



# **Guidelines for applicants Grundtvig Sweden**

**Questions and answers about:**

**Partnerships**

**Preparatory visits**

**Contact seminars**

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# Questions and answers about Grundtvig Partnerships, preparatory visits and contact seminars

Grundtvig Partnerships is one of several opportunities for organisations to work together in the field of adult learning on an international level. The programme is targeted at all adult education institutions as well as informal learning environments, e.g. libraries, museums and associations. It is important that people such as students and trainees also play an active role in Grundtvig Partnerships.

For more information about Grundtvig Partnerships and other opportunities offered by the Grundtvig programme, please refer to the website of the International Programme Office for Education and Training (IPK), [www.programkontoret.se](http://www.programkontoret.se), or the European Commission's website, [http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/index_en.html). Here you will also find information on other ways of co-operating in the field of adult learning.

We hope that this document will help you finding answers to many of your questions. If you read it page by page you will find the same information several times. This is to make sure that every question has an answer that is as complete as possible.

## I. The first step towards international cooperation

Grundtvig Partnerships is a framework for small-scale cooperation projects. It has been conceived to promote initial contact between organisations from different countries and will usually **suit smaller organisations with no previous experience of international cooperation.**

Grundtvig Partnerships gives organisations the opportunity to acquire the added value of working on a European project as opposed to a local or national project. This gives adult educators, their organisations, their students/trainees and the local community a European dimension.

The term, "Partnerships", is intended to emphasise that the aim of the project is to learn from the experiences of others - to cooperate with colleagues and to get to know the conditions for adult learning and adult education in other European countries. The central feature of the collaboration is the exchange of experiences and methods in the chosen thematic area and, consequently, project meetings and teacher exchanges are fundamental activities. Learning Partnerships focus on the process rather than the product.

A Grundtvig Partnership often paves the way for future, larger Grundtvig Multilateral Projects or Grundtvig Networks. A Partnership cover a period of 2 years and the participating partners must come from at least three European countries preferably constituting non-adjacent geographical and organisational zones, as diversity promotes learning.

In addition to traditional adult education providers and informal learning environments, associations, NGOs, museums and libraries can also take part. It is essential that learners play an active role. It is also possible to apply for a "Preparatory visit" grant or take part in a contact seminar in order to plan and draw up a joint Grundtvig Partnerships application.

## 1. How can I find cooperation partners?

- ❖ "Partbase" is a database which is accessible on IPK's website, <http://partbase.programkontoret.se/> It enables you to search for partners and you can also register your own organisation to find potential partners. The database has been developed with support from the European Commission and it can be used to make contact with partners in all the countries participating in Grundtvig.
- ❖ **Personal contacts**, both private and professional, are a good starting point.
- ❖ **Organisations involved in adult learning.** In addition to Swedish organisations, organisations such as the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) – [www.eaea.org](http://www.eaea.org) – may be helpful.
- ❖ **The twinning programme** in the municipalities can be used to find partners.
- ❖ **Local and regional authorities** in the countries with which you wish to work may also be able to help you.
- ❖ **Grundtvig in-service training courses** may often lead you to potential partners.
- ❖ **LLP Study visits** for managers provide good opportunities to establish contacts with interested organisations.
- ❖ **Contact seminars** arranged by the National Agencies for Grundtvig Partnerships. The contact seminars bring together organisations from the participating countries to enable them to find partners in a particular thematic area. The contact seminars are advertised on the IPK website and **applications to take part** and for **funding** must be made to the IPK. A special application form must be used (the same form as for a preparatory visit; hence the name). The grant covers a substantial part of travel and subsistence costs.
- ❖ **Preparatory visits.** Before submitting an application for funding for a Grundtvig Partnership, it is possible (and advisable!) to apply to the National Agency for a grant to undertake a preparatory visit. You will need to apply using a special form. The purpose of the visit is to discuss and **develop** an outline for the planned project together with your partner organisations and to start drafting a Grundtvig Partnerships **application for funding**. The grant provides a considerable contribution towards travel costs and several days of subsistence costs, is normally awarded to **one person per organisation** and is for an amount up to 1 000 euro. The host organisation is ineligible for funding in connection with preparatory visits.
- ❖ The IPK and European Commission websites provide useful information on **completed and on-going projects**. They also provide access to the names of participating organisations. One useful option is to contact Swedish organisations participating in the project and ask them for the names of good partners.

Bear in mind that Grundtvig Partnerships are mainly targeted at small organisations with little or no previous experience of international cooperation. Preference will therefore be given to

applicants with little previous experience when assessing proposals. Each partner is funded by its own country. Applications for funding must be sent to the National Agency of the country concerned. Also bear in mind that experienced partners may want to manage the project in a way that does not benefit the other partners. On the other hand, there are advantages in having an experienced partner in the project, but this needs to be decided on a case-by-case basis.

## **2. Which countries can I work with?**

Grundtvig is part of the EU LLP programme. Countries eligible to participate in the programme include all the EU Member States, the EU accession candidate countries and the EEA countries. These include Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Turkey. To be eligible for support, the partnership must consist of organisations from at least three countries within the geographical zone for partnerships, of which one must be an EU Member State.

## **3. What can the project be about?**

Grundtvig is an EU programme which means that the European Union has an interest in organisations working in the field of adult learning in Europe benefiting from each other's knowledge and experience, and together **enhancing the quality and accessibility of educational provision for adults throughout Europe**. It is therefore necessary to think of creating the project which is based on a theme and, in terms of partner composition, which has a broad European dimension. Project proposals with thematic areas and target groups focussing on marginalised or socially excluded groups, people with limited previous education or who find themselves outside the labour market, or disabled persons, are highly valued.

Reading “**Guidelines for applicants**” and the **annual “Call for proposals”**

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/index_en.html), will provide you with a good idea of possible projects and which ones are given special priority. The **application form** for project funding also provides good guidance. These three documents can be downloaded from the IPK's website or from that of the European Commission. Projects involving participants from various types of organisations are particularly welcome. The greater the differences between the project partners, the greater the opportunities for learning.

Particular attention will be given to new applicants. A Grundtvig Partnership often leads to a Grundtvig Multilateral Project, especially if the project area is previously uncharted territory. The European Commission's website provides an insight into areas covered by previous Grundtvig projects. IPK's website gives information on earlier Grundtvig Partnerships with Swedish participants.

## **4. Do we know what we are getting into?**

You can never be quite sure what you are letting yourself in for when it comes to international cooperation – and that is part of attraction and the intention! The name of the programme is learning Partnerships and that is exactly what it is about. Learning about different cultures and ways of doing things is an essential part of your partnership. You will find that it is possible to work together despite general cultural differences and different working cultures. This applies to the concept of time, for example. For us Swedes, 08:00 means just that - 8 sharp, but could just as well mean 08:30 for your Spanish colleagues. Therefore, be open to the viewpoints of others and discuss differences with your partners and the possible problems

they could give rise to.

Before definitely deciding to join a Partnership, you must make sure that you will be able to see the project through to the end.

You must, of course, familiarise yourself with all the conditions that apply to Grundtvig Partnerships but, more importantly, you need to ensure that the project has the support of management and colleagues in your organisation. Make sure that your manager or the board agrees, in writing, to your participation in this assignment and that it forms part of your normal duties. This is crucial in view of the fact that funding is based on co-financing, i.e. working time. It is important that local government organisations have support from politicians. The curriculum for municipal adult education provides the head of an educational establishment with a mandate to take part in international cooperation projects, and this is a strong argument in discussions with decision makers.

You should never embark on international collaboration alone. It should always involve a group of people from your organisation. A few enthusiasts may drive the project but they cannot accomplish the work by themselves. There are many examples of projects foundering because of one person's illness or change of job.

## ***5. What needs to be taken with you when meeting to prepare a partnership?***

Before the first meeting with the other organisations to set up the project, you need to prepare yourself. The following checklist contains some useful tips about what to take – and which you should **familiarise yourself with prior to the meeting**: (If you are able to take a laptop computer or a USB stick with you, this would, of course, give you easy access to the actual document.)

- ❖ **Guidelines for Grundtvig Partnerships applicants (see IPK's or Commissions website)**
- ❖ **Call for proposals (see IPK's or Commissions website)**
- ❖ **Application form with supporting instructions (See IPK's website). Look up for national differences, bring both the national and the English or common partnership version**
- ❖ A letter of intent from the head of your organisation or the board, **supporting** your participation in the project.
- ❖ **Information on your organisation**, in the form of, for example, a URL, brochures, the relevant planning and curriculum documents, annual timetables and information about the educational system in your country. Even if you are not a formal learning organisation, your partners may be interested in your country's educational system.
- ❖ Copies of **lists of contact names** in your organisation with telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, job titles, etc.
- ❖ Photographs, CDs, videos, etc. to give an **impression of your organisation** and its surroundings, a camera and a camcorder.

- ❖ **Tourist information** about the area in which your organisation is located.
- ❖ **Gifts**, particularly ones which have some relevance to your organisation and the local community. Take more than you expect to need because you may well find yourself meeting more people and being given more hospitality and presents than you had anticipated! Gifts and entertainment are not eligible for funding but they are considered as part of the **co-funding** of the project.

## **6. What needs to be taken into account when first meeting your partners?**

**Teambuilding** should probably be your first concern. The project revolves around a number of individuals and organisations working together as a group towards a common goal. The first meeting is crucial as the decisions taken will affect the development of the whole project. Use your communication skills and be diplomatic, tolerant and flexible in your negotiations. Keep in mind that your linguistic backgrounds differ. Make sure that you have understood each other correctly.

You should be aware of any cultural differences and the impact these could have on the collaboration. They should be discussed so they do not create tensions.

Apart from deciding on the location of the first joint meeting, it is important to agree on a definite and **clearly-defined agenda** and choice of **chairperson**. During the meeting itself, it is important to have a **secretary** who, besides making notes, can make an **oral summary** of what has been jointly agreed throughout the proceedings. This enables any misunderstandings to be ironed out before they result in problems. The various priorities and targets must be clarified early on for smooth running of the project. A good investment is copying documents and minutes from the meeting to USB sticks for everyone to take home from the meeting.

During the meeting itself, it is vital that all participants are given the **opportunity to speak**. Do not allow one organisation/person to run the meeting according to his or own objectives so that others feel pressured or brushed aside. If this happens, the partnership will not last. It is not always an advantage to have a native English speaker as the project chairperson or coordinator. There is a risk that the other participants will not be able to keep up with the discussion.

**You will need to work through the items listed below during the meeting:**

- ❖ What are your reasons for wanting to take part in a transnational project and what are your **expectations** of the meeting?
- ❖ What are the **functions** of the staff from the various organisations who will be involved in the project, and how many and **which students/trainees** will be taking part from each organisation?
- ❖ How will you **communicate** within the partnership – **in which language(s), by what means and how often?**

- ❖ **Project budget** – compare the lump sums in the annex to the application form, they differ from country to country.
- ❖ When and in which country should **project meetings** and **exchanges** be held?
- ❖ What areas would you like to explore as **themes** and who are the **target groups** for the project?
- ❖ How will the theme be developed in each of the organisations – **everyone does not need to have the same approach.**
- ❖ Which organisation will **coordinate** the project? What **tasks** will this organisation and the other organisations take on? Divide the responsibilities and tasks between the organisations.
- ❖ What equipment, resources, expertise and contacts does each organisation **bring to the project?** How will it be **used** during the course of the project?
- ❖ What are the arrangements for **collecting** data, monitoring progress, **evaluating and disseminating knowledge and experience?**
- ❖ **Ownership** – the project work is funded by the EU and designed to benefit countries throughout Europe. Establish whether any of the organisations expect ownership of any of the project results and put the matter up for discussion. The question of ownership will not usually create problems within Grundtvig Partnerships, which is process rather than outcome-oriented, but you should be aware that it is a possibility.
- ❖ What will happen if **key persons** in the various organisations change? Ensure that all organisations have **back up** measures in place for on-going project cooperation.
- ❖ What will happen to the project if one of the partner organisations withdraws or the application is not approved in one of the countries? Will there still be sufficient partners or will you need to invite others? **Have a plan B!**
- ❖ What happens next if the **project is rejected** – will there be any further cooperation?

## **7. What is a contact seminar?**

Contact seminars are arranged to enable educational representatives who are seeking European partners to collaborate within a specific thematic field.

A contact seminar takes place over 3-4 days and comprises several participants from each country up to a maximum of about sixty. The contact seminars are an excellent way to find partners sharing the same areas of interest and to form an impression of them. Experienced project participants tend to emphasise the importance of “good” partners for the project to succeed. Make sure that you get reliable partners with staying power from organisations which will be able to see the project through. There is always the risk that an organisation will put forward a person who has good **linguistic abilities** but who is **not sufficiently established in the organisation, or vice versa.** You must adopt the same approach with

regard to seminar participants who are **consultants** or **managers** in case they do not intend to participate actively in the project.

The seminar programme alternates between **joint activities** and **group activities**. The joint activities usually comprise **presentations of what Grundtvig Partnerships is about, “living examples”** from projects in progress and **cultural activities**. During the group activities, participants are given assistance to form a partnership around a common theme. Prior to the seminar, participants will have submitted a reply form describing their areas of interest. The replies are compiled and form the framework for the groupings. During the course of the seminar, some spontaneous reorganisation occurs resulting in the formation of new groups. Gradually groups are created which, towards the end of the seminar, start to draw up their applications for the project. The benefits to be gained from attending a contact seminar should be considerable, which is why IPK gives priority to applications from organisations which have not already established international partnerships within the EU’s educational programme.

**Normally the seminar kicks off in the afternoon** with a “**European Fair**”, a type of European market. All the participants make a presentation about their organisations and countries, and offer products which are typical of their country or region. These items may include sweets, wine, cakes and other culinary items. The costs for these are ineligible for funding as they are part of the co-financing. Visiting each other’s tables is a way of establishing initial contact with the other participants. Following the welcome speeches and the initial presentation on the aims of the seminar, there is usually a dinner after which participants can return to the joint fair. Do not miss the first evening’s opportunity to mix!

**Next day** is a day of **creative chaos**. It is a mix of useful information on Grundtvig Partnerships, tips about the themes and approaches, as well as actual group work to form partnerships. The composition of the groups will usually have been decided in advance but there are opportunities for creating new groups. Frequently, there are bulletin boards for advertising for partners. Be prepared for the fact that the group you start off in can change. The number of participants is normally up to 60 so there is room for many specialised groups.

To start with, the group work is often led by a representative of the organisers who has the responsibility of providing the framework for the group work and answering questions. It is also quite usual for representatives of the various National Agencies to participate and to move between the groups helping to answer practical questions.

During the course of the day, there will usually be a plenary session, where each group will give a short report on the chosen theme by them and an update on their progress. This is also a good opportunity to establish new contacts and to change groups if need be, or to examine opportunities for collaborating in several future projects.

**The third day** is an intensive working day. This is when participants begin to fill in their application forms and make important decisions about the distribution of roles (coordinator or partner), aims, target groups, the duration of the project, approach, etc. At some stage in the afternoon, there will be a plenary session for the final reporting, after which the conference will break up for cultural activities and dinner, often in conjunction with a short excursion.

On the **last day** it is time to pack up and return home. There are usually no activities planned for this day.

The invitations to the contact seminar, containing details of thematic areas and programme, are sent out to the National Agencies a few months in advance of the seminar, and they then put the details on their websites or advertise them by other means. Applications to participate and for funding must be made to the National Agency. If participation is approved, a contract is drawn up between the participant and the National Agency. It stipulates, for example, the size of the grant awarded and how feedback should be provided to the National Agency after the seminar. The maximum grant is 1 000 euro, a contribution to travel costs and seminar costs.

## **8. What is a preparatory visit?**

The aim of the visit is to bring the partner organisations together in order to discuss and develop an outline of the planned project and to **start drafting the application for funding for a Grundtvig Partnership**. A preparatory visit differs essentially from a contact seminar in that a partnership has already been established and one of the partners acts as the host. The National Agency is not represented.

The grant provides a considerable contribution towards **travel costs and several days of subsistence**, is normally awarded to one person per organisation and is **limited to 1 000 euro**. **No funding** is available to meet the costs incurred by the **organisation hosting** the preparatory visit.

**Application deadlines** for preparatory visits may vary between countries. If you receive funding for participating in a contact seminar, you cannot receive further funding for preparatory visits in connection with the same project application. Note that **within certain limits each country has different procedures with respect to the size of the grant**. This is relevant when planning where visits are to take place. For example, Sweden grants 50% of what the Commission stipulates as the maximum amount for subsistence for each country. It is a good idea to establish these conditions prior to the preparatory visit. Also read the application form for Grundtvig Partnerships carefully prior to the preparatory visit so that any questions can be clarified with the National Agency.

The preparatory visit will enable you to get to know your partner organisations, their method of working and what equipment they have. It will give you an idea of, for example, their technical resources, premises, sources of financing, target group and, notably, their culture and the climate for lifelong learning in their respective countries. It is important to prepare carefully for the meeting. An agenda and a list of the participating partners, for example, should be in place when submitting your application for a preparatory visit.

During a preparatory visit you can discuss issues such as the work plan, the roles and tasks of the coordinating organisation and partner organisations, means of communication, languages to be used and mobility activities to be undertaken in the course of the project.

Since preparatory visits are designed to pave the way for a project, they must take place before the project application is submitted.

## II How to set up a project

### 1. What grants are available for Grundtvig Partnerships?

The grant is paid as a lump sum to cover certain **basic local project costs** such as administration and documentation, and transnational mobility costs, i.e. **travel** and **subsistence**.

All EU grants are based on **co-financing**. Co-financing for Grundtvig Partnerships is the working times for each organisation over the duration of the project. The grant provides support for project collaboration but **you cannot expect to recover all your costs**. The aim of Grundtvig Partnerships is to establish cooperation without a large amount of administration, and the contribution has been calculated accordingly.

**It is important to remember the following:**

- ❖ The grant may only be used for to **cover costs that are directly related to the project**
- ❖ **If you have not spent the entire grant, you will have to return the unused amount** to the National Agency. Therefore, be realistic in your grant application, and only apply for as big a grant as you can use. Any grant unspent cannot be used to finance other projects in Sweden but will be returned to the European Commission's budget.

If you want to be less involved with the actual process – getting to know each other and establishing a working relationship within a particular thematic area – and more involved with **developing a product, then you should apply for a Grundtvig Multilateral Projects grant instead**. Moreover, there are opportunities for **networking under Grundtvig**. There are **individual grants** for Grundtvig Courses, job shadowing, seminars and conferences - don't miss these chances!

You can read about these alternatives in more detail by following the links above or on IPK's website. In the future several new opportunities will be presented on our website.

The application form and its annexes provide good guidance as to what is possible under Grundtvig Partnerships.

### 2. How big is the grant?

The grant is paid as a lump sum to cover certain **basic local project costs** and **mobility costs**, see annex in the application form for the grant for each country.

### 3. When and to whom must the application be sent?

Please check the annual call for proposals for deadlines and procedures. Partner need to apply for funding from their National Agency. The application consists of a joint project description. You and your partners therefore need to fill this information in together and it must have the same wording. The coordinator makes an on-line appli

#### **4. What makes a good application?**

The project must **meet the objectives and priorities of Grundtvig** as presented in the “Guidelines for applicants” and the annual “Call for proposals”. Both these documents, together with the application form, are available from the IPK’s website.

In addition to the formal selection criteria, you should also pay efforts in demonstrating the following elements in your application:

- ❖ The basic facts about the project with clear **aims and objectives** and indicating what can realistically be **expected**.
- ❖ Project **content** and a **clear and coherent work programme** which is reflected in the budgetary part of the application.
- ❖ Project organisation including a description of every **project partner** and how each of them is **contributing to the project during project period**.
- ❖ Plans for the on-going **follow up** and **evaluation** of the project.
- ❖ Plans for the on-going **dissemination of experiences and results** at local, European and also, if possible, at regional and national level.
- ❖ **Budget** – a separate budget (number of mobilities and corresponding national lump sum) for each of the partners.
- ❖ **Summary** of the project, to be presented at the beginning of the joint section and which will be read first by those assessing the application. **Be explicit as it is here that the reader will form his or her first impression of the quality of the project!**

**Follow the instructions and try to read the application from the viewpoint of the assessor before submitting it!** In this respect, it could be useful to let someone who is not involved in the project read your application and give feedback on it. Silly omissions and unclear points can then be corrected resulting in a final product which is explicit.

Grundtvig projects are cooperation projects where all partners have equal rights and obligations. The application should therefore make it clear that all partners have agreed the project content and that everyone is equally committed to the project. This does not mean that everyone must be responsible for the same tasks, but that everyone must be in agreement about how responsibilities and tasks are subdivided.

#### **5. How is a work programme set up?**

The first thing to keep in mind when setting up a work programme is that the goal of the project should be attainable. **Do not be over-ambitious!** The main concern will be to agree on ways to organise the activities and on how to put ideas and plans into practice. Remember that the **project should form an integral part of the regular working activities**, and that the **students/trainees should actively participate** in the activities and that the way you will approach this must be stated clearly in the application.

**Clarity and coherence** are keys to a good work programme. You should be able to visualise the concrete steps ahead of you. Provided that you have a common understanding of the objectives and the content of the project, you can set up a work programme that will ensure a steady and consistent development of the project.

**Therefore, make sure that:**

- ❖ **effective channels of communication are established** within the partnership;
- ❖ **the timetable is realistic** in relation to what you are seeking;
- ❖ there is agreement regarding **which partner** does **what** and **when**;
- ❖ you have considered how the project will be **monitored, evaluated** and **disseminated**;
- ❖ all partners are in possession of an **approved work programme well ahead of the application deadline**.

**You will need to set dates for:**

- ❖ **meetings:** local meetings (with colleagues, decision makers, students/trainees, other interested parties) and transnational meetings with partners;
- ❖ **mobility activities**;
- ❖ **reporting**, evaluation and dissemination of results and experiences;
- ❖ **delivery** and exchange of products, files, etc.

## ***6. Rules of thumb in the planning phase***

- ❖ **Just do what you would have done anyway!**
- ❖ Ensure that the **target group** is clearly **defined** and really **wants/requires** what you are developing.
- ❖ Develop strategies for helping the target group to **overcome its resistance to change**.
- ❖ **Warning to enthusiasts** – secure support for the project and distribute the work within your own organisation.
- ❖ **Formulate clearly the objectives** of the development project and the dissemination of the results.
- ❖ **The objectives must be specific, measurable, acceptable, realistic and time lined (SMART).**

- ❖ **Choose your partners carefully** – exactly as you would your personal contacts.
- ❖ International development projects are a way of **developing your own organisation** – and **not** a means to obtain money for the **production of training materials**.
- ❖ External project funding must be regarded as the **catalyst** to kick-start the project.
- ❖ Plan for **dissemination activities** over the **entire course of the project**.
- ❖ How will you decide whether the project has been successful? Have an **evaluation plan!**
- ❖ **Make a SWOT analysis** with your project partners to establish the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the partnership.

You must keep in mind that the project must provide **added value** – it must contribute something to the European dimension and guarantee that the investment has been justified and not merely an expense for the European taxpayer.

Additional information can be obtained from the “**survival kit**”, for example;

<http://www.socrates.at/download/survivalkit/inhalt.php#download>

### III. How to build a partnership

#### 1. Which partners should I have?

As stated above, the partnership must consist of organisations from at least **three countries** forming part of the geographical zone for Grundtvig partnerships. It is advantageous to create a partnership with as many **different** types of organisations as possible, as this will provide recourse to a broader range of experiences and cultures, thereby enriching the project. At the same time, an effective partnership cannot be achieved with too many participating organisations. As the grant does not cover staff costs, it could be burdensome to the coordinator if the number of partners was in the region of 10 or more. At least four partners from as many countries should take part so that you can “afford” it if one potential partner is turned down.

At the first meeting with your partners, you will quickly gain an impression of them. To promote effective cooperation, study the points above outlining what you should bear in mind at and what to take with you to the first meeting. If you feel that the partnership is not going to last, it is advisable to raise the matter during the meeting so it can be discussed and, if the worst comes to the worst, you can withdraw. The solution may be to create two projects instead of one or, together with one or more of the other organisations, look for new partners. Application rounds come around every year and with it a new call for proposals – do **not rush into anything if you are unsure of staying the course!**

## **2. Coordinator or partner?**

The role of the coordinator is predominately a **contact and management role**. The coordinator ensures that everyone has carried out what was agreed and within the agreed time frame. The coordinator **collates** the reports of the various partners and **proposes any amendments** considered necessary.

Swedish organisations often hold back when it comes to taking on the responsibility of coordinator. This is a pity as they then miss out on the chance to be actively influencing and managing the project. If you know that you are the kind of person who needs to keep a tight rein on the project, then you should take the opportunity to take on the role of coordinator. You can always count on **support from your National Agency**, no matter whether you are a coordinator or partner, but our experience shows that the IPK works more closely with the coordinating organisation, which we always find rewarding.

The coordinator has **overall responsibility** for the whole project. For example, the coordinator is responsible for producing the joint project plan which then forms part of all the partners' grant application. The coordinator is also responsible for producing a joint report in the end of the project for which each partner needs to **provide the coordinator with material**. It is a **team effort** with people depending on each other.

## **IV. Selection and entering into the contract**

**Each country** participating in Grundtvig Partnerships is allocated a **budget**. **The approval of projects depends on the annual budget**. The selection process will change, from quality assessments in every country represented in the partnership to one single assessment.

The selection is based on the **criteria** stated in the "Guidelines for applicants" and the annual "Call for proposals" and which are reflected in the application form.

When a project has been approved, a **contract** is concluded between each of the partners and its National Agency. The contract details all the commitments and the size of the grant. Expenses arising outside the project year cannot be covered by the grant.

## **V. How should the project be organised?**

Once you have received your contract, check with your partners that they understand that the foundations for cooperation have been established. Experience has shown that frequent communication – both between and within the partner organisations – is one of the key factors for the success of the project. **Clarity, commitment and the will to compromise** are also essential if the project is to succeed.

### **1. What needs to be considered when starting a project?**

- ❖ Make sure **that** everyone in your own organisation, as well as those on the board, in politics, in the media, etc., **is informed** that your application has been **successful**.

Visibility and the active support of the whole organisation, the students and the local community are very important for the success of the project.

- ❖ **Establish** regular and effective **communication** between the project participants and within the partner organisations. It is important that the project should become established as early on as possible and this is best achieved through a regular flow of information, questions, suggestions and greetings.
- ❖ Exchange greetings with your partners and take **practical steps to get the project under way** – by establishing contact between the organisations at both the staff and student/trainee level.
- ❖ Agree on the **means of communication** to be used – e-mail, shared platforms etc.
- ❖ Organise an early briefing **meeting for colleagues** within your **own organisation** to renew and secure their enthusiasm and commitment.
- ❖ **Make sure** that **theory and practice tally** and that you can quickly share practical outcomes of the project with colleagues in your own organisation and the partner organisations.
- ❖ **Ensure that** everybody involved has a clear idea of the different phases of the project. You could, for example, draw up a **subcontract** to guard against misunderstandings.
- ❖ Take notice of basic **facts** concerning your partner organisations, e.g. holiday dates, the daily lesson programme, exam times.
- ❖ Record events, expenditure, data, successes and concerns, preferably in a **log book**, so that the process can be monitored afterwards by means of follow-up, evaluation and reporting. An integral part of the project is the submission to the National Agency of reports on the progress of the project and on the use of funding. Special forms are provided with the contract.
- ❖ Be aware of the impact that **staff changes** can have on the project. There must always be several people involved in the project so that you can fill in for each other when necessary. A project is not a one-person task! The concept behind the grant is that the organisation should learn and grow rather than the individuals as such.
- ❖ **Keep your targets and time-scale under constant review.**
- ❖ **Carry out those activities that formed the basis of your application for funding!** This may seem obvious, but you will often have reason to refer back to your original application and the annexes containing specifications indicating what eligible costs are.
- ❖ **Arrange to send questionnaires to all partners in the run-up to a meeting to ensure that everyone is on the right track and working towards the same goal.** This can be done by the coordinator or the organisation hosting the next meeting.

- ❖ Have **arrangements in place for updating** websites and actual addresses, contact names, etc.

## **2. How can the project be made part of the domestic plans?**

Integrating the project in your own organisation – both vertically and horizontally – is fundamental to a successful project. Work in this respect needs to be carried out before the project is launched, but needs to be followed up throughout the project period.

The organisation for which you work is probably an important player in the **community**, and people are generally interested in its activities. Use this to your advantage and extend an invitation to **key organisations** such as:

- ❖ local and regional bodies and organisations
- ❖ associations working in the field of adult education
- ❖ social partners
- ❖ teacher training institutions, higher education institutions and universities
- ❖ sister organisations in the region.

Dissemination of results and experiences during the project period will provide other development opportunities and will also enable you to view your theme from new perspectives. As the grant is funded by taxes paid by all EU citizens, the results must benefit everyone.

By staying in touch with, and even accepting help from, outside organisations throughout the project period, you will be ensuring that experience is broadened and the project will benefit from ideas and suggestions from outside.

Inviting others to **information meetings** or by taking part in the meetings and **conferences** of other organisations is an enjoyable way to disseminate experiences and results. The **media** may sometimes show keen interest, but this is by no means certain. In large metropolitan areas, it can be very difficult to secure press coverage, but you need to try!

Remember that a functional and **up-to-date website** is an excellent way of marketing both the project and your organisation!

“**Associated partner**” is used to describe organisations which have a specific role in the project but who are ineligible to apply for a grant in their own right. They can apply to be associated with the project in the annual application renewal if you consider it a good idea for them to take part in the transnational mobility activities.

## **3. Which language(s) can be used?**

Promoting **language learning** is one of the objectives of Grundtvig. Those participating in the project will have the opportunity to practise and improve their foreign language skills. Frequently, participants choose the easiest way forward by using English as the common

language. This has both advantages and disadvantages. Remember that partners who have English (or whatever the chosen language is) as their mother tongue have an advantage in the communication process. So try not to yield to the temptation to also let them coordinate the project solely on the basis of language ability! Also try to communicate in languages other than English; this is called a learning partnership, after all, and it is directed at learners at all levels. When communicating with individual partners, try and use a language other than the common project language. **Take the opportunity to practise your language skills.**

#### **4. What information and communication technology (ICT) is to be used in the project?**

Frequently people choose to communicate in writing by means of **e-mail** or a shared **platform**. This form of communications gives you time to think before responding and it provides a lasting record. Moreover, communicating by e-mail is cheap in comparison with telephone or video conferences, for example. Try to find the lowest common denominator for communicating with each other. It is only to be expected that the communication equipment of the various project partners will vary greatly.

A **web camera** is a nice way to communicate. Trainees and students, in particular, tend to take to it once they have become acquainted with it. If you are equipped with computers, web cameras and microphones-headphones, your options for making direct contact with others are far greater than by means of written communication alone.

**Video conferences** are used relatively frequently in some projects.

#### **Some reasons for using ICT for project work:**

- ❖ it provides an opportunity to work with partners in other countries in a **simpler**, faster, cheaper manner and which is more fun
- ❖ it **motivates** students/trainees and encourages them to communicate and exchange experiences
- ❖ it increases linguistic and cultural **awareness** and provides the possibility to use foreign languages in an authentic setting
- ❖ it provides new **learning opportunities**, particularly in the field of distance learning
- ❖ it **makes it easier for people with disabilities to participate**
- ❖ a well designed website will provide information to those outside the organisation, e.g. colleagues, other organisations and decision makers.

## **VI. Monitoring progress and evaluation**

You need to remind yourself why the European Union – or rather we, the taxpayers – are interested in handing out grants under the Grundtvig programme. The goal is for Europeans to make a **joint, lasting and long-term** impact on improving **access** to and the **quality of adult learning**. The reasoning behind this is that an active, well-informed and educated population

will improve our **ability to compete**. Moreover, it is in all of our interests that the initiatives we set up should benefit everyone and, in particular, we must strive to create opportunities for those who have least benefited from education up to now. More background information on the aims and target groups in LLP is available from the Commissions website.

To make certain of keeping the project on track, it is important that you continuously **reflect** on processes and outcomes, and monitor and integrate project activities. This allows you to adapt the project objectives and activities to new or changing needs and ensure that the project gives maximum added value to the organisations directly involved and other potential beneficiaries.

**Use the following questions to make regular checks on the progress of the project:**

- ❖ Have the **plans** been **followed** and if not why not?
- ❖ Are the **goals appropriate** and **clearly formulated**?
- ❖ Should any of the project targets and methods be **modified**? Which and how?
- ❖ Is the project helping to **raise** the **achievement** or competence levels of the students/trainees?
- ❖ What are the **benefits** of the different activities for the **students/trainees** and the **staff** involved?
- ❖ What skills have been developed and can they be demonstrated?
- ❖ Are the means of **communication** used appropriate and **efficient**?
- ❖ Are you keeping your **websites up-to-date**?
- ❖ Are you succeeding in **involving local and regional bodies** in the way you intended?
- ❖ Have the participants' **skills in foreign languages** and motivation to learn them increased?
- ❖ Have you managed to make the participants more aware of the different **European cultures**?
- ❖ Have you succeeded in creating and/or introducing and establishing a **European dimension** in learning?
- ❖ Has the **planned end product/end result** been **achieved**?

It is often useful to have an **independent assessor** associated with the project or to have one partner continuously responsible for project evaluation. Too much responsibility could otherwise rest with the coordinator who, rightly, has a greater responsibility for the continuous monitoring of the project than the other partners.

## VII. Dissemination and “valorisation”

You should not wait until the project has been completed to **share** your experiences and the results. [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/valorisation/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/valorisation/index_en.html) is a website where the European Commission presents information about dissemination and exploitation of results.

See also the QAS tool: [http://weaver.programkontoret.se/templates/Page\\_5838.aspx](http://weaver.programkontoret.se/templates/Page_5838.aspx)  
Below, is a compilation of ideas from across the Grundtvig programme put together by the IPK.

### 1. What is meant by dissemination?

Dissemination is often described as a process that involves a sharing of results and experiences with the aim of influencing the way other people think and act, or of making them aware of a new idea, product or service.

### 2. What would you like to achieve?

- ❖ **Raise awareness** in the intended target group.
- ❖ Generate **understanding** and obtain the **support** of others in disseminating information.
- ❖ **Involve** others outside your own organisation.
- ❖ Bring about a **change in attitudes and ways of thinking**.
- ❖ Bring about a **change in attitudes towards** students, visitors, lenders at libraries or colleagues.
- ❖ **New patterns of conduct** in the target group – the end users of the project results.

There are many more ways to describe the aims of the dissemination process - motivate, inspire, suggest, call attention to, arouse curiosity, enlighten, encourage, make visible, channel, sum up, concentrate, caution, prevent, introduce... The main thing is that you are **aware of your aims** and that you select an appropriate method.

### 3. Why is dissemination important and for whom?

- ❖ **The project comes to an end – but the results live on and are only meaningful if they are put to good use and result in functional changes.**
- ❖ **Concluded – but not finished.** The project contributes to lifelong learning and personal development, both with respect to those undertaking the project and those whom the project aims to support.

- ❖ Make staff and students/trainees **aware of what a good job they have done**.
- ❖ **Make all interested parties** and a wider public **aware** of what you have accomplished.
- ❖ **Influence decision-makers** – important to them, too, as a basis for decisions.
- ❖ Generate general **interest** in transnational cooperation.
- ❖ Generate interest in **language learning**.
- ❖ Raise **awareness** of European cultural diversity and similarity.

#### ***4. What needs disseminating?***

It is vital that the participants in the project have a shared vision and understanding of what needs to be disseminated. Not only will this provide a common framework but will also enable the participants to describe the project and the planned dissemination in an informed manner.

- ❖ Products
- ❖ Methods
- ❖ Good practise
- ❖ Experience – leading to messages about findings, recommendations, warnings and so on

#### ***5. Do you have the support of your own organisation?***

International cooperation requires time, commitment and resources, and must ultimately benefit the target groups, students or learners. The way to do this is through colleagues in your own organisation. **International development projects are ultimately about achieving positive changes in terms of development. Change is often seen as something threatening.**

Real change cannot be achieved unless we share certain fundamental attitudes.

Successful projects require convergence over the course of the project, but if everyone does not have the same framework or understanding of the project activities, then what should you do?

- ❖ The role of the project leader is to **formulate** his or her vision and perceived challenges, which colleagues can use as a basis for understanding the aims and strategies of the project.
- ❖ The project leader makes discoveries and experiences **possible**, and helps colleagues to interpret their experiences so they do not feel threatened by them.

- ❖ The project leader cannot force his or her interpretation of the project on colleagues; **dialogue encourages receptiveness to new ways of thinking** and exposes people to alternative ideas.
- ❖ Strive for a **common understanding** of the work in a way that is qualitatively different.
- ❖ Display **patience** along the way – have a long-term perspective with a **balance between continuity (strengthening existing skills) and change (developing new skills)**.

People create their own understanding of reality and incorporate elements of new information and new experiences into their existing conceptions. This involves **strengthening, modifying or changing previously held ideas**.

Whatever applies to your colleagues, also **applies to the primary target group**, and it is the **messengers** (your colleagues) who play the most important role in disseminating the project results.

## ***6. Do you have several target groups and, hence, different dissemination strategies and tools?***

Anyone embarking on a development project has in mind that it will ultimately benefit a certain target group. The project will also affect you, personally, and other colleagues, as well as others not considered part of the primary target group.

This means that you will need to identify who these groups are in the preliminary project planning phase and, if possible, **involve them in the dissemination process**. They could be people in your own organisation or others involved in similar development projects. Try to identify the **key groups** locally; they can give the dissemination process impetus. This means that even if you think of **end-users** as your target group, you should also involve for instance **stakeholders and decision makers**

**Below are some possible questions you can ask yourself:**

- ❖ How do we **secure the support of management in our own organisation** for the project and how we can try to make use of the insight they gain of the project in the dissemination process?
- ❖ Are there any **forums** where we can present the project to more than one target group?
- ❖ Do we have a plan for keeping our project partners in other countries updated?
- ❖ What other **players** in the local communities, e.g. the employment office and social services, could be interested in the same end target groups and how should we work with them?
- ❖ Which local, regional, national or international colleagues, associations, organisations or **other players** could possibly be interested?

- ❖ What does my **network** look like – can I get support elsewhere?

## ***7. What does the toolbox look like? What methods should you use in disseminating the information?***

Your choice of tool will depend on your understanding of the target group as well as on your aims. Are you aiming to raise **awareness**, **change attitudes** or create **new patterns of conduct** in your target group?

The aim can also vary depending where in the process you find yourself, and this calls for a deliberate, planned variation of methods.

**Methods you can use in the dissemination process include:**

- ❖ **Informal person-to-person meetings** – unrivalled as a way of persuading
- ❖ **briefings**, seminars, workshops, conferences, exhibitions – provide opportunities to inform and discuss
- ❖ printed materials, e.g. **reports**
- ❖ **websites** – but don't forget to update them!
- ❖ **links** to and from websites
- ❖ videos, CDs, DVDs or other audiovisual materials
- ❖ **mass media** – have a strategy for attracting their attention!
- ❖ E-mail lists for mass mailing a **newsletter** – continuous dissemination of process results
- ❖ **direct** application in a learning situation – the original aim of dissemination activities
- ❖ **information officers**
- ❖ **press releases**
- ❖ **Braille** to give access to the partially sighted or other methods specially adapted to cater for various other types of disability.

## ***8. What needs to be avoided in your dissemination activities?***

When you are totally immersed in an activity, it is easy to lose sight of who the recipients are. It is useful to bear the following points in mind when disseminating your results and experiences:

- ❖ **Refrain from showing a lot of photographs** of the project meetings you have had – how much fun is it looking at a family album when you do not know anyone?

- ❖ Avoid giving detailed accounts of every meeting – **get to the point!**
- ❖ Share the **experiences** as well as the **results** – **meta-learning** is just as important!
- ❖ **Written Information** can be given out **in advance** – personal meetings provide the opportunity to talk about things in more depth (in the form of seminars) and create a basis for influencing attitudes and changing future patterns of behaviour.
- ❖ Try not to give everyone the same information but **tailor** it to the target group.
- ❖ Do not fall into the trap of saving the dissemination activities until the end of the project – you will then miss the opportunity to get **feedback** and **support** from other interested players.
- ❖ **Think in terms of quality, not quantity** – you are better off choosing few words that generated interest.
- ❖ Be clear right from the start who “owns” the project results so that discussions about **copyright**, for example, do not mar the end of the cooperation process.

### **9. What other effects does dissemination have besides the sharing of results?**

All project activities have positive as well as negative side effects. Some of the most obvious positive side effects are listed below:

- ❖ feedback during the project → change of direction → better quality
- ❖ **strengthened cooperation and the feeling of solidarity within your own organisation** – if responsibility and authority are shared and the project has support from the start
- ❖ increased **visibility** of the organisation in the local community
- ❖ promotion of **innovation** in society
- ❖ new **energy** and **ideas**
- ❖ **new contacts and new projects** – **contagious!**
- ❖ **awareness** of other cultures and readiness to take on cultural differences
- ❖ **foreign-language competence** and better communication skills
- ❖ **ICT skills**
- ❖ an understanding of **your own culture** when faced with others
- ❖ **personal development** and development of your own capabilities.

## **10. Follow-up, evaluation, dissemination – how do they differ?**

**Follow-up** is ensured during the process so that any changes of direction necessary can be made.

**Evaluation** is carried out when the project has been completed.

**Dissemination**, as defined earlier, is a continuous process with an emphasis on informing others of your activities.

## **11. How do I know the project was successful?**

- ❖ Have I reached my **target groups** and has there been a change in attitudes and behaviour as envisaged in the project plan?
- ❖ How **good** is the actual **product** or **service**?
- ❖ **Test method**?
- ❖ Can I see any positive or negative **side effects**?

An effective project plan includes instruments for making use of any outcome. Thinking **SMART** in the preliminary phase makes evaluation possible in the end phase. Smart objectives are, as mentioned earlier, specific, measurable, acceptable, realistic and time lined. And, to be absolutely sure, you can add an **E – they must be evaluable**. After measuring the results, you enter the interpreting phase, during which you seek possible explanations and reflect on what the consequences will be for future activities.

The term **valorisation**, is being used increasingly in the context of a project. It means **to disseminate and harness project results with the aim of:**

- ❖ **optimising** their **value**;
- ❖ increasing their **impact**;
- ❖ **integrating** them within educational and methodological systems at local, national and European level.

Disseminating experiences and results is not enough. You also need to consider their **use and long-term sustainability**. The last phase in implementing a project is to ensure that the results you have achieved are put to good use. Bear this in mind in the planning stage of the project and describe your method for achieving it in your project application.

Here are some questions to consider in connection with valorisation:

- ❖ What **end results** do we expect?
- ❖ Which educational or learning needs are they meeting?

- ❖ Who are the users and/or final beneficiaries of the project's results?
- ❖ What activities should we use to disseminate and harness the project's results?
- ❖ Timetable, funds and available resources?

And once again: Don't hesitate to take a look at **dissemination and exploitation of results on The European Commission's website**

[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/valorisation/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/valorisation/index_en.html) or the QAS website: [http://weaver.programkontoret.se/templates/Page\\_5838.aspx](http://weaver.programkontoret.se/templates/Page_5838.aspx)

**And...always ask yourselves the following questions:**

**Why?**

**What?**

**How?**

**When?**

**Who?**

**To whom?**

## **VIII. Reporting**

This means **reporting to your National Agency** on the project. When the project is approved, you will receive a contract specifying the conditions. It will state, for example, how much money you received in funding and how you are to go about reporting on the use of the grant and on the project activities. You will need to use a special form which is usually provided together with your contract. All activities must take place in the time interval stated in the contract.

It is advisable to hold a final coordination meeting of the partnership immediately prior to the end of the project year. This will give you the opportunity to draft the joint report together. Incidentally, it is not always easy to get everyone to submit their contribution on time, especially as term times vary from country to country in Europe.

When the reports have been submitted, they are processed by the National Agency, which approves them or requests additional information. After this, the remaining 20% of the grant is paid out. If you have not used all of the 80% you were initially awarded, you will have to pay back the surplus amount instead. More information on this is contained in the instructions you will get from the National Agency.

Every year the National Agencies make **on-site monitoring visits**. These visits usually take place in a district which has several on-going projects so that projects can be linked together; alternatively, projects are selected randomly or thematically. The aim of these visits is to gain

an impression of the project and its results. We, at the National Agency, find it rewarding to meet those in charge of the project as well as the students/trainees.

## **IX. Possible problems and how to deal with them**

In a project involving several partners from different countries, unexpected problems may arise. Being aware of the kind of problems that may arise helps you to plan and carry out your project in a more realistic and practical manner.

### **1. Withdrawal of a partner**

Even if the minimum requirement for a Grundtvig Partnership is partners from three countries, it is wise to start with four or five partners. In this case, if one of the partners withdraws from it, the project will remain viable.

It is also advisable to actively involve several persons from each organisation. If one of the persons has to withdraw from the project, there will be others who are familiar with it and can continue the work.

### **2. Unclear division of tasks**

The tasks of the participating organisations should be clearly defined in advance. Each organisation should be aware of its role and the tasks that it is expected to carry out. To this end, draw up a written agreement before applying for funding.

Sometimes, one of the partners acts as a “**sleeping partner**”, i.e. a partner on paper only. Agree a strategy in advance for dealing with such situations. In this case, the remaining partners can proceed without this partner – if you cannot persuade the passive partner to play an active role as required.

### **3. Lack of time and resources**

It is easy to set goals that are so ambitious that attaining them within the scope of the project is impossible. This is not uncommon and can be seen when a Grundtvig Multilateral Projects application, which was not approved, is “converted” to a Grundtvig Partnership application. When planning the project, it is therefore better to set concrete, attainable goals to which all participants can commit themselves.

Keep in mind that the various partner organisations can have very different resources and that they cannot always invest equal amounts of time in the project.

Draw up the application and the renewal application carefully, and do not be overly ambitious!

#### **4. Language and communication problems**

It is important to ensure that you and your partners have a common working language. Interpretation is not recommended because it slows work down, does not allow such personal contact as with direct communication and is not always available.

Regular communication between the partners – and within each participating organisation – is one of the key elements for the success of a project. Face-to-face meetings cannot be organised very often and that makes using efficient means of communication particularly important.

It may be useful to agree on fixed days for communication. The means of communication need to take account of the technical equipment of the partners and what is being discussed.

#### **5. Lack of support from your own organisation**

A Grundtvig Partnership project should involve the whole organisation, not just a contact person and his or her students/trainees. Whoever takes the initiative to participate in a project should ensure that he or she has the support of management and colleagues, even those not directly involved in the project. You should be aware that not everyone regards project involvement as something positive. Quite the opposite, it can create envy and jealousy. Be aware of this and counteract it by keeping everybody continually informed of the progress of the project and try to involve the critics in the work.

#### **6. Unexpected problems**

If you encounter unexpected difficulties or problems, you may contact your National Agency for advice. We will frequently be able to come up with a solution together, making it possible for the work to progress without unnecessary interruption.

**For more advice, please visit the QAS website**

[http://weaver.programkontoret.se/Default\\_5836.aspx](http://weaver.programkontoret.se/Default_5836.aspx)

## **X. Success factors**

There are no magic formulas, only the constant search for knowledge and previous experience.

You cannot get away from the need to ask yourself the fundamental questions of why you want to invest time and energy on this, where we find all the available information on Grundtvig Partnerships and what we should be thinking about before, during and after the project.

We hope that the document you have just read provides good guidance and is a factor in ensuring a successful outcome!

**The Swedish coordinator of a completed Grundtvig Partnership has the following tips based on his experiences:**

- ❖ Put some effort into the **preparatory visit!**

- ❖ Have a **well thought-out project plan** that has the **full support of your organisation!**
- ❖ Stay in **close contact!**
- ❖ **Keep the momentum going!**
- ❖ Regard the project as part of your **ordinary development programme!**

Kerstin Hagblom  
International programme office, 08/08/2008