

Tool - Roles of the different partners

A) Having in place a strong 'cooperation team'

Establishing a dedicated team for cooperation at partner level is essential for a smooth implementation of your cooperation project.

This means that each partner should:

- make one person available to devote enough time to the cooperation project. Whether there is or not a local responsible for cooperation matters, you should make sure that a contact person has been clearly identified to your partners;
- make sure that, inside your local team, you have sufficient language skills available and/or enough people truly interested in working with partners from another country;
- obtain advice from people with a significant management experience, possibly with cooperation projects;
- ensure that you will be in a position to call upon experts when needed (for administrative or technical questions);
- not forget that a project is firstly a matter of people and not of procedure and administration.

When all these issues are clearly understood among all partners, it will be time to establish the roles of the different partners, i.e. the agreement on who will be taking the lead partner role (the official project coordinator) and who will fulfil 'simple' project partner roles. These roles need to be defined early, as they are also to be specified in the project application form. They cover specific tasks for which you will find a short description hereafter.

B) The project coordinator

Coordinating a transnational cooperation project does not mean that all project management work will be centralized with the coordinator, or that the other partners will have less freedom in the way they implement the project at a local level. The project coordinator ensures that the project moves forward smoothly, by monitoring and understanding the cooperation process and ensuring good communication flows between the actors involved in the project.

B.1 Aspects of sound project coordination

A transnational project coordinator should be:

- technically competent;
 - in a position to make available sufficient time and be ready to get involved in the cooperation action;
 - conversant in foreign languages in order to communicate with all partners;
 - open to multicultural approaches and ready to take into account different points of views;
-

-
- able to animate and stimulate communication in order to guarantee a good involvement of all partners and a sufficient information flow both inside the partnership and towards external actors;
 - show some authority in order to ensure that deadlines and commitments are respected by all partners.

B.2 Coordination tasks for a transnational cooperation project

The main tasks of the project coordinator are the following:

- Ensuring that the core of the project is respected by all partners (in terms of the project's objectives, programme, time plan including inputs and outputs, etc.), in accordance with the approved application form or, preferably, the cooperation agreement;
- Organising the project and animating the partnership (keeping the cooperation link between partners 'alive', ensuring exchange and information flow and that work is undertaken jointly): organise meetings, telephone conferences, e-mail exchanges, regular circulation of reports to the other partners, etc;
- Ensuring that the cooperation project does not work in 'isolation': contacts must be maintained between the cooperation partners and others key actors and institutions, in order to circulate relevant information and thus to show what the project contributes to achieving the projects' and the LAG's local development objectives;
- Taking charge of the administrative and financial coordination of the project:
 - o Set up monitoring systems for the activities of all partners and ensure the monitoring of the whole project,
 - o Support the on-going and final evaluations of the project,
 - o Consolidate data (notably financial) available from the different partners for monitoring purposes and for forwarding, e.g. to the managing authorities and/or to the Commission.
- Coordinating and organising the P/R, i.e. the communication about the project's progress and achievements.

Coordination role does not mean liability for the implementation of the entire cooperation project

Each partner remains liable towards its managing authority for: the implementation of its actions and for its related expenditures; the controls that have to be carried out in respect of the local part of the cooperation project.

The coordinator is liable, as any other partner, for the actions implemented in its own area. In addition project coordination liability includes project animation, data gathering, reporting and other administrative tasks.

C) The main task for a project partner

Partners are expected to carry out local actions directly linked to the cooperation project and to contribute to the implementation of joint transnational activities (=joint development work). Strong commitment to the project and provision of sufficient resources (human and financial notably) by all partners are basic key to the success of a project.

Each partner should:

- participate in the transnational meetings;
-

-
- be responsive to requests of the project coordinator, such as reporting inputs, including project progress status information, financial reporting justifications and others;
 - ensure smooth information flow concerning all project activities implemented including the results achieved locally;
 - organise meetings in its own territory;
 - develop contacts with possible new partners, with the prior agreement of the other partners involved in the project;
 - involve local administrations, economic and social actors in its local area;
 - develop communication/distribution channels in its own local area and contribute to the project promotion across the country.

D) Different types of partnership management

The management of a cooperation partnership differs from project to project, depending particularly on:

- the promoter of the cooperation project: the LAG is not necessarily the promoter of the project. In this case, the LAG will principally manage the general coordination and verify that the operator ensures its lead partner role (e.g. organisation of transnational meetings, development of communication tools and others) and respects the rules and procedures of the financial aspects of the cooperation project.
 - the project partners: the coordination differs depending the number of partners involved. If the partnership is very large, different types of organisation can be foreseen:
 - o The creation of legal structures EIG or EGTC, involving the recruitment and contracting of resources to coordinate the project and to manage the partnership;
 - o The share of responsibilities between partners by task: each partner can manage one type/group of activities of the project (i.e. communication, specific types of actions);
 - o The mobilisation of a coordinator belonging to the structure of the lead partner, whose related staff costs can be shared between all partners.
-