a specific part of EU legislation.
- **Study visits:** a group of three practitioners from a beneficiary administration take part in a study visit to an EU Member State's administration.

The TAIEX mandate to provide assistance covers:

- Croatia (new Member State – still benefitting from assistance programmed);
- Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo;
- Turkish Cypriot community in the northern part of Cyprus;
- Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and **Ukraine**;
- All countries covered by the Partnership Instrument;
- EU Member States in the framework of the administrative cooperation within the policies managed by DG for Regional and Urban Policy and DG Mobility and Transport.

TAIEX assistance is open to:

- **Civil servants** working in central public administrations;
- **Judiciary** and **law enforcement** authorities;
- Parliaments and **civil servants** working in Parliaments

and Legislative Councils;

- **Representatives** of social partners, trade unions and employers' associations.

TAIEX does not provide direct support to civil society, private citizens or to individual companies.

Officials in line Ministries dealing with community legislation, staff from regulatory or supervisory bodies and inspectorates, officials in notified bodies which implement or enforce legislation as well as officials in Parliaments, the Judiciary and Law Enforcement Agencies, can introduce requests for TAIEX assistance, by filling-in the respective form (available at: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/TMSWebRestrict/applicationForm>).

Public officials of EU Member States with expertise relevant to TAIEX beneficiaries can register as TAIEX experts. TAIEX experts can be invited as speakers to seminars, workshops, expert missions or to host study visits matching their specific profile.

TAIEX relies on a network of contact points at the level of national public institutions implementing or enforcing EU legislation. Contact points help TAIEX identify suitable experts within their respective ministries or agencies, depending on the request. Interested officials can register as institutional contact points.

TAIEX is used in the following fields:

- Agriculture and food safety
- Freedom, security and justice
- Environment, Energy, Transport and Telecommunications
- Internal Market
- Support to the Turkish Cypriot community

- TAIEX REGIO Peer 2 Peer (facilitates short-term exchange of know-how between cohesion policy experts and administrations involved in the management of the ERDF and Cohesion Fund in all Member States).<sup>6</sup>

## 2 SIGMA (Support for Improvement in Governance and Management)

**SIGMA** is a joint initiative of the European Union and the OECD principally financed by the EU. It focuses on strengthening public management in areas such as administrative reform, public procurement, public sector ethics, anti-corruption, and external and internal financial control. Its key objective is to strengthen the foundations for improved public governance, and hence support socio-economic development through building the capacities of the public sector, enhancing horizontal governance and improving the design and implementation of public administration reforms, including proper prioritisation, sequencing and budgeting. SIGMA team has been working with countries on strengthening their public governance systems and public administration capacities for over 20 years.

The SIGMA team of around 20 experts provides assistance in five key areas:

- Public service and human resource management;
- Public financial management, including external audit;
- Public procurement;
- Policy development and co-ordination;
- Strategic framework of public administration reform.

<sup>6</sup> TAIEX and Twinning Activity Report 2013. Published by European Union, 2014.

## Sigma COOPERATES

With the EC's Directorate-General Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement negotiations (NEAR), the SIGMA team currently works with:

- Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey as EU candidate countries and potential candidates.

With the EC's Directorate-General International Cooperation and Development – DEVCO, the SIGMA team currently works with:

- Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Georgia, Jordan, Lebanon, Moldova, Morocco, Tunisia and Ukraine as EU Neighbourhood countries.

In these countries, the SIGMA team works with:

- Ministries at the centre of government;
- State agencies and other public institutions;
- Parliaments.

**In Ukraine**, SIGMA is currently discussing with Ukrainian public administration institutions how it can best support capacity building and reform initiatives following recent events and the forthcoming elections.

Recent SIGMA activities have included:

- Reviewing the draft civil service law of Ukraine;
- Reviewing reform of administrative procedures.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.sigmaweb.org/countries/ukraine-sigma.htm>

SIGMA has also been asked to review three draft legal acts related to e-procurement.

The main beneficiaries are:

- National Agency for the Civil Service;
- Ministry of Justice.

## 3 Neighbourhood Investment Facility (NIF)

The Neighbourhood Investment Facility (NIF) is financial mechanism aimed at mobilising additional funding to cover the investment needs of the EU Neighbouring region for infrastructures in sectors such as transport, energy, the environment and social issues (e.g. construction of schools or hospitals). The NIF also supports the private sector particularly through risk capital operations targeting Small and Medium-sized Enterprises.

The NIF has been designed to finance capital-intensive infrastructure projects in partner countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) as well as to support their private sector. The Facility brings together grants from the European Commission and the EU Member States with loans from European public Finance Institutions, as well as own contributions from the partner countries.

In doing so, the European Union backs its neighbours' priorities and supports them in carrying out necessary investments for the future. This will have a significant positive impact on their population as well as on European citizens given the common interests in stability and welfare.

By pooling different resources, the NIF plays a key role in donor coordination and increasing aid effectiveness in accor-

dance with the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action. In addition, the NIF supports the implementation of regional and multilateral processes, in particular the Union for the Mediterranean, the Eastern Partnership and the Black Sea Synergy.

For the 2007–2013 period, the European Commission has earmarked a total amount of €767 million for the NIF, which are complemented by direct contributions from Member States kept in a trust fund managed by the European Investment Bank. To date, the NIF contributes €678.9 million to infrastructure and private sector projects, leveraging a total project volume of more than €19.3 billion.

NIF-projects operate in the following Neighbourhood partner countries:

- **Eastern Neighbourhood region:** Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, **Ukraine** as well as regional east-wide projects;
- **Southern Neighbourhood region:** Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia as well as regional south-wide projects.<sup>8</sup>

To benefit from the NIF, a project has to be submitted by one of the following European Public Finance Institution recognised by the NIF Board as 'eligible':

- European Investment Bank (EIB)
- European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)
- Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB)

8 NEIGHBOURHOOD INVESTMENT FACILITY STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS 2014-2020, EUROPEAN COMMISSION - DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION – EUROPEAID, Ref. Ares(2014)3801629 - 14/11/2014

- Nordic Investment Bank (NIB)
- Agence Française de Développement (AFD)
- Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW)
- Oesterreichische Entwicklungsbank AG (OeEB)
- Società Italiana per le Imprese all'Estero (SIMEST)
- Sociedade para o Financiamento do Desenvolvimento (SOFID)
- Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (AECID)

The Secretariat of the NIF is in charge of organising the NIF Board meetings and of implementing its decisions. It is located within the European Commission (DG Development and Cooperation - EuropeAid, Unit C3 'Financial Instruments' - Sustainable Growth and Development) responsible for coordinating all the regional investment facilities managed by the European Commission.

## 4 Thematic Programmes

### a) European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights

Launched in 2006, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) replaces and builds upon the European Initiative (2000–2006).

The thematic instrument has a broad scope of action. Its aim is to provide support for the promotion of democracy and human rights in non-EU countries.

EIDHR budget is €1.104 million for 2007–2013 (€157 million per year approximately including electoral observation) mainly implemented through call for proposals (delegations or Head Quarter). As of today the EIDHR is funding more than 1200 projects in over 100 countries.

The key objectives of the EIDHR are:

- Enhancing respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in countries and regions where they are most at risk;
- Strengthening the role of civil society in promoting human rights and democratic reform, in supporting the peaceful conciliation of group interests and in consolidating political participation and representation;
- Supporting actions in areas covered by EU Guidelines: dialogue on human rights, human rights defenders, the death penalty, torture, children and armed conflicts and violence against women;
- Supporting and strengthening the international and regional framework for the protection of human rights, justice, the rule of law and the promotion of democracy;
- Building confidence in and enhancing the reliability and transparency of democratic electoral processes, in particular through monitoring electoral processes.

The projects' beneficiaries vary according to the objectives. Calls for project proposals are often open to civil society organisations based anywhere in the world. The entities eligible for funding depending on the specific objectives of each action / call for proposal are:

Beneficiaries:

- Civil society organisations;
- Public- and private-sector non-profit organisations;
- National, regional and international parliamentary bodies, when the proposed measure cannot be financed under a related Community external assistance instrument; international and regional inter-

governmental organisations; natural persons, when their help is necessary for achieving the aims of the EIDHR.<sup>9</sup>

EIDHR only awards grants through competitive calls for proposals. These calls for proposals may be launched either by EU delegations on the ground ('Country-Based Support Schemes') or by EC headquarters in Brussels. Applicants have to follow the instructions given in the 'guidelines for applicants' for each call.

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome&PubliList=15&orderby=upd&orderbyad=Desc&searchtype=AS&pgm=7573843&Z-GEO=&ccnt=7573876&debpub=&finpub=&aet=36538>

- Country calls for proposals: they are specific to one country (Country Based Support Schemes – CBSS) and they cover local projects designed to reinforce the role of civil society in promoting human rights and democratic reforms, in facilitating the peaceful reconciliation of group interests, and in consolidating political participation and representation, and are managed by local EU delegations.
- Global calls for proposals: the projects cover all objectives of EIDHR and are selected by the Commission in consultation with its local delegations.

### **b) Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP)**

On 11 March 2014, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union adopted the Regulation establishing an Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) which succeeds the Instrument for Stability (IfS).

<sup>9</sup> Regulation (EC) No [1889/2006](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on establishing a financing instrument for the promotion of democracy and human rights worldwide.

The Instrument is one of the key external assistance instruments that enable the EU to take a lead in helping to prevent and respond to actual or emerging crises around the world. The FPI, working in close collaboration with other services of the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS), mobilises the IcSP to provide for:

- Urgent short-term actions in response to situations of crisis or emerging crisis, often complementing EU humanitarian assistance; and
- Longer-term capacity building of organisations engaged in crisis response and peace-building.<sup>10</sup>

On the ground, the implementation of IcSP actions is typically devolved to EU Delegations located in the concerned third countries. In addition to its headquarters-based IcSP team, the FPI has IcSP personnel posted to EU Delegations to provide key support during real-time crises and to oversee implementation of response measures.

Implementing partners for IcSP actions include NGOs, the UN and other international organisations, EU Member State agencies and regional and sub-regional organisations.

Part of the EU's new generation of instruments for financing external action, the IcSP will pursue the same broad political objectives in terms of its focus on **crisis response, crisis preparedness and conflict prevention** to better contribute to the EU's comprehensive approach to external conflicts and crises.

The crisis response component of the Instrument has broadened, with an increased focus on conflict prevention. The 10 REGULATION (EU) No 230/2014 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 11 March 2014 establishing an instrument contributing to stability and peace

**conflict prevention, peace-building and crisis preparedness component** provides for better tailoring of longer-term assistance and responses to **global and trans-regional threats and emerging threats** also provide for assistance in new areas such as cyber-crime, all forms of illicit trafficking and counter-terrorism.

The IcSP will play its part, in line with the EU's political commitment to pursue conflict prevention and build peace as one of the main objectives of EU external relations.

Grants:

[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/fpi/announcements/grants\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/fpi/announcements/grants_en.htm)

Tenders:

[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/fpi/announcements/tenders\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/fpi/announcements/tenders_en.htm)

In the majority of cases, funding through the long-term component is allocated using the negotiated procedure, a direct award, administrative arrangements or joint/contribution agreements with international organisations. Calls for proposals and calls for tenders are used only in rare circumstances. If they are, the eligibility criteria for individual calls are specified in the related documents.

### c) Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities

The Thematic Programme 'Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities' (CSOs LAs) has its legal base in Regulation No 1905/2006 (article 14) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014, establishing a financing Instrument for Development Cooperation (DCI).

The DCI defines the objective of the Programme as to strengthen civil society organisations and local authorities in



partner countries and, when their actions relate to Development Education and Awareness Raising (DEAR) of European citizens, in the Union and beneficiaries eligible under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance Regulation.<sup>11</sup>

The Programme will be implemented over the period 2014–2020.

Three priorities are identified:

- Action at country level will be at the core of the Programme to support CSOs and LAs contributions to governance and accountability through inclusive policy-making – hence empowering citizens and populations through the voicing and structuring of their collective demands to tackle injustice and inequality, to benefit from qualitative social services and to profit from wealth and job creation. The Programme will also support actions aimed at a sustainable territorial development, including in urban contexts, to foster local development and social cohesion. The promotion of an enabling environment for CSOs and LAs – in its legal, regulatory and operational dimensions – will be a crosscutting element.
- Regional and global CSOs networks and associations of LAs are essential stakeholders playing a pivotal role in linking local concerns, often caused by global challenges, to regional and international debates. The EU aims at strengthening them with a view to enhance their contributions to development, especially in the post-2015 Development Agenda.
- DEAR activities will aim at developing citizens' awareness and critical understanding of the interdependent world,

<sup>11</sup> Regulation (EC) No 1905/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation

of their role and responsibility in relation to a globalised society; and to support their active engagement with global attempts to eradicate poverty and promote justice, human rights and democracy, social responsibility, gender equality, and a sustainable social-economic development in partner countries.

The Programme allocation amounts to €1.907 billion for the period 2014–2020. An envelope of around €970 million has been earmarked for the Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2014–2017.<sup>12</sup>

More information can be found at: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome&nbPubliList=15&orderBy=upd&orderByad=Desc&searchtype=AS&pgm=7573847&ZGEO=&debpub=&finpub>

#### **d) Human Development and Migration & Asylum**

The thematic programme on migration and asylum does not address the root causes of migration directly. Instead, it focuses on capacity building in countries of origin and transit. It also fosters cooperation initiatives and encourages them to share experience, working methods and best practices regarding various aspects of migration.

To achieve these key objectives, the programme focuses on:

- Strengthening the synergies between migration and development;
- Promoting well-managed labour migration;
- Fighting illegal immigration and facilitating the readmission of irregular immigrants;

<sup>12</sup> Summary sheet on the Thematic Programme 'Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities' (2014-2020)

- Protecting migrants against exploitation and exclusion and supporting the fight against trafficking in human beings;
- Promoting asylum, international protection, and the protection of stateless persons.

The programme was established in the wider context of the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI). More specifically, it is based on Article 16 of the EU Regulation establishing the DCI and was launched within the framework of the 2007-13 financial perspectives.<sup>13</sup>

All non-EU countries covered by the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), the European Development Fund and the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument are eligible in the context of this programme. However, in line with the article 38 of the DCI Regulation, priority is given to the EU neighbouring countries.

### e) Twinning

Twinning is a European Commission initiative that was originally designed in May 1998 to help candidate countries acquire the necessary skills and experience to adopt, implement and enforce EU legislation. Since 2004, twinning is also available to some of the eastern and southern Neighbourhood partner countries.

Twinning projects bring together public sector expertise from EU Member States and beneficiary countries with the aim of enhancing cooperative activities. They must yield concrete operational results for the beneficiary country under the terms of the Association Agreement between that country and the EU.

<sup>13</sup> Regulation (EC) No 1905/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation

To set up projects, the Commission relies on the co-operation and administrative experience of Member States. They are expected to mobilise experts from government and other public sector organisations.

Twinning projects are built around the secondment of at least one full-time Member State expert – the Resident Twinning Adviser (RTA) who goes to work in a beneficiary country administration. Projects mobilise a number of actions run by the MS public body(ies) partner(s) to the project, including workshops, training sessions, expert missions, study visits and counselling.

ENP countries in which the Twinning tool is available are:

- South: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia;
- East: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

### Twinning Principles

The local partner in a twinning should be represented by a public body that is capable of working with a Member State organisation which has a similar structure and function. The beneficiary country partner must be able to adapt, take on board change and make it sustainable: the twinning project is not about the EU providing one-way technical assistance.

Twinning projects are designed to bring about changes both in the structure of the beneficiary institution and in the regulatory framework of a given domain in which the beneficiary institution plays a significant role.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Twinning manual: [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/financial\\_assistance/institution\\_building/2012/manual\\_may\\_2012.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/financial_assistance/institution_building/2012/manual_may_2012.pdf)

Regulatory changes must include elements relating to the adoption of EU legislation. An approximation to the *acquis communautaire* is called for, rather than full integration of EU legislation as was demanded of the candidate countries.

Twinning programmes started in Ukraine in 2005. There is a national twinning and TAIEX office, as National Focal Point in the Main Civil Service offices and an EU funded project supporting the development of the twinning programme. The European Commission Delegation is actively involved in the programme.

More information can be found at website Delegation of EU to Ukraine:

[http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/ukraine/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/ukraine/index_en.htm)

Following websites can be visited to learn more about contracts, contract applications and contract phases:

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome&nbPubliList=15&orderby=upd&orderbyad=Desc&searchtype=QS>

General information can be found at the following website, according to the programme:

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome&nbPubliList=15&orderby=upd&orderbyad=Desc&searchtype=AS&pgm=7573843&ZGEO=&debpub=&finpub>

### f) Central Europe 2014–2020

Partners from non-EU countries can participate in a project but will not receive any ERDF funds from the programme. They could act as associated partners, i.e. be involved in a project without financially contributing to it.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.central2013.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Downloads/Intranet/OP\\_revision/Operational\\_Programme\\_version\\_2.1.pdf](http://www.central2013.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Downloads/Intranet/OP_revision/Operational_Programme_version_2.1.pdf)

### g) Danube Transnational Programme 2014–2020

The programme will invest €202.3 million from the ERDF and €19.8 million from IPA II for transnational projects in the Danube basin territory. Eligible partners are Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Germany (only Baden-Württemberg and Bayern), Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia; and 5 non-EU countries – Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, **and a part of Ukraine**.<sup>16</sup>

Projects can involve stakeholders from both public and private sectors. The program is funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Project activities are co-financed by the ERDF to 85% of eligible expenditure.

The programme is built around **four thematic priority axes**:

#### 1. Innovative and socially responsible Danube region:

1.1 Improve framework conditions for innovation;

1.2 Increase competences for business and social innovation;

#### 2. Environment and culture responsible Danube region:

2.1 Strengthen transnational water management and flood risk prevention;

2.2 Foster sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources;

2.3 Foster the restoration and management of ecological corridors;

2.4 Improve preparedness for environmental risk management;

#### 3. Better connected and energy responsible Danube region:

<sup>16</sup> Council conclusions on the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region 3083rd GENERAL AFFAIRS Council meeting Brussels, 13 April 2011

3.1 Support environmentally-friendly and safe transport systems and balanced accessibility of urban and rural areas;

3.2 Improve energy security and energy efficiency;

#### 4. Well-governed Danube region:

4.1 Improve institutional capacities to tackle major societal challenges;

4.2 Support to the governance and implementation of the EUSDR.<sup>17</sup>

The first call for proposals is planned for the autumn of 2015.

#### h) The International Visegrad Fund

The International Visegrad Fund is an international organization based in Bratislava founded by the governments of the Visegrad Group (V4) countries – the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Republic of Poland, and the Slovak Republic – in Štířín, Czech Republic, on 9 June 2000.

The purpose of the fund is to facilitate and promote the development of closer cooperation among citizens and institutions in the region as well as between the V4 region and other countries, especially in the Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership regions. The fund operates several grant programs, and also awards individual scholarships, fellowships and artist residencies. Grant support is given to original projects namely in the areas of culture, science and research, youth exchanges, cross-border cooperation and tourism promotion, as well as in other priority areas defined in calls for proposals published on the fund's website <http://visegradfund.org/>.

<sup>17</sup> COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS: European Union Strategy for Danube Region, COM(2010) 715 final

The fund's annual budget (€8 million as of 2014) consists of equal contributions of V4 governments. The fund also utilizes (in the form of subgranting or co-financing) contributions from other governments / governmental organizations from the following countries: Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States.

Any natural person or legal entity is eligible to apply for grant support with the exception of organizations of state (central) administration institutions. Preference is generally given to those projects submitted by not-for-profit entities (NGOs/CSOs, foundations) and public institutions (schools and universities, research institutes, etc.). Applicants from outside of the V4 region can win support provided that their proposed projects deal with the V4 region and meet all formal requirements, such as having V4 project partners.

Ukraine can participate in the **Visegrad 4 Eastern Partnership program (V4EaP)** that was initiated in 2011 by the V4 governments to enhance the cooperation between the Visegrad region and the countries of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The main aims are facilitating the unique know-how of the Visegrad countries with social and economic transformation, democratization and regional cooperation particularly through the development of civil society and support of cooperation among local governments, universities and individual citizens.

The program consists of separate grant programs, but also includes the EaP chapter of the Visegrad Scholarship Program (covering incoming scholarships for scholars from the EaP countries to V4 higher-education institutions).

The aim of the Flagship Projects program is to support long-term projects of strategic character that significantly contribute to providing access to the unique experience and know-how of the V4 countries with democratic transformation and integration, EU accession and regional cooperation.

Flagship Projects are meant to support reform processes, political association and economic integration with the EU, strengthen institutional capacities, and contribute to the development of civil society and the overall transformation of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries. Projects submitted to the fund must involve grantees and project partners from all four V4 countries, as well as with at least two EaP countries. Projects are solicited through publicly available calls for proposals. Annual budget for Flagship Projects is €600,000.

The program has no regular annual deadline and proposals are solicited through calls for proposals published on the fund's website.

Extended Standard Grants support medium-term projects of strategic character that significantly contribute to providing access to the unique experience and know-how of the V4 countries with the processes of democratic transformation and integration and with regional cooperation. Extended Standard Grants are meant to support reform processes, political association and economic integration with the EU, strengthen institutional capacities in target countries, and contribute to the development of civil society and the overall transformation of the EaP region.<sup>18</sup>

Projects submitted to the fund must involve grantees and

<sup>18</sup> AGREEMENT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL VISEGRAD FUND, Štířín, Czech Republic, on June 9, 2000.

project partners from at least three V4 countries and a single EaP country regardless of the applicant. Projects are solicited through calls for proposals published on the fund's website.

The program has no regular annual deadline and proposals are solicited through calls for proposals published on the fund's website.

In 2015, **Ukraine** is one of Strategic Grants priorities and there are two activities to be realized:

1. V4 + Ukraine – Conference/Forum + Expert Consultations
2. V4 + Ukraine – Energy Security / Energy Efficiency Expertise Exchange

#### i) EEA/Norway Grants

The EEA and Norway Grants contribute to growth and development in Europe, which is Norway's most important export market. At the same time, the deal facilitates participation of Norwegian companies, researchers, local authorities, social partners and NGOs in programmes and projects with EU countries.

The support is divided into two schemes. The EEA Grants, funded by the three donors, amount to €221.2 million per year over the period 2014–21. The Norway Grants, funded solely by Norway, are worth €179.1 million per year over the same period.

The Grants should concentrate on stimulating growth through innovation, research and education, and greater mobility in the European job market. In this way they can help tackle the high youth unemployment in Europe. They will also focus on strengthening Europe's energy security and contributing to an ambitious climate policy.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic

Funding will also be used to extend police and judicial co-operation between the donor and recipient countries, including on responding to Europe's migration challenges. A regional fund worth around €100 million is to be established. A number of challenges in Europe affect several countries or entire regions and require joint working across borders. The aim is to support such initiatives, and may also include countries that are not recipients of the EEA and Norway Grants. This opens up possibilities for collaboration with countries such as **Ukraine** and Moldova.

The agreements must be approved by the parliaments in Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, and the EU Member States.

#### j) Specialized EU Programmes (former community programmes)

These programmes are a financial instrument of the European Community, which are funded directly from the EU budget. Their objective is to promote international cooperation of subjects from different Member States in areas directly related to European policies. As well as in operational programmes financed by the Structural Funds, these programmes are multi-year programmes.

Unlike the operational programmes, the managing and the preparation of specific calls are usually within the jurisdiction of the European Commission. Another fundamental difference between specialized EU programmes and operational programmes is that applicants in operational programs are usually from one member country, projects submitted in the framework of specialized EU programmes involve actors from several member countries – project partners.

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Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2009-2014

#### Horizon 2020

Horizon 2020 is the biggest EU Research and Innovation programme ever with nearly €80 billion of funding available over 7 years (2014–2020) – in addition to the private investment that this money will attract. It promises more breakthroughs, discoveries and world-firsts by taking great ideas from the lab to the market.

Horizon 2020 is the financial instrument implementing the Innovation Union, a Europe 2020 flagship initiative aimed at securing Europe's global competitiveness.

Seen as a means to drive economic growth and create jobs, Horizon 2020 has the political backing of Europe's leaders and the Members of the European Parliament. They agreed that research is an investment in our future and so put it at the heart of the EU's blueprint for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and jobs. The goal is to ensure Europe produces world-class science, removes barriers to innovation and makes it easier for the public and private sectors to work together in delivering innovation.<sup>20</sup>

The signature of the Horizon 2020 Association Agreement with **Ukraine** took place on 20 March 2015, but the Agreement will only enter into force once Ukraine has ratified it and notified the Commission. The Agreement does not provide for provisional/retroactive application.<sup>21</sup>

Calls for proposals are published at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/home.html> or

20 Regulation (EU) No 1291/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing Horizon 2020 - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) and repealing Decision No 1982/2006/EC

21 RISE 2015: Is Ukraine considered as Associated Country?

[http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/cosme/master\\_calls.html](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/cosme/master_calls.html)

### Erasmus+

The Erasmus+ programme aims to boost skills and employability, as well as modernizing Education, Training, and Youth work. The seven year programme will have a budget of €14.7 billion; a 40% increase compared to current spending levels, reflecting the EU's commitment to investing in these areas.

Erasmus+ provides opportunities for over 4 million Europeans to study, train, gain work experience and volunteer abroad. Erasmus+ supports transnational partnerships among Education, Training, and Youth institutions and organizations to foster cooperation and bridge the worlds of Education and work in order to tackle the skills gaps we are facing in Europe.

It supports national efforts to modernize Education, Training, and Youth systems. In the field of Sport, there will be support for grassroots projects and cross-border challenges such as combating match-fixing, doping, violence and racism.

Erasmus+ brings together seven existing EU programmes in the fields of Education, Training, and Youth; it will for the first time provide support for Sport. As an integrated programme, Erasmus+ offers more opportunities for cooperation across the Education, Training, Youth, and Sport sectors and is easier to access than its predecessors, with simplified funding rules.<sup>22</sup>

Calls for proposals for 2015 are available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:C2014/344/10&from=EN>

<sup>22</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing 'Erasmus+' the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport and repealing Decisions No 1719/2006/EC, No 1720/2006/EC and No 1298/2008/EC

### COSME

COSME is the EU programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises running from 2014 to 2020 with a planned budget of €2.3 billion.

COSME aims to make it easier for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to access finance in all phases of their lifecycle – creation, expansion, or business transfer. Thanks to the EU support, businesses have easier access to guarantees, loans and equity capital. EU 'financial instruments' are channelled through local financial institutions in the EU countries. To find a financial institution in your country, visit the Access to Finance portal.

COSME helps businesses to access markets in the EU and beyond. It funds the Enterprise Europe Network that helps SMEs find business and technology partners, and understand EU legislation; the Your Europe Business portal that provides practical information on doing business within Europe; and the SME Internationalisation Portal for companies who want to develop their activities outside Europe. It also finances a number of IPR (intellectual property rights) SME Helpdesks.

COSME supports entrepreneurs by strengthening entrepreneurship education, mentoring, guidance and other support services. Actions support specific groups who may find it difficult to reach their full potential, such as young people, women and senior entrepreneurs. The programme also aims to help businesses access opportunities offered by digital technologies.

COSME aims to reduce the administrative and regulatory burden on SMEs by creating a business-friendly environment. COSME also supports businesses to be competitive by encouraging them to adopt new business models and innova-

tive practices. This complements actions in areas with high growth potential such as the tourism sector.

Among third countries participating in the programme, there are Eastern neighbourhood countries (Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Moldova, Azerbaijan and Belarus).<sup>23</sup>

**Ukraine** has officially expressed interest in participating in the programme in 2015. Negotiations are ongoing but depend on the evolving political situation.

Calls for proposals are published at:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/contracts-grants/calls-for-proposals/index\\_en.htm?tpa=1029](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/contracts-grants/calls-for-proposals/index_en.htm?tpa=1029),

calls for tenders are published at: [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/contracts-grants/calls-for-tenders/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/contracts-grants/calls-for-tenders/index_en.htm)

### Creative Europe

Creative Europe is the new EU programme to support European cinema and the cultural and creative sectors, enabling them to increase their contribution to jobs and growth. With a budget of €1.46 billion for 2014–2020, it will support tens of artists, cultural and audiovisual professionals and organisations in the performing arts, fine arts, publishing, film, TV, music, interdisciplinary arts, heritage, and the video games industry.

The programme takes account of the challenges created by globalisation and digital technologies, which are changing the ways cultural works are made, distributed and accessed, as well as transforming business models and revenue streams.

<sup>23</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1287/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing a Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises (COSME) (2014 - 2020) and repealing Decision No 1639/2006/EC

These developments also create opportunities for the cultural and creative sectors. The programme seeks to help them seize these opportunities, so that they benefit from the digital shift and create more jobs and international careers.

Creative Europe is open to the 28 Member States, and, so long as they fulfil specific conditions, to the European Free Trade Association countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland), to EU candidate and potential candidate countries (Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo) and to neighbourhood countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, **Ukraine**, Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Palestine, Syria and Israel). Non-EU countries have to pay an 'entry ticket' to participate in the programme. The cost is based on the size of their GDP (Gross Domestic Product) in relation to the budget of the programme.

The programme will build on and bring together the former Culture, MEDIA and MEDIA Mundus Programmes (2007–2013).<sup>24</sup>

Calls for proposals are published at: [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/calls/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/calls/index_en.htm)

The Creative Europe programme has two sub-programmes, Culture and MEDIA, in addition to a cross-sectoral strand.

Under the Culture sub-programme, opportunities exist for:

- Cooperation between cultural and creative organisations from different countries;

<sup>24</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Creative Europe Programme (2014 to 2020) and repealing Decisions No 1718/2006/EC, No 1855/2006/EC and No 1041/2009/EC



- Initiatives to translate and promote literary works across the European Union;
- Networks helping the cultural and creative sector to operate competitively and transnationally;
- Establishing platforms to promote emerging artists and stimulating European programming for cultural and artistic works.

The MEDIA sub-programme, which supports the audiovisual and multimedia sector, provides opportunities for:

- Initiatives that aim to promote the distribution of works and the access to markets;
- Initiatives for the development of projects or a set of projects (slate funding);
- Support for the production of television programmes or video games;
- Activities to increase interest in and improve access to audiovisual works;
- Activities that promote interests in films, such as cinema networks or film festivals;
- Measures that facilitate international co-production and strengthen the circulation and distribution of works;
- Activities to build the skills and capacities of audiovisual sector professionals.

In December 2014, Moldova and **Ukraine** have set to have partial participation in Creative Europe’s MEDIA sub-programme from 2015 (<http://www.screendaily.com/news/moldova-and-ukraine-to-join-media/5080616.article>) but as of 2015 only Georgian, Moldovan and Turkish organisations can partially participate in the MEDIA Sub-programme, i.e. in training, festivals, audience development and market access activities ([https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/eligible-countries\\_en.pdf](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/eligible-countries_en.pdf)).

## LIFE

Under LIFE, Member States can participate in the project and applications from entities in all MSs can be funded; certain non-EU countries may negotiate full participation in the LIFE programme. To date, no third country has chosen to fully participate because of the substantial costs involved without any guarantee that relevant projects in their country will be financed. It should be noted, however, that entities based in non-EU countries and OCTs may also participate, without any ‘entry ticket’ as associated beneficiaries in individual projects and in actions carried out in third countries, in certain cases described in the application guides.

According to the Article 5 of the Regulation No 1293/2013, The LIFE Programme shall be open to the participation of the following countries:

(a)	European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries which are parties to the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA);
(b)	candidate countries, potential candidates and acceding countries to the Union;
(c)	countries to which the European Neighbourhood Policy applies;
(d)	countries which have become members of the European Environmental Agency in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No 933/1999.

Article 6 of the same Regulation, which governs the activities outside the Union or in overseas countries and territories, stipulates as follows:

- Without prejudice to Article 5, the LIFE Programme may finance activities outside the Union and in overseas countries and territories (OCTs) in accordance with

Decision 2001/822/EC (the Overseas Association Decision), provided those activities are necessary to achieve Union environmental and climate objectives and to ensure the effectiveness of interventions carried out in Member State territories to which the Treaties apply.

- A legal person established outside the Union may be able to participate in the projects referred to in Article 18, provided the beneficiary coordinating the project is based in the Union and the activity to be carried out outside the Union meets the requirements set out in paragraph 1 of this Article.

An **associated beneficiary** may be legally registered outside the European Union, provided that the coordinating beneficiary is based in the EU. Any activities to be carried out outside the EU must be necessary to achieve EU environmental objectives and to ensure the effectiveness of interventions carried out in the Member State territories to which the Treaties apply. The associated beneficiary must always contribute technically to the proposal and hence be responsible for the implementation of one or several project actions. An associated beneficiary must also contribute financially to the project.<sup>25</sup>

### Galileo

The Galileo programme is Europe's initiative for a state-of-the-art global satellite navigation system, providing a highly accurate global positioning service under civilian control. The fully deployed system will consist of 30 satellites and the associated ground infrastructure. Galileo will provide Europe with independence in satellite navigation but will also be in-

<sup>25</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the establishment of a Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) and repealing Regulation (EC) No 614/2007

ter-operable with GPS and GLONASS, the two other global satellite navigation systems. The budget available is €7.1 billion.

In short, Galileo will offer greater:

- **Precision:** Thanks to a greater number of Galileo signals, the new satellite clock design, and improved corrections of ionospheric effects, positions computed with Galileo satellites will be more accurate. When combined with GPS, the higher number of satellites available will also offer higher precision. From most locations, six to eight Galileo satellites will be visible, and in combination with GPS signals, this will allow positioning to within a few centimetres, depending on the service used.
- **Availability:** The high number of satellites will improve the availability of signals in cities where tall buildings can obstruct signals from satellites that are low on the horizon.<sup>26</sup>

**Ukraine's participation** in the Galileo project will ensure a highly efficient operation of international transport corridors passing through its territory, as well as provide access to high-precision navigation and clock information for a wide range of applications, including science, economy, and national security.

### Other Programmes

In the following part of the text, the specific EU programmes are mentioned that shall be also open to the partner countries under the European Neighbourhood Policy, provided that these countries have reached a sufficient level of alignment of the relevant legislation and administrative methods<sup>26</sup> Cooperation Agreement on a Civil Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) between the European Community and its Member States and Ukraine

with those of the Union. The partner countries concerned shall participate in the Programme in accordance with provisions to be determined with those countries, **following the establishment of framework agreements concerning their participation in Union programmes**. However, **no other country has signed** a specific agreement on these programmes so far. When such an agreement is signed in the future, the Commission will publish the name of the country on the website of the programme.

#### ✓ Health 2020

The Programme aims to support Member States' action to improve people's health and reduce health inequalities, by promoting health, encouraging innovation in health, increasing the sustainability of health systems and protecting EU citizens from serious cross-border health threats. Building on achievements and lessons learned from the previous health programmes, the new programme focusses on key objectives and priorities where Europe is believed to deliver true added value. The programme objectives are following:

- Strengthen action to promote health and prevent diseases;
- Be better prepared to protect citizens against health emergencies and to coordinate action at European level to address them;
- Increase the up-take of innovation in health; and
- Improve people's access to medical expertise and information for specific conditions; and improve healthcare quality and patient safety.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Regulation (EU) No 282/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 on the establishment of a third Programme for the Union's action in the field of health (2014-2020) and repealing Decision No 1350/2007/EC

#### ✓ Customs 2020

Customs 2020 is an EU cooperation programme providing national customs administrations with the possibility to create and exchange information and expertise. It allows developing and operating major trans-European IT systems in partnership and establishing various human networks by bringing together national officials from across Europe. The programme has a budget of €547.3 million and will run for 7 years from 1 January 2014.<sup>28</sup>

#### ✓ Fiscalis 2020

Fiscalis 2020 is an EU cooperation programme enabling national tax administrations to create and exchange information and expertise. It allows developing and operating major trans-European IT systems in partnership, as well as establishing various person to person networks by bringing together national officials from across Europe. The programme has a budget of €234.3 million and will run for 7 years from 1 January 2014.<sup>29</sup>

#### ✓ Justice 2020

This programme shall contribute to the further development of a European area of justice based on mutual recognition and mutual trust. It promotes:

- Judicial cooperation in civil matters, including civil and commercial matters, insolvencies, family matters and successions, etc.;

<sup>28</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1294/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing an action programme for customs in the European Union for the period 2014-2020 (Customs 2020) and repealing Decision No 624/2007/EC

<sup>29</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1286/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing an action programme to improve the operation of taxation systems in the European Union for the period 2014-2020 (Fiscalis 2020) and repealing Decision No 1482/2007/EC

- Judicial cooperation in criminal matters;
- Judicial training, including language training on legal terminology, with a view to fostering a common legal and judicial culture;
- Effective access to justice in Europe, including rights of victims of crime and procedural rights in criminal proceedings;
- Initiatives in the field of drugs policy (judicial cooperation and crime prevention aspects).<sup>30</sup>

✓ **Rights, Equality and Citizenship (including Daphne programme – the Daphne programme continues in the period 2014–2020, as one part of the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme)**

This programme shall contribute to the further development of an area where equality and the rights of persons, as enshrined in the Treaty, the Charter and international human rights conventions, are promoted and protected. Its nine specific objectives are to:

- Promote non-discrimination;
- Combat racism, xenophobia, homophobia and other forms of intolerance;
- Promote rights of persons with disabilities;
- Promote equality between women and men and gender mainstreaming;
- Prevent violence against children, young people, women and other groups at risk (Daphne);
- Promote the rights of the child;
- Ensure the highest level of data protection;
- Promote the rights deriving from Union citizenship;

<sup>30</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1382/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 establishing a Justice Programme for the period 2014 to 2020

- Enforce consumer rights.<sup>31</sup>

✓ **Europe for Citizens**

The aim of this programme is to:

- Contribute to citizens' understanding of the EU, its history and diversity;
- Foster European citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at the EU level;
- Raise awareness of remembrance, common history and values;
- Encourage democratic participation of citizens at the EU level, by developing citizens' understanding of the EU policy making-process and, by promoting opportunities for societal and intercultural engagement and volunteering at the EU level.<sup>32</sup>

✓ **Hercule III**

This programme will make available an amount of €104.9 million to support Member States in fighting fraud, corruption and other illegal activities. The programme helps finance concrete projects such as the purchase by national authorities of x-rays scanners and other technical equipment to stamp out smuggling and other criminal activities against the EU's financial interests. The Hercule III Programme is the follow-up of the Hercule II Programme, established by Decision 878/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council and adopted in 2007 for the 2007–2013 period. The programme also finances training activities. It helps facilitate

<sup>31</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1381/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 establishing a Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme for the period 2014 to 2020 Text with EEA relevance

<sup>32</sup> Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 of 14 April 2014 establishing the 'Europe for Citizens' programme for the period 2014-2020

the exchange of best practices through seminars and conferences dedicated, for instance, to preventing corruption in procurement procedures. Training is also provided for law enforcement staff to strengthen and continuously update their digital forensic skills.<sup>33</sup>

✓ **Consumer Programme 2014–2020**

This programme with a budget of €188.8 million will support EU consumer policy in the years to come. It aims to help the citizens fully enjoy their consumer rights and actively participate in the Single Market, thus supporting growth, innovation and meeting the objectives of Europe 2020.<sup>34</sup>

**k) Programmes Where the Third Countries Cannot Participate**

These programmes are open only for EU Members states (eventually EFTA countries and Switzerland):

- **Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)**
- **Pericles 2020**
- **ESPO 2020**
- **INTERREG EUROPE**
- **INTERACT III**
- **URBACT III**

33 REGULATION (EU) No 250/2014 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

of 26 February 2014 establishing a programme to promote activities in the field of the protection of the financial interests of the European Union (Hercule III programme) and repealing Decision No 804/2004/EC

34 Regulation (EU) No 254/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on a multiannual consumer programme for the years 2014-20 and repealing Decision No 1926/2006/EC

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

The European Union will support Ukraine in implementing the objectives and priorities set out in the Association Agenda. It will do so through using all available sources of EU support, as well as expertise and advice, best practices and know-how, the sharing of information, including the provision of advice and a structured process of approximation to EU acquis, support to capacity-building and institutional strengthening. As a part of these efforts, the Commission's Support Group for Ukraine, established in 2014, provides technical assistance and advice on the reform agenda to the Ukrainian authorities, in close coordination with the EEAS, the EU-delegation in Kyiv and Member States. Ukraine is also to make full use of the role of the EU Advisory Mission for Civilian Security Sector Reform as part of the overall EU contribution to the reform process. It will also encourage and seek coordination of support from other partners of Ukraine. The relevant EU financial instruments will also be available to help in the implementation of the Association Agenda.

The EU support will be provided in the context of the overall priorities for assistance in favour of Ukraine, as outlined in the multi-year programming under the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) as part of the overall funding available for Ukraine and in full respect of the relevant implementation rules and procedures of EU external assistance.

In 2014, in response to the fast moving events in Ukraine and the urgent need to mobilise considerable assistance to contribute to the stabilisation and development of the country, the EU adopted a €365 million Special Measure, including a €355 million State Building Contract and a €10 million support programme to civil society.

For 2015, a possible Special Measure could focus on private sector development and recovery actions. EU bilateral assistance should be included in the Single Support Framework (SSF) as a/the result of the forthcoming multi-annual programming exercise for the period 2016–2017, depending on the situation on the ground.

Civil society, in particular the EU-Ukraine Civil Society Platform, as well as the Parliamentary Association Committee, will also be encouraged to focus their monitoring activities on the Association Agenda. This Association Agenda may be amended or updated at any time as necessary by agreement of the EU-Ukraine Association Council.

In the centre of all international cooperation activities is mutual concern and mutual benefit – in short: the creation of win-win situations. Among the benefits of international cooperation are:

- Enhanced synergies between the different partners;
- Facilitation of good practice transfer;
- Networking to better coordinate development agendas;
- Support of know-how transfer.

There are many ‘constraints’: the European dimension of the project, the number of partners involved, the European added value... Project funding requires a sound methodology, and despite its apparent complexity, it offers very valuable skills to those who are persistent and brings European visibility and additional financial resources to all organizations involved,

However, the EU funds are used for direct access only by a small circle of practitioners, despite the fact that these grants are a real opportunity for financing of all projects with a European dimension. Mastering EU funding techniques ensures a

valuable skill for your career and is essential for the development of your organization leverage.

Lots of patience and persistence are needed when working on international projects. But you should not be afraid of failure – you can always find new opportunities!

## Part 3: Characteristics of International Funding

### Specifics of International Grant Programs

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

As it has been already said in the previous chapters, there are an unlimited number of international programs into which project proposals can be submitted. Despite the fact that these programs may differ as to particularities, some basic principles and rules remain the same. These characteristics should be borne in mind because they directly influence the way we apply for participation in these programs, the way we implement projects, how we communicate with partners and last but not least, they also influence the project impacts and our overall impression from international cooperation.

This methodology introduces four basic characteristics:

##### 1 Ensuring Project Participation

If an organization decides to participate in a project as an ordinary partner, there are several ways how to join in. By far the most effective way – with respect to the availability of projects, communication and clarity – are social networks, mainly LinkedIn and Facebook.

Within each of these platforms, there are lively discussions, continued exchange of information and offers for project participation that the interested parties and partners representatives publish in specifically focused groups, which are usually thematically divided according to particular international programs (e.g. Erasmus+, The Employment and Social

Innovation, Horizon 2020). Within these groups, it then suffices to react to particular contributions and to get in touch with the person who published the contribution in question.

Once communication is successfully established, the next step is to clarify the project idea, including the budget, activities and responsibilities, i.e. the role of an ordinary partner. The preparatory work may last up to several weeks, but sometimes only several days so as to finish the project in time.

Your organization is only one of a number of partners that take part in the preparation of the project and thus it is not uncommon that the preparatory work for the project runs till the last hours and minutes. In this phase, it is important that the institution is able to react to leading partner's requirements in time and that it does not postpone answering or sending important documents till the last possible moment. Otherwise it can happen that the remarks of the organization concerning project activities or the budget will not be taken into account.

The next step is approving, which may last approximately from 3 to 9 months; in special cases this time period may differ. Once a decision has been made, the information appears on the internet and, as an established practice, the main partner usually informs all ordinary partners about the outcome. If the grant is approved then the project is implemented and the grant is subsequently paid out; possibly there may be other talks about potential adjustments of the project.

In international projects, no significant changes usually appear during the implementation of the project (such as adding new activities, etc.). What is common is that the international partnership usually adjusts the budget during the

project implementation – these changes usually reflect the actual utilization rate of financial means by individual partners, or the unused proportions of the grant (for instance financial means saved) are possibly allocated among partners with higher utilization rate.

## 2 Partnership and the Role within the Project

Each grant program has its own rules and many programs are limited only to applicants with a certain legal form. However, there are many suitable programs for each legal form and the examples used in the second chapter of this methodology only stress this fact – in general, it could be said that for programs of international cooperation subjects from public, non-profit as well as profit (SME) sectors may apply. Yet it is important to consider other risks that are related to the specific legal form and to its financial capacity – before the organization joins the project, it is necessary to do the primary analysis and to realistically decide, whether the organization is or is not capable to meet the professional and financial obligations.

There are two main approaches towards participation in international projects:

- a) The organization acts as an applicant and the main partner and invites partners from other countries.
- b) The organization joins the project as a partner, the applicant and the main partner is the foreign institution.

Each of the above mentioned approaches entails both risks and opportunities that should be well considered by each institution. You can join the international programs in two different roles. The main organization which is in charge of the project and bears the most responsibility is the so called main

partner who usually writes the project application, forms the partnership and coordinates it.

In the preparatory phase, the main partner directs the process of application processing, including the list of expected activities, the budget and the necessary annexes (confirmation of cooperation, copies from various registers, etc.), and he is responsible for timely preparation of the application, for its quality and its submission.

Each project application has to include the title of the project, the identification of the applicant and the partners, the description of the project (its aims, outputs, a timetable of activities) and information about its budget. The application has to exactly describe what the problem to be solved and is what will be the outcomes of the project.

It is also necessary to specify what target group is the project aimed at, what it wants to achieve, how it should be achieved and how will the achievement of these aims be verified at the end of the project. The project application is usually written by the main partner, whereas the ordinary partners only provide him with important information.

The quality of the processed application to a certain degree depends on the communication and cooperation between all partners, because if the main partner does not have specific (local) information, he is not able to aptly express and justify the necessity of the project which can subsequently influence the quality of the application and its final outcome. It is obvious that the main partner has the final say when it comes to the budget drafting and activities proposal; it should therefore be an unwritten obligation for the ordinary members to actively participate in the preparation of the application.



If the project is approved, then the main partner becomes responsible for communicating and maintaining a relationship with the grant provider, as well as for the overall monitoring, activity management and financial coordination of the project. Communication is essential in this phase, especially since the partners meet in person in several monthly cycles (usually once in 5 or 6 months) and the operational information is communicated via email or telephone.

As a rule, the role of the main partner is usually reserved for experienced institutions that have sufficient administrative, professional and financial capacity to coordinate projects which can sometimes amount to millions of Czech crowns. It is necessary to take this fact into account when considering the international cooperation participation and to assess it well – wrong reasoning in this phase may have a number of negative impacts and in the worst scenario it can lead up to a dampening of activity.

The other organizations are the so called ordinary partners. Within the project, they are responsible for activities they have undertaken to perform and they help with the monitoring and the propagation of the project. However, their responsibility and the overall amount of work related to the project are much smaller than in the case of the main partner.

In the preparatory phase, the Czech partner may influence the form of the project proposed by the foreign main partner and it can also comment on the form of the activities and the budget. It is not common that the main partner would not take account of these comments – on the contrary, interesting ideas and additions may be welcomed, because due to them the application may be of higher-quality and more successful.

The partner/organization can thus carefully negotiate while forming its own role within the project currently being prepared and at the same time influence the amount of financial means allocated by the main partner – the main partner usually does not have a detailed overview of usual wages and prices. In order to ensure that the budgets are economical and correspond to the usual prices, the main partner usually relies on the input data provided by the ordinary members.

The ordinary partners are responsible for activities at the local level (usually within the given region or within their place of operation), or they participate in the coordination of partial activities at the level of the entire partnership (for example responsibility for project publicity, specialized activities, etc.). The roles of individual ordinary partners within the project may differ and they depend on the project application, the mutual agreement and on the requirements of these partners voiced during the project processing. In exceptional cases it may happen that the ordinary partners assume the responsibilities of other partners, provided that these partners do not perform quality work or they decide to withdraw from the project.

### 3 Financial Management

A basic financial consideration has to be done every time organizations consider participating in an international project, regardless of their expected role within this project. As a standard rule, international projects usually require from the participants cost co-funding ranging from 5 to 50%. The final co-funding rate is thus an important aspect that the organization has to take into account, together with the duration of the project which extends the financial exposition and the time commitment.

From this point of view, the international programs/grants thus should not be understood as the only source of income of the given institution or non-profit organization, but always only as a suitable addition that can be used to develop a specific activity or as a tool for exchanging experience.

The organizations that decide to participate in these projects have to have other sources of funding as well (business activities, subsidies, etc.). This is the only way how to prevent that as the upshot they will be burdened by the co-funding obligation and they will not have enough means to finance their regular activities.

In some cases, the co-funding can also be done via non-financial means – for instance by providing voluntary work (in the case of non-profit organizations), by providing premises belonging to the organization, etc.

The actual process of co-funding does not mean that the given “share” is transferred to a bank account; it means that the back payment of the grant the organization spent and presented in a regular overview to the main partner is lowered by the amount of this share.

The organization thus has to continuously keep track of its own cash-flow, as well as of the cash-flow of project expenses, and to anticipate in which phases of the project cycle will it spend more and in which less (for example due to various project investments, organizing of spasmodic activities or meetings).

It is necessary to check in advance how are the already incurred expenses reimbursed, so that it does not happen that for example in the case of a tight budget, the organization will have to wait for the expenses reimbursement after the project is finished.

The amount of the advance and the instrument of interim payments during the project implementation differ from project to project, and the organizations should create a sufficient financial cushion for cases the advance payment is not available (i.e. for example 30% from the overall grant claim in the beginning of the project).

At the same time it is true that even despite the non-existence of advance payment, project participants have to draw money continuously, otherwise they could not show relevant expenses in monitoring reports and they would thus not be entitled to receive grant payments. The risk of a vicious circle is considerable, yet it can be prevented by creating financial reserves and by careful planning of expenses – a balance sheet should be made during the creation of the project and during its subsequent commencement.

Financial means for the expenses approved by the grant provider are given to the main partner who then allocates them between the ordinary members. The time period from the moment the monitoring report is submitted to the moment the grant is received usually amounts to months. It is thus not unusual that in the case of more complicated projects and settlement of comments raised by the grant provider this period even exceeds one calendar year.

The final calculation of the claimed grant is done within the final report which summarizes all project activities and expenses and which includes a request for the reimbursement of all remaining financial means according to rightfully made expenses that are usually reimbursed several months after the final report has been submitted. In some grant programs, the monitoring reports are prepared exclusively by the main partner upon requesting all necessary materials from the in-

dividual ordinary partners. However, there are also grant programs where each partner makes his own monitoring report and the main partner then incorporates their aggregate into the overall monitoring report for a given project.

#### 4 Networking

An important and substantial, yet often underestimated, characteristics of international programs and projects is networking of participants and experts who are familiar with the international sphere of European (and other) grants. In this field, establishing, cultivating and maintaining foreign contacts is much more important than in other fields. Not only because cooperation is the main building block of international programs, but also because it is a way how to stay within this community of professionals and how to participate in quality project consortiums.

Active networking thus cannot be perceived only as a tool how to enter into a project, but rather as a natural part of your activities in the international realm. It is important primarily due to two reasons:

a) In the initial phases of establishing the cooperation, it enables you to purposefully select and identify interesting consortiums. This is important especially in the early stages of your activity, when you do not have virtual nor personal ties to main project partners or creators of project consortiums. There are various forms of networking – the virtual one via social networks was described in the beginning of this chapter, then there is physical networking which takes place at conferences or so called infodays organized by managing authorities of particular international programs. Participation in these events is often underestimated; however they are not important only with respect to the information content pre-

sented there (the information is usually presently available online), they are important primarily because they constitute an unique opportunity to meet (future) colleagues who are searching for suitable project partners that would suit their interests. Regular part of such events is project stock exchange or “partner search forums”, where the main partners personally present emerging consortiums or projects.

How to recognize and correctly identify consortiums with the largest potential? You can certainly form your opinion on a project during a personal meeting; in the case of virtual networking this ability is naturally lower. From the communication and the presented materials, you should get an impression that the project is being prepared professionally and that it has clear vision, aims and outcomes. If you have doubts about the purpose or the method of the cooperation, do not join the project. Low quality of preparation necessarily emerges in later phases of the project and for you it would mean only complications.

Remain close to the source of project offers – check websites of grant programs, search the social networks and carefully evaluate the quality of projects currently being prepared. It should be mentioned that the best offers are many times not even openly announced to the public, because the project consortiums consist of organizations that have been cooperating already for a many years.

b) Once you penetrate into a community, maintain frequent contact with others. Long-term cooperation in a highly competitive environment means that the most successful consortiums have stable cores made up of experienced organizations. It occurs only exceptionally that the best of them “let” new unverified members to join them – firstly, they do not know how these newcomers work and secondly, mutual

trust has not been built. Even if your project fails, it is likely that the main partner will contact you again when the project is resubmitted or when a new one emerges. This method is naturally more effective than to repeatedly create new consortiums where the main partners have to again face repetitive risks. It is also likely that once a project has been successfully implemented, the former partners will contact you again and you will continue to work in the same or slightly changed consortium. It is thus important to present yourselves as professionals throughout the implementation of the project, to actively communicate and to regularly participate in project activities. Passive approach means that you are closing the door leading towards future cooperation and you are pushed out to the outskirts of the international project community.

## Part 4: Control Mechanisms for Quality Assurance

### 1. WHY PROJECT FAILS

In a perfect world every project would be 'on time and within budget'. But reality (especially the proven statistics) tells a very different story. Everyone can think of projects that have 'failed' – perhaps processes got worse rather than better, maybe there were cost overruns, or perhaps the project was launched with fundamental errors. Even if the budget and schedule are met, one must ask: 'Did the project deliver the results and quality we expected?' True project success must be evaluated with respect to all three components. Otherwise, a project could be considered 'failure'.

Too often situations arise where projects begin to show signs of disorganisation, appear out of control, and have a sense of doom and failure. Settings emerge where everyone works in his box and no one seems to know what the other team member is doing. What about team members who live by the creed: 'I'll do my part (as I see fit) and after that, it's their problem.'? Even worse is when team members resort to finger-pointing. Situations similar to these scenarios point to a sign that reads 'danger'. And if you read the fine print under the word 'danger', it reads: 'Your project needs to be brought under control or else it could fail.'

When projects begin to show signs of stress and failure, everyone looks to the project manager for answers. It may seem unfair that the burden of doom falls upon a single individual. But this is the reason why you chose to manage projects for a job. The project manager should be trained to recognise

and deal with these types of situations.

Even with the best of intentions or solid plans, project can go wrong if they are not managed properly. Quite often, problems can occur (and usually do). This is when the project management must recognise a warning sign and take action. If you understand the difference between symptoms and problems and can spot warning signs of project failure, your judgement will help you take proper steps. In addition to applying the processes and principles taught in project management courses, personal work skills of communication, management, leadership, conflict resolution, and diplomacy could also be used to take a corrective action.

During the course of managing a project the project management must remain in control of a project and be aware of any activity which presents a risk of project failure.

A project is considered a success when it has delivered what was required, in line with expectations. Therefore, in order to succeed, a project must deliver to cost, to quality, and on time; and it must deliver the benefits presented when the project was approved.

In international cooperation projects it is important to communicate properly and clearly to all project partners what is the substance of the project, what are the main goals and what are the indicators.

Responsibility for this common understanding of the project lies with the project leader. The project leader should clarify all issues before the project starts and repeat and confirm them during the project kick-off.

A common reason why projects fail is related to **insufficient project visibility to all team members**. All three tiers of the

project team, executive management, project managers, and team members, need access to the right level of information at the right time.

Project managers often complain that they do not have visibility into all current activities. They often do not have access to the project schedules in real-time. Sometimes project managers present the plan at the outset of the project and then become gatekeepers of the schedule, claiming to executives that the schedule has not been updated recently and is not ready to be shared. The sponsors of a project and the executives do not have access to a schedule or reports until it is too late to either re-direct the effort or to cancel the project. The net result that management cares about is the cost of the schedule overruns.

Project managers often put together a schedule and plan at the outset of a project. The schedule does not always get updated for a variety of reasons. The project managers are so preoccupied with managing issues and re-organizing resources that they do not have time to update the tasks on the schedule and review their impacts.

Project managers often lack visibility into all of the projects their resources are working on. Many times they share team members with other project managers, so they may not know exactly what tasks the resource is working on at a particular moment.

The mostly heard complaint from team members is that they lack visibility on a day to day basis about the tasks that they are supposed to work on. If they are working on multiple projects at one time, they are often confused about task priority. Tip: Publish projects to a visible location

The best solutions are a combination of tools, process, and people-based changes. The most important thing is to provide the team with a centralized location for publishing all project schedules. The simplest way to share project schedules is to post project files in a network folder, setting permissions on shared folders and group permissions for access rights.

A better solution is to put projects and corresponding documents to an intranet or extranet application, again setting access rights. If the team uses a web based system, then project information may be accessed from remote places if team members travel, work from home, or need to update information from client offices.

The success of the implementation involves executive management. Executives must communicate to all team members the importance of updating tasks and projects on a daily basis.

If project management has **not clear project objectives** and priorities, then it is also unclear about the project importance. Many organizations get so busy that they forget that a key component of success is taking the time out to meet and discuss goals and strategies to reach those goals. Once these elements are outlined, many projects are eliminated for not matching up to those goals.

Many times, project managers are given so many projects that they cannot realistically achieve them on time and on budget. Some of the more experienced project managers may push back, telling that all efforts cannot be achieved. However, many project managers do not, either in fear of losing their jobs, or not wanting to 'rock the boat.'

The natural result of this lack of prioritization is that team members are often overworked. Eventually, some may leave the organization seeking a less hectic environment. At a minimum, the project priorities must be communicated in status meetings and reiterated frequently. If a project management solution is utilized, then the project priority should also be designated in that solution as a visible reminder to all team members.

Following the lack of clear project objectives are usually overloaded resources. It is a circular problem as well. That is, because management has no visibility into all of the projects and activities the team is performing, they are often labouring under the belief that the team can achieve more than it is capable of.

If project objectives and priorities are not clearly established, then it is highly likely that the team will embark upon too many tasks at one time. The result is that the average team member will have more work than time in the work day to complete that work.

Project managers often state that executive management has no idea how much work their resources actually have assigned to them. Unless the project managers are willing to stand up to executive management, or have a way to show that their resources are overloaded, they are in trouble.

A common problem is **gaps in communication**. Most project teams use e-mail to communicate about their projects and tasks. The biggest complaint here is that project communication resides in each individual's email box. So, if for example a new resource joins the project, there is no centralized view of the project history.

At a bare minimum, communication should be posted in a centralized location. The purpose of centralizing the project communication is so that if new staff join the project during its implementation, they can get up to speed rapidly by reviewing the entire project history.

The better solutions are the web based collaborative and project systems that provide a centralized location for project and task communication.<sup>35</sup>

## 2. GENERAL ASPECTS OF THE EC CONTROL

The European Commission has the political responsibility for ensuring that EU funds are spent properly. Each year they endorse the EU's annual accounts, including data on all money spent during the year. The European Parliament then decides whether to give its approval to how the Commission implemented the budget for the year, a procedure known as the 'budget discharge'.

The European Commission delegates day-to-day management of the budget to its directors-general and the head of the European External Action Service (EEAS). Each of them issues an annual activity report. The reports are the main instrument of internal accountability within the Commission and contain a 'declaration of assurance'. They provide an analysis of the internal control and financial management systems set up by each department to ensure EU funds are properly managed.

The declaration provides assurance that the report gives a true and fair view and about the legality and regularity of underlying transactions and the sound management of all

financial transactions. The directors-general are obliged to enter reservations in areas where significant problems have been identified which affect the declaration of assurance. Since about 80 % of EU funding is managed by EU countries themselves, they have a big share of the responsibility for how this money is spent. EU countries have to put in place effective and efficient internal control systems and carry out the necessary checks on the EU funding under their management. Each country is required to provide the Commission with information on how it has implemented the rules, by submitting, annually, its accounts, a management declaration, a summary of audits and checks carried out and an independent audit opinion.

One of the tools used to prevent fraud and corruption in the management of the EU budget by the European institutions and agencies is the central exclusion database (CED). This is administered by the Commission's accounting officer and accessible to EU countries. The CED contains all relevant information on people and organisations condemned for fraud, corruption, involvement in criminal organisations or any other illegal activity which is detrimental to the EU's financial interests. The Commission has proposed developing a better-integrated system of early detection and exclusion to bolster the protection of these interests.

The EU's accounts are based on 'accrual accounting' standards, a modern and transparent accounting system (which only a few national governments apply as yet). The system mirrors the modern accounting standards used by the private sector.<sup>36</sup>

The purpose of **project control** is to adjust the project to meet its goals by assessing the implementation of the project, an-

35 Le Management De Projet. GAREL, Gilles, La D couverte, 2011

36 Beginners Guide to EU Funding. European Comission, 2015

analysing the problems and their causes, designing changes to address problems that are determined to need attention, and implementing those changes through control actions. Project control is distinguished from project planning in two important ways: 1) project control gives a set of decisions and actions, whereas project planning gives a design; and 2) project control is a real time process during the implementation, not before the implementation begins.

The EC is responsible for the programmes implementation and managing the budgets in the interest of the European Union. So the EC has an important role in supervision and control of the selected projects.

The EC monitors projects to ensure that Beneficiaries submit technical and financial reports in accordance with the current reporting requirements. It shall, if necessary, carry out financial control either through on-the-spot checks, or by requesting supporting documents.

The purpose of the control is to ensure that the amount of EC financial contribution is reduced if it finds irregularities, including non-compliance with the provisions of the Grant Agreement or with other aspects of the legal framework, or if it turns out that the action has been subjected to a change without the EC's approval. If irregularities are detected, effective, proportional and dissuasive penalties shall be applied in accordance with the Financial Regulation.

## 1 Support

The aim of the EC is the success of the projects. EC shall provide the Beneficiaries with the assistance during the whole implementation period of the project.

It gives advice and answers questions concerning the agreement and provides information, where possible, on the best possible way of complying with the incumbent obligations and requirements.

A nominated desk officer shall be available to provide assistance. He answers all questions as soon as possible, however, each desk officer is responsible for many projects and it may therefore take up several days for the question to be answered. The Beneficiary shall be informed about the desk officer's name at the beginning of the project. All questions should be sent to the mailbox of the relevant programme, quoting the reference of the project in the subject of the message.

## 2 Monitoring, Evaluation and Audits

Besides the internal and external evaluation that may be carried out within the project as a part of the project's activities, the EC can organize an external monitoring, ex-post evaluation or audit of projects.

### a) Monitoring Visits

Monitoring visits represent a visit from an EC official or an expert hired by the EC. The main aim of these visits is to help and give advice to organisations involved in the projects during its implementation period (so that suggestions and help can be taken into account to guarantee the successful outcome of the project). The visits are made on-site. After the visit, the EC's official or expert will prepare a report.

The main elements discussed during monitoring visits are:

- Questions by the Beneficiary;
- Compliance of project objectives with project activities;
- Project's effectiveness, efficiency, potential sustainability and expected impact;



- Quality of the project's management.

The EC's official/expert gives recommendations on actions that should be taken or necessary modifications that shall be considered in order for the project to achieve the planned results.

### b) Evaluation Visits

After the completion of a project, the EC may carry out an evaluation visit. The aim is to assess the project impact and outcomes.

Unlike monitoring visits that are organized during the project implementation, the ex-post evaluation is also a review of the impact and planned actions to assess the overall impact of the programme.

### c) Audits

During the project implementation and up to several years after the final payment the EC or any hired experts authorised by the EC may audit the project. The aim of the audit is to verify the use made of the EU financial resources.

The audit experts shall have access to the relevant project documents, e.g. invoices, payrolls, purchase orders, proofs of payment, timesheets and any other documents used for the calculation and presentation of costs.

The Court of Auditors may also verify the use of the EU's financial contribution on the basis of its own procedures.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the Union and its rules of application Synoptic presentation And a selection of legal texts relevant to the budget. Luxembourg; Publications Office of the European Union, 2013 ISBN 978-92-79-25596-0 doi:10.2761/18969

## Preparation for an External Audit – TIPS

### Planning

- Nominate an audit contact person within your organization who will act as the auditors' main contact. This should be an experienced person with strong project management and communication skills.
- Send a general communication to the project team stating that if the auditors contact them directly, they should refer them to the contact person.
- Develop a list of contacts that should be kept informed of the audit progress.
- Develop a list of contacts that can provide technical or administrative support.
- If necessary, organize a training session with persons who may participate in the audit either to produce documents, be interviewed by the auditors or may participate in findings discussions.
- Contact auditors and set up opening interview. Clarify the purpose of the audit and ask for audit requirements in writing.
- Inform the internal audit department of the upcoming audit.
- Make necessary arrangements for the audit team – meeting rooms, preliminary interview schedule, entrance interview specifics including attendees.

### Opening Interview

- Develop a list of questions to discuss in the meeting including the purpose, objectives and scope of the audit; timelines including the beginning and the end of the audit action and expected report date; and communication process.
- Consider giving the auditor(s) a helpful hand.
- Determine staff and space requirements, including an on-site space; modify meeting room for auditors, etc.

### Audit action

- Obtain the list of requested documents and develop an approach for sharing the information on a timely basis. Give a target date for providing documents to the auditors.
- Review the documents prior to submission to the auditor. Consider if the documents provide the necessary support. Anticipate what questions these documents may provoke.
- Maintain a list of all documents provided to the auditors.
- Meet with auditors at least weekly to learn of the status of the audit and potential issues that are identified.
- Communicate at least weekly with staff who need status updates.
- Set up exit interview.

### Exit Interview

- Ask for a copy of each finding or draft report prior to the interview.
- Consider participation of representatives from other groups, e.g. internal audit, controller's office, etc.
- Agree on valid findings; negotiate those findings where the facts are not representative of the control weakness.
- Pass any disputed issues to supervisors.

### Audit Report

- Ask for the final draft report for review.
- Draft responses to the audit findings and circulate them to management for approval.
- Discuss the follow up process.
- Perform a post-audit evaluation to determine weaknesses in the process and potential changes to approach in the future.<sup>38</sup>

38 Projektov management. SVOZILOV, Alena, Grada, 2011

## 3. Financial Aspects

### a) General Principles

The amount of the grant mentioned in the Grant Agreement is a maximum grant subject to the following conditions:

- 1) The absolute amount of the grant may not exceed the amount indicated in the Grant Agreement.
- 2) The percentage of the total eligible costs (EU contribution) cannot be higher than the maximum percentage mentioned in the Grant Agreement.

Not only the costs covered by the EU grant but all project related expenditure and income must be reported in the financial report, as the project is taken as a whole.

The EC reduces the payment of the balance of the grant or even asks for reimbursement of pre-financing amount already paid if the actions carried out do not comply with the conditions, activities and outputs, as described in the grant application, as well as the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement, or if the total eligible costs are not sufficient to justify the pre-financing payment.

Only expenses incurred between the starting and the closing date of the project - as indicated in the Grant Agreement- and related to actions taking place within the project schedule are eligible.

### b) Accounting and Internal Control

An analytical accounting system must be established as well as an adequate internal control system, to ensure that:

- Source of funding for the project is identified;
- The project expenditure is duly recorded and authorised.

All transactions relating to project expenditure must be systematically recorded in the project's accounts.

All expenditure must be supported by adequate documentation. Any not documented or not adequately supported cost item cannot be taken into account when establishing the final amount of the grant. According to the Grant Agreement, all records and supporting documentation must be kept for a given period after the date of the payment of the final.

Where an ex-post audit concludes that the information is not sufficiently supported by the accounting records, such findings may lead to a recovery of funds<sup>39</sup>.

### c) Eligibility of Costs

#### General Aspects

Only following costs are eligible for EU co-financing:

- They must be incurred by the Beneficiary, recorded in project's accounts or tax documents and must be identifiable and verifiable. Any income or expense not registered in project's accounts will not be taken into consideration when calculating the final amount of the grant. Any costs declared in the statement of expenses, which are not supported by an appropriate accounting document, will also not be taken into account when calculating the final amount of the grant.
- They must be incurred in a country eligible to participate

<sup>39</sup> Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 of 29 October 2012 on the rules of application of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union. (Official Journal L 362 of 31.12.2012)

in the programme (information on eligible countries is provided in the call for proposals).

- They must be connected to the activities of the project and necessary for the fulfilment of its objectives and they must be present in the original budget or any amendment.
- They must be reasonable, justified and in accordance with the principle of value for money and cost effectiveness. Changes between the budget and actual costs must be explained, and when they exceed a specified limit (e.g. 10%) of a budget heading they are subject to prior approval of the.
- They must be incurred and paid during the eligibility period of the project indicated in the Grant Agreement and must clearly indicate the activity to which they relate. In the absence of this information, the costs cannot be taken into consideration.
- They must be actually incurred in the relevant project report..

#### Project costs - documentation

##### General Principles

Not documented costs cannot be taken into consideration. Whenever possible, all payments must be made by bank transfer, not in cash. Invoices must contain the project reference, date of purchase, of delivery and the date(s) when the services were provided.

The Beneficiary shall provide copies of relevant documents. There are no supporting documents needed to be attached to the final report, but the EC often requests providing sample of representative supporting documents. The size of the sampling requested may represent up to a 100% of the costs declared.

The documents must be the same as those which would be accepted by the Beneficiaries' tax authorities and may concern the following categories:

**a) Staff Costs**

Staff costs may only be charged to the project if they correspond to the actual time devoted to the project.

The findings from the EU controls show that the wrong calculation of staff costs is one of the main problems in financial reports. The gross salary should be taken into account when calculating staff costs plus obligatory social charges and any other statutory costs included in the payroll.

The staff costs must be in compliance with the Beneficiary's policy on payment and must be and should not much exceed the rates used in the relevant field of work. When this principle is not respected, the costs can be classified as not eligible or excessive expenditure either at any time during the project implementation or at the time of final payment

**b) Travel Costs**

Only travel directly related to the activities of the project and realized by persons directly participating these activities can be reimbursed.

**c) Subsistence Costs:**

These costs are eligible provided that they are in line with the Beneficiary's/ies' usual practices. They refer to accommodation, local travel and meals. They are eligible up to the spent amount. That's why it is important to keep all supporting documents mentioned in the Applicants /Financial guide issued for each call.

**d) Overheads/Indirect costs**

These costs cannot be calculated as specific costs under one of the budget headings. They usually include maintenance, stationery, photocopying, mailing postage, telephone and internet costs, heating, electricity or other forms of energy, water, office furniture, insurance and any other expenditure necessary for the successful completion of the project.

They do not need to be supported by accounting documents but in case of audit they must be interpretable. The amount that can be included represents a limit (e.g. maximum of 7%) of direct eligible costs.<sup>40</sup>

**4 Reporting – Control of the Realization of the Project**

The reporting period, types of reports and reporting dates requested by the EC are included in the Grant Agreement.

**d) Progress Report**

The project report is a document, which gives an overview about the project implementation to ascertain if the project schedule and project finance comply with the Grant Agreement. The progress report is usually used when the project implementation period specified in the Grant Agreement is longer than certain number of years (e.g. 2) and should be elaborated usually after the first year of project implementation

**e) Final Report/Final Request for Payment**

This report shall provide an overview of all project's activities

<sup>40</sup> Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002

and achievements. The final report consists of:

- The final financial statement;
- The final report completely describing the implementation.
- All written project outputs.

Most agreements have a deadline for presentation of the final report, usually of no later than 3 months from the end of project period.

### Tips for Writing the Project Report

Why is the report important?

If you wish to obtain a good mark for your project, you should write a good report. It is the report which is marked, not the outputs or anything else you might have constructed during the project period. No matter how significant your achievements, if you do not write up your work well, you will obtain a poor mark.

You should understand that the report will be read by examiners who have no familiarity with the work you have done. Examiners are not mind-readers, and cannot give credit for work which you have done but not described in the report.

### The Mechanics of Writing

The problem you have to solve is this: to transfer your own experiences of doing the project, and the knowledge you have gained, from your brain onto paper in a coherent, logical and correct form.

There are several ways of achieving this. One method, often used by technical authors, is to write as quickly as you can, without regard for coherency, structure or order, until you

have written down all the points. If your brain is running faster than your fingers and a thought gets into your head which belongs in another part of the document, you can skip to the end of the page and insert a few words there to remind you that point later, then resume where you were. The aim is to pass as much relevant things from brain to paper as quickly as possible. This method has been called the "brain dump". It is practised by some writers of fiction as well as by technical authors.

After three hours of "brain dumping" you might have four or five pages of disorganized text. Then it is necessary to put the text into order and final form.

### How to Write Well

Any type of writing is difficult, but technical writing is particularly hard.

### Precision

You must be absolutely precise. When you write, it is not sufficient that you know what you mean; neither is it sufficient that your writing admits of the meaning which you intend: it must admit of no other meaning. What you write must not be capable of misinterpretation. You must carefully choose the right word for the occasion. For example, you should not write 'optimum' if you mean 'good'. 'Approximate' means 'close', so 'very approximate' means 'very close' – which is not what many people seem to think it means.

### Enthusiasm

Precision in writing is mainly a matter of taking sufficient care. Good writing is not only precise, however, it is enthusiastic, and that is much harder to achieve. It helps if you have read widely, especially novels.

Prefer short sentences to long sentences. Prefer short words

to long words, provided that the short word has the meaning you need. Terseness is a great virtue in technical writing. Avoid circumlocutions. 'In almost all sectors of the computing marketplace' can be replaced in most contexts by 'almost everywhere'.

### Grammar

Poor grammar is a problem that keeps from understanding. Even if you yourself do not place a strong emphasis on good grammar, most of the examiners do. Most examiners will be irritated by poor spelling and poor grammar. It is always worth doing whatever you can, short of bribery, to put your examiner in a good mood. Write well and spell well, for this reason if for no other!<sup>41</sup>

## 3 RECOMMENDATIONS

### ❖ To develop, obtain and keep all financial records related to the project in the form required by the EC, follow the financial guidelines for applicants;

Keeping relevant documentation is very important. Without proper documentation it is impossible to show that the costs claimed from control authority meet the conditions of the Grant Agreement. Approximately 4 out of 10 issues affecting project funding found during controls under the EU programmes relate to inadequate record-keeping. If documents showing that the project finance has been used in accordance with the Grant Agreement cannot be provided, the EC may decide to recover the unsubstantiated expenditure.

<sup>41</sup> Controlling von Projekten - Mit konkreten Beispielen aus der Unternehmenspraxis - Alle Aspekte der Projektplanung, Projektsteuerung und Projektkontrolle. FIEDLER, Rudolf, Springer, 2014

## What could go wrong? Key Control Measures

- Certain documents may not be drafted or kept. For example, the Beneficiaries' internal procedures may not provide for certain documents required in the Grant Agreement. → Ensure that project staff know and understand the conditions set in Grant Agreement.
- The documents kept do not provide sufficient evidence that the Grant Agreement have been met. → Ensure that the project documentation provides relevant proof (for example, the documents are official documents from an outside source).
- Project documents may have been kept, but may not be retrievable later. → Arrange for a numbering, filing and archiving system that can be followed easily and allows easy retrieval of the documents.
- Project documents may be prematurely discarded. This may occur if the Beneficiaries' rules do not require a document to be kept for the full period required in the project contract. → State clearly the date until which the documents must be kept in the archiving system. Also write this date on the boxes containing the project documents.
- Project documents may deteriorate over time. This may occur if documents are not protected from heat or damp. → Arrange for the documents to be archived in safe, secure conditions.

The project staff may no longer be available when the EC decides to carry out an audit. This is often the case if staff has been specially hired for the project. In that case, the project documentation will often be the only reliable supporting evi-

dence. With this in mind, be aware that most contracts for EU funded actions allow the control authority to perform audits and checks up to seven years after final payment. For these reasons, Beneficiaries should keep extensive records so they can later show how the project was managed. Beneficiaries are advised to keep more than just the minimum documents listed in the Grant Agreement.

- ▶ An original document is more reliable than a copy, as it is difficult to alter and offers better protection against recording the same expense item twice. For this reason, during checks or audits, the auditors will generally ask to see original documents.
- ▶ An official document is more reliable than an unofficial one. For example, an official bank statement provides more reliable evidence of payment than a cash payment voucher.
- ▶ A document issued by an outside source is better evidence than a document drawn up in-house. For example, for procurement under a grant contract, a tender or letter sent by the tenderer is better evidence of a competitive consultation than a note from the Beneficiary stating that the tenderer was contacted. For a service contract, a timesheet filled in and signed by the person who did the work is better evidence than a summary drafted by the Beneficiary's administrative department.
- ▶ Relation to the project: The supplier's invoice shows that goods were bought, but not necessarily that they were used for the project. The link to the project may need to be documented, for example by means of receipts signed by the ultimate recipients. For vehicles, a logbook can be kept to prove that the vehicle was used for the project and not for other purposes.

▶ Reality: Project documentation should prove that the costs were incurred. For example, the supplier's invoice may prove that the supplier was owed money by the project. But it does not necessarily prove that the project completed the transaction by accepting the goods and paying for them. So it may be necessary to keep the supplier's invoice AND the supplier's delivery note AND the bank statement (or receipt) showing that payment was made.

- ▶ Within the project period: Contracts for EU funded external actions generally specify a period during which the action may be implemented. The purchase invoice may not show that the costs were incurred during the term of the contract. A delivery note or a transport document showing when the goods were received may be helpful.
- ▶ Specific contractual conditions: The Contract may include specific conditions, for example requiring competitive procurement procedures or some form of EU visibility. In these cases, the project documentation will need to include not only the supplier's invoice but evidence that Contractual Conditions were also met.

If the the project documentation cannot be retrieved during an audit, the consequences could be the same as if no documentation had been kept at all, especially if the project has already ended and the staff are no longer on hand. How can this be prevented?

- ▶ Use a simple referencing and numbering system that anybody can follow, even people unfamiliar with the project. Make sure the system allows the documents to be found easily and quickly. Project references may follow a chronological, numerical, thematic, geographical or other system. The Beneficiary/Co-Beneficiaries should decide on the most

appropriate system depending on the circumstances. A clear filing index can save a lot of trouble.

- ▶ Use orderly physical arrangements to file the documents. For example, file the documents in folders for easy retrieval, rather than tying them with string or keeping them in bags or in piles. If they are archived in boxes, one simple, effective measure is to label the box with its contents.
- ▶ Make sure the documents are physically protected and cannot deteriorate while in storage or in transit. Documents should not be stored in damp conditions or next to flammable or chemical products. They should be stored in closed premises safe from rodents and other animals.
- ▶ The Beneficiary has to acknowledge that project partners may be obliged to keep documentation locally to comply with local accounting and tax regulations.
- ▶ The Beneficiary is accountable to the EC and must:
  - Present supporting documents when the EC conducts audits and checks;
  - Take into account that the auditors will generally require original supporting documents as proof;
  - Facilitate audits and checks, bearing in mind that if the documentation is spread over many locations this may create obstacles.

The Beneficiary will need to find practical ways to reconcile these conflicting objectives. Here are some possible approaches.

- ▶ For grants, at the project proposal stage, question whether project execution/documentation really needs to be

spread between so many local actors. If it is possible to organise the project so that it is not overly dispersed, this will make audits and checks easier.

- ▶ See whether the documentation can be grouped in fewer locations (for example all the documentation for one particular country might be grouped in only one location in that country).
- ▶ See whether the documentation can be moved temporarily to a central location when an audit is carried out.
- ▶ Find out whether the local partners can be asked to send a copy of their documentation together with their financial reports. This would help the lead partner to check the work of the local partners. This approach would also facilitate audits, as the auditors might then be able to inspect the copies centrally. But the auditors may still wish to check that the copies match the originals.<sup>42</sup>

For easy and quick orientation it is highly recommended to develop a documentation checklist.

#### ❖ To check carefully project schedule;

The project schedule is the tool that communicates what work needs to be performed, which resources of the organization will perform the work and the timeframes in which that work needs to be performed. The project schedule should reflect all of the work associated with delivering the project on time. Without a full and complete schedule, the project manager will be unable to communicate the complete ef-

42 Controlling von Projekten - Mit konkreten Beispielen aus der Unternehmenspraxis - Alle Aspekte der Projektplanung, Projektsteuerung und Projektkontrolle. FIEDLER, Rudolf, Springer, 2014



fort, in terms of cost and resources, necessary to deliver the project.

Schedules also help do the following:

- They provide a basis to monitor and control project activities.
- They help determine how best to allocate resources in order to achieve the project goal.
- They help assess how time delays will impact the project.
- They help figure out where excess resources are available to allocate to other projects.
- They provide a basis to help track project progress.
- Project managers and the project management team often do not put enough emphasis on the schedule. However, schedule changes can affect any area of the project and can have downstream impacts. In this manner, the schedule becomes the central focus and the foundational tool for managing the project.

❖ **To inform the EC about all changes in the project, in particular about the changes in the budget and in the project schedule;**

Any request for modification of the project must be formally addressed to the Commission by the Beneficiary's legal representative by official communication and in sufficient time before the changes would take effect. No modification to a project will be accepted within the final month of implementation. All modifications to the project must be duly justified by the Beneficiary. The Beneficiary must clearly outline the management and financial implications of the modification requested/proposed. The Commission will examine the request for modification of the project and inform the Beneficiary by e-mail or in writing as to whether the request for modification is accepted or rejected. Where necessary, a

written amendment to the Grant Agreement to be signed by both parties will be issued. Under no circumstances will either party be contractually bound by any verbal agreement. Any request for changes that fundamentally alter the overall objectives of the project and that call into question the decision to award the grant shall be rejected.

❖ **To ask EC desk officers (contact persons for relevant project) for consultation whenever needed;**

A dedicated desk officer is available to provide assistance. While he will endeavour to answer all queries as swiftly as possible, it is necessary to notice that each desk officer is responsible for 50–75 project files and it may therefore take up to 15 days for your query to be answered. The name of the relevant desk officer shall be communicated to the Beneficiary at the beginning of the project. All queries should be addressed to the functional mailbox of the relevant programme, quoting the reference of the relevant project in the subject of the message.

## Part V: Methods of International Cooperation

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In some types of international programs, proper and flawless implementation of projects in the conditions of multinational project teams where each partner speaks a different mother tongue presents a sufficient challenge already. All the more emphasis must then be put on the ways and methods of group work, because it influences the impact the project has on all parties involved and the impressions we take away from this cooperation.

Heterogeneity and experience invested into the cooperation by the parties involved are at the same time the main motive and reason for a longtime support of international cooperation on the part of various institutions at the European as well as worldwide level. Thanks to various starting positions and practice the partners learn from each other, and if proper methods are involved these effects can multiply.

It cannot be said that there would be only one “proper” method. Although in most cases you will probably encounter the so called peer review method or action learning, the real portfolio of available methods is much broader. In this chapter, we will have a look at the best known methods and we will illustrate their usage and modalities with examples.

### 2. PEER REVIEW

Another method of cooperation in groups is the peer review process or, in other words, **evaluation by colleagues or by people of the same age**.

The English word peer denotes a person from the same stratum; the peer review is thus a process of evaluation where the author and the evaluator are professionally and otherwise equal.

However, the peer review method is suitable for other areas as well. It can be used in science where a community of experts in certain area cooperates on reviewing a scientific work of their colleague. Yet within this community there is often fierce competition and the peer review is thus often ineffective – the evaluators are not capable to do an unbiased review.

There are two types of peer review:

- Anonymous
  - The evaluator does not know whose work (s) he evaluates and vice versa, the author of the work gets an opinion from the evaluator, but (s)he does not know who the evaluator is.
  - An advantage is that like this the evaluator may leave aside his/her prejudices.
  -
- Open
  - The author and the evaluator know each other.
  - If some prejudices exist, they can be eliminated in mutual communication.
  - The open peer review can be followed by an answer from the author and a fruitful discussion.

The peer review is an ideal method for international cooperation.

- Subjects that are active in the same area also often encounter similar problems.
- Yet thanks to the fact that each of them operates in a different state, they have different backgrounds and different experience when it comes to solving these problems.
- If they participate in a peer review, it is of great benefit to all.
- The partners are able to provide each other with a real perspective from the outside.

There are several important principles with respect to the peer review:

- **Peer Review is not a control.** The peer review does not bring the perspective of a superior authority, but rather the perspective of an experienced colleague or colleagues. Throughout the process, all participating are learning – the evaluated as well as the evaluator –, everyone should benefit from the result of the process.
- **Purposeless critique is not the aim.** The aim is to ensure that the evaluated partner gains a realistic perspective on his results and approaches. The perspective of the evaluating partner is a perspective from the outside, yet at the same time it is a perspective of a person who is in the same position and most likely encountering the same problems.
- **Peer review is not a test.** The evaluated partner cannot see the peer review as a test of his abilities. On the contrary, he has to perceive the entire process as an opportunity to develop his skills. The situation cannot result in the loss of the evaluated nor the evaluator; it is a situation out of which they will both come out as winners.
- **Peer review strengthens the partnership.** Throughout this activity, both the evaluated and the evaluators will

develop their ability and willingness to share their experience with others. Moreover, the evaluators will learn how to observe, interpret and present constructive suggestions of solutions.

The peer review has the following phases:

- **Preparatory phase.** Within the preparatory phase, it is important to determine which areas will be subject to evaluation. It is necessary to keep in mind that it is not an evaluation of the partner as such, but rather an evaluation of his activities. The evaluated can beforehand outline where he sees the weak point of his activities. He will provide his colleagues with materials necessary for the execution of the peer review – the annual report, concept of future development and other relevant documents. However, he should always try to stick to the determined area and not to overburden his colleagues with unnecessary information. Within the preparatory phase, criteria of evaluation should also be set to ensure that the results from individual peer reviews within the same project are comparable.
- **The actual peer review.** After the evaluating colleagues manage to go through the provided materials, the practical part of the peer review takes place. Its course of course differs depending on the area in which the cooperation occurs. The peer review usually takes the form of an evaluation visit, when the evaluators personally come to have a look at the activity of the evaluated. The most important parts are the feedback for the evaluated and the subsequent discussion.
- **Drafting of a report.** If both parties are interested, an evaluation report regarding the entire process can be made. It is made jointly by the evaluators and the evaluated can then add his comments that should be

incorporated into the evaluation report. The evaluation report usually also contains particular recommendations that can have the form of an action plan or of its basis.

- Incorporation of results: The fourth phase is, in actual fact, not a part of the peer review, yet without it, the entire process would lack purpose. The point is that the results and recommendations that emerged during the process and that are incorporated into the evaluation report have to be transformed into particular measures to improve the activities of the evaluated. Within the fourth phase, the action plan for incorporating results within the organization should be created and it should of course also be followed. If it is necessary, the evaluators can be further available for consultation and assistance with the implementation.

Each project has its specifics, but some features of the peer review remain the same:

- It is important to delineate and narrowly define an area that should be improved.
- You should not uselessly critique other areas or the actual partner.
- The evaluated partner has to be open to comments and also prepared to subsequently implement them.

### An example of use:

Within the **preparatory phase**, the evaluated region **determines an area** in which it would like to be evaluated (the use of wind power plants, awareness of green energy, financial conditions for investors, etc.) and **provides** the evaluating team with detailed **information about the situation** in the region. Preparations for the evaluation visit should include the **planning of visits** to relevant places (wind power plants, infor-

mation centers, etc.), meetings with relevant stakeholders (companies, non-profit organizations), etc.

During the actual **evaluation visit** these places can then be visited, workshops with the stakeholders may take place, the evaluator can prepare a **questionnaire** for the stakeholders, etc. The responsibility for the course of the visit usually lies with the team of the evaluated partner. This includes the **logistics of the visits**, etc.

After the evaluation visit took place, the evaluated and the evaluating regions should jointly **draft the evaluation report**. The evaluation report is followed by an **action plan** into which the results of the entire evaluation process should be incorporated.

### 3. METHOD 6-3-5

The method 6-3-5 is sometimes considered to be an independent method, other times it is considered to be a form of brainwriting. It falls within techniques the purpose of which is to elicit as many ideas as possible.

Basic principles of the method are:

- 6 participants
- 3 ideas
- 5 minutes

You ask 6 people to sit in a circle and during 5 minutes to write down their three ideas on a piece of paper. Then the papers are passed to their neighbors. The neighbors can develop any of these three ideas, or potentially suggest new ones. Within half an hour, the paper will return to its first owner. Each

member of the group in the end reacts to his three ideas developed by the contributions of his colleagues.

#### Advantages:

- Although the session is longer because you have to read the individual ideas, you get 108 (6 times 18) ideas within less than an hour.
- The participants inspire each other.
- Really everyone gets to talk, even the less self-assertive members of the group.
- The author of a helpful idea may be identified – a motivation factor.

#### Disadvantages:

- 
- The time limit may get the session participants under pressure and they will not manage to be creative.
- The participants do not have sufficient space to develop their ideas – they have a short time period during which they only have to briefly pass on the information so that the colleague sitting next to them would understand it.

#### An example of use:

This method can be used for example within smaller project consortiums (from 3 to 6 partners because of time saving) within creative activities of the project management – for example during a discussion about a follow-up project, during generation of ideas, etc. In such case, in the first phase you would ask everyone to write down three ideas concerning the problem being solved – for example “Continuation of cooperation within the next 3 years”. The advantage is that in the next rounds the participants develop the ideas that have been already written down or they potentially suggest

new ones. In the ideal case, towards the end of the process you get an interesting overview of the development of individual ideas that you can use as a basis for a more sophisticated discussion with others.

## 4. BRAINSTORMING AND ITS VARIATIONS

Brainstorming is one of the best known methods of cooperation in larger groups and teams.

#### Characteristics:

- This method is intended to generate as many ideas as possible.
- It uses the fact that the members of the group can inspire each other and together they come up with more ideas than if they would be solving the problem individually.
- The majority of methods designed to produce as many ideas as possible are variations on this method.

#### The most important principles of brainstorming:

- No evaluation. There are no bad ideas. Even the seemingly silliest idea can contain important elements or at least inspire others. The presented ideas thus should not be commented on or evaluated by anyone.
- Relaxed atmosphere. Within the first phase of the brainstorming, it is the quantity of ideas that counts, and thus nobody should be afraid to come up with an idea that does not fit in with the other ideas. This is facilitated by an informal atmosphere where the team members know each other and they are not afraid of their critique. The team members are equal, nobody is a leader, otherwise it could happen that (s)he tries to influence the others

and lead them in a certain direction.

- Writing down ideas. All ideas that were presented should be written down. The best idea is to have a record-keeper present in the room, who is not involved in the brainstorming and who concentrates solely on not missing any idea.
- Determining the border. In order not to lose time during the brainstorming, it is important in the beginning of the session to exactly determine the problem we are trying to solve and the aims we are trying to achieve. Otherwise it can easily happen that we come up with many good ideas, yet they will not be relevant with respect to the problem we are trying to solve.

What to be careful about:

- Given the fact that the outcome of this method is presented as the result of the entire team, the team members may lose motivation to be creative.
- The fear that colleagues could evaluate your idea influences the performance of the team members, especially if their superior is present in the room.

The creative phase is followed by a rational phase when the best ideas are identified. Within this phase, the individual ideas are interconnected, the irrelevant ones are eliminated and together you arrive at the best solution to the problem.

Advantages:

- collection of a large number of ideas,
- high creativity,
- mutual inspiration,
- involvement of all team members.

Disadvantages:

- It is actually not really useful to have a large number of ideas.
- It requires a team spirit and good atmosphere.

### 1 Individual Brainstorming/Brainwriting

Participants write down their ideas on a piece of paper, which you then collect.

A slight modification of this method is to distribute the brainwriting into several days and to write the ideas down on a freely accessible piece of paper placed for example in the corridor of the company building through which people often pass, or in the vestibule of a room where an international project meeting takes place. Within these several days, the participants come into touch with the ideas of their colleagues and they have the chance to improve them. They can add their own ideas with which they came up while working.

Advantages:

- Nobody is afraid that (s)he will be criticized for his/her ideas; certain anonymity of ideas is ensured.
- While during the brainstorming the dominant individuals come to the fore, during the brainwriting truly everyone has the opportunity to express his/her opinion.
- Disadvantages:
- During a classic brainwriting, the participants cannot inspire each other (this can be overcome by having more rounds).

## 2 Mind Map / Mindmapping

Participants shout out their ideas, which the record-keeper groups according to their instruction into the form of a mind map.

Advantages:

- The outcomes of brainstorming are more structured.
- If you come back to the mind map after some time, you can see the ideas and connections more easily.
- You can use arrows, highlighting of relations, circling, etc.

Disadvantages:

- The immediateness of the ideas gets lost.
- The participants are forced to think logically about the connections – maybe to the detriment of creativity.

## 5. BRAINWALKING

The technique of brainwalking is a fairly new one and it comes in many versions. It is based on the presumption that walking is a healthy form of movement which supports the functioning of both brain hemispheres. It is often recommended as an exercise to improve memory.

The brainwalking can be also understood as a variation on brainwriting/brainstorming.

In this case, the participants write down their ideas on a board or on papers placed on the walls of the room. Thus the participants are not sitting, rather they move around; the entire session is more dynamic, there is more action and it is less stereotypical.

The brainwalking can be used as a preparation for a creative process.

Before the session begins you can incorporate a walk as a means for “starting your brain”. It can be used for example between the first and the second round of the brainwriting. While walking, the participants have the opportunity to think over the ideas that were already presented and they come up with new ones.

Generally, any movement makes the blood circulate and it is beneficial to creativity.

### An example of use:

As it follows from the previous description, the individual methods of “brainstorming/walking/writing” do not differ fundamentally; the only difference is the method of application. We use them when we want to arrive at a fast result; it is effective during really spontaneously organized meetings. It does not require an excessive preparation or a background and it is thus truly ideal for the purposes of international cooperation and solving of unexpected problems.

The brainstorming and its variations is a method used mainly during project meetings of the individual partners implementing teams, for example when solving problems and situations connected with the project management. Brainstorming can be used to solve one partial problem that complicates the implementation of an international project. The parties involved act under time pressure, because joint meetings with extensive agenda last only 1 or 2 days and there is no space for a thorough analysis. Everyone is expected to actively participate; the leader then chooses the most suitable suggestions of solutions.

## 6. TREE OF PROBLEM

Besides the mind maps, there is also another tool often used during problem analysis to visualize problems – the so called tree of problem.

This method is suitable for the beginning of the project; it can be used already in the planning phase. It helps us not only to exactly determine the problem we want to solve, but also to identify its causes and consequences. Like this it will enable us to understand the connections and mutual relations between the individual parts of the problem and to improve the aiming of the projects and programs at solving particular issues.

Every individual can draw a tree of problem, yet even this method lets the advantages of an international team to come to the fore.

Throughout the session, the tree of problem gets transformed into a tree of goals. If we have managed to correctly determine the problems, their causes and consequences, we can reach our goals within few moments by mere reformulation of sentences. So for example, if we define the cause of the problem as the “vague division of competences within the team”, then the automatic goal is to “particularize the competences within the team”.

Procedure:

- To make a list of all problems anyone from the team thinks of and finds relevant.
- A relevant problem is a problem that really exists at the given moment, not a problem we are afraid could appear in the future.

- We identify the key problem, the one that will be in the middle of the graph, the one that we are primarily trying to solve.
- We determine the causes and consequences of the key problem.
- We make the tree of problem.
- We transform the tree of problem into a tree of goals/tree of solutions.

### An example of use:

A consortium is preparing an international project on exchanging experience in the area of urban cycling transportation. Each of the partners encounters various complications, but their fundamental problem is the same – public transportation overload. The main partner performs an analysis using the “tree of problem” method, in order to correctly understand the motivation and obstacles in individual regions/localities. A demonstrative layout of partial problems can help the partnership to find the uniting elements of various causes and to better justify the necessity of the project, and as a result to better target the project activities.

Once the tree of problem is ready, you can transform it into the tree of goals. You either have to invest more money into new buses and to increase the number of connections so that they are not overcrowded, or you have to incite the citizens to use an alternative means of transportation – a bike. A well-executed campaign that will increase the interest of citizens in cycling will result in higher number of bikers and the subsequent de-crowding of buses. A more bearable situation in public transportation will lead to fewer complaints and to improvement of air quality in the city.



## 7. ACTION LEARNING

The method of action learning uses long-known facts, namely that we remember better things that we can try on our own than those we only see or hear. It is of course not solely about remembering, but rather about the overall understanding of the issue.

The method of action learning does not rely on reading books or studying sample examples of successful projects. When using the method of action learning, a **living project comes into existence**. It can be supposed that when somebody signs up for a training course, (s)he is facing some practical problems (s)he would like to solve after the course ends. If (s)he is not interested only in adding a title to his/her name, (s)he probably expects that the knowledge he will gain during the course will help him to solve these problems. If the course takes the form of the action learning, **these problems will start to be solved right away during the course**.

Naturally, the method of action learning does not have to be applied only within a course. On the contrary, similarly to the method of peer review, the action learning can be done in a group of professionals who are mutually exchanging experience. Thus it does not mean gaining any academic or other factual knowledge, but rather developing practical skills used during work and sharing of experience. It is an ideal learning method that is **practice-oriented**.

### These are the main advantages of action learning:

- focused on practice-oriented skills, elimination of redundant theory, which is especially important for participants of further training;

- getting feedback from the partners and mutual sharing of experience with people in a similar post and a similar situation;
- getting feedback following the solution of a practical problem – Do the things that I have learned also work when applied in reality? If not, there is the possibility to adjust to the newly emerged situation or to jointly search for a new solution;
- once you master the methods of the action learning, you can use it in practical activities without having to invest some extra energy – learning as you go along;
- for employers it represents a unique opportunity how to encourage their employees to continue in further training and to have a practical outcome ensured.

The method of action learning is especially suitable in cases when we want to learn how to create something. Its main advantage is that **the desired outcome can be created with the assistance of all partners directly during the learning**.

The learning often takes on the **form of workshops** at which the outcome is created under the guidance of a lector.

Action learning has six main components:

- Problem. In the beginning, there is an urgent and significant problem which is at first sight not easy to solve.
- Team participating in action learning. There is a team within whose competence it falls to solve the problem. The ideal team comprises of 4 to 8 people from different backgrounds and with various experiences.
- Learning process. The process of action learning in the first place includes a careful asking of questions so as to ascertain the true nature of the problem. Only then it is possible to find possible solutions and only after that it

is possible to approach towards the actual action. The questions elicit a dialogue within the team and thanks to that innovative ideas arise.

- Problem solving. The basic characteristic of the action learning is the fact that the seeming encountering of a solution does not mean that the process ends. The team has to have the opportunity to immediately apply this solution to the given problem and to correct potential mistakes as they go along.
- Dedication to learning. Despite that fact that solving a certain problem benefits the participants, this benefit is only a short-term one. The true strategical value is what the participants have learned and what they can for example pass on to their colleagues or to use further.
- Coach. Especially if the team has no experience with the action learning, a coach is needed who would help the team members to figure out how to properly define their problem and how to learn properly. The coach guides the team members to listen to each other, to give each other useful feedback, etc.

### An example of use:

The method of action learning is frequently used in projects where some development can be supposed, for example joint technologies, or in the case of partners who use unique methods to present themselves, or in all cases where the participants can experience new procedures and to learn them. In order to illustrate a particular use, we will again turn to the example with the project on exchange of experience concerning cycling transportation in towns – the experts sent by the individual partners will meet at the place of the partner with the most advanced technology (for example a public system of bike renting) and they will test the system in practice. They work with the system, they rent a bike, they

behave like normal users, yet at the same time they are assessing its functionality. They consider its advantages and disadvantages and whether it is suitable for their town or region. Together they share their findings and subsequently work on a joint project outcome, which can take on the form of a feasibility study or plans for purchasing a similar system.

## Part 6: Conclusion

You have just finished reading the methodology for successful initiation of projects of international cooperation, their management and control in the new programming period 2014–2020. We hope that you will find the information contained in it beneficial and above all useful in each phase – regardless of whether you are experienced project managers, you are only thinking about international grants and partner building or you potentially represent grant providers. We believe that after having read this methodology you feel more confident and you perceive international grants as a unique opportunity for both personal and institutional development, and last but not least also as an opportunity for the region you are active in. Exchange of experience, contacts with neighbors as well as contacts across the continent have always been and continue to be an important asset of Europe and its institutions – not only of the European Union and the Visegrad Fund, but also of other organizations. For this purpose, these organizations fund a number of grant tools supporting mobility and learning, which in the broader sense help to prevent inter-cultural misunderstandings and facilitate building of common infrastructure, organizing of scientific and cultural activities and last but not least also comparing of and constant improving of the life around us.

In the introductory part, the basic starting projects were introduced – these programs are important for Ukraine and they invite to participation in and submission of content-wise diverse projects. It is evident that the most popular are the programs of cross-border cooperation; within our overview, an emphasis was put on the added value of the so called community programs managed directly by the European

Commission. It should not be overlooked that the opportunities within this area will be expanding, provided that the EU and Ukraine will agree on participation in individual priorities and programs. We are convinced that we have listed the most important ones and that this clearly arranged summary constitutes an added value for you that will help you to select the most suitable tool.

It is important to properly and reasonably choose the most suitable means of financing your intention; however, it is equally important to understand and see the specifics of the international project community. This manual presents you options how to enter into international projects and it discusses the advantages and disadvantages. The third part of this methodology at the same time draws your attention to both common and less common communication procedures within partnerships and points out the risks connected to it. Emphasis was put on clarifying the thorniest aspects of management of and participation in international projects – preparations, implementation, finances, impacts and further establishing of contacts. We consider the development of international contacts to be one of the most important characteristics and the decisive element which penetrates this methodology from its beginning to its end.

However, we should not forget a sad fact that the implementation of international projects is often accompanied by a number of mistakes or by frequent perplexity of partnerships when it comes to making use of the results and outcomes of long-term activities. The fourth part concentrates on the reasons why these issues occur and it offers instructions how could these poor ends and failures be avoided. What is the role of the applicants and what is the role of the grant providers? What are the most common mistakes? Many of the outlined problems have their solutions – it suffices to follow

the basic principles of project management and not to get entrapped in lethargy and “doing projects for the sake of doing projects” without considering the broader context. Atmosphere within partnerships directly depends on communication, which directly influences the overall content and financial management. It is in this context that the basic principles of correct financial management are discussed and the most frequent mistakes and their rectifications are pointed out.

The last, fifth chapter concentrates on the most frequent methods of cooperation – these are important primarily with respect to ensuring the largest possible impact and benefit for the parties involved; it could be said that an (in)correct choice of a method often determines the impact of the entire project, or rather whether it fails or succeeds. We believe that you will find some of these methods an interesting diversification of your specialized and often administrative work which forms an integral part of the international cooperation projects.

The RESOURCE project team wishes you a lot of success when participating in and implementing the projects.