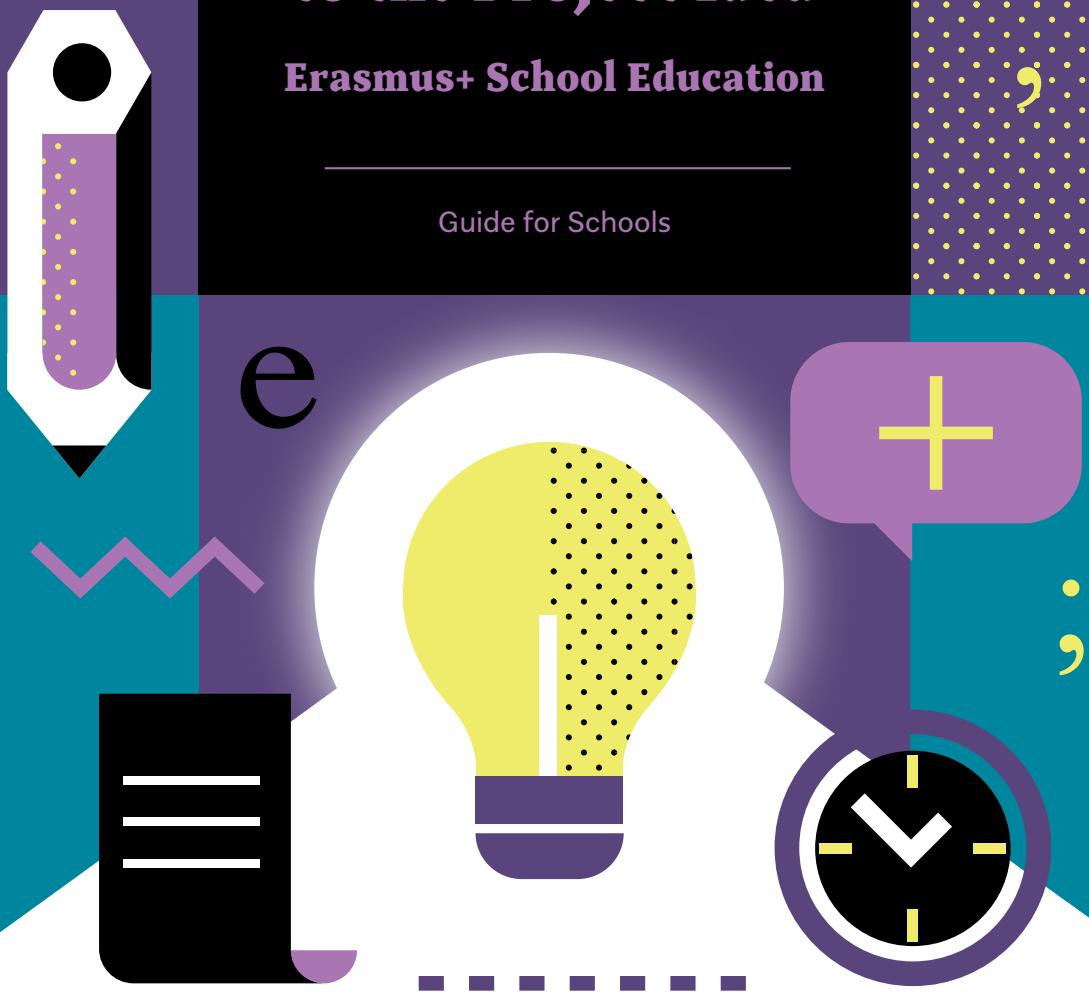
FRSE THEMATIC REPORTS

From the Need to the Project Idea

Erasmus+ School Education

Guide for Schools



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From the Need to the Project Idea. Erasmus+ School Education. Guide for Schools

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Foreword

Dear Readers,
We are delighted to present this publication to school community - headteachers, teachers and administrative staff - who see the need to develop their institutions through international projects.

Such an opportunity is provided by **Erasmus+** the 2014–2020 European Union programme for education, training, youth and sport, and by **eTwinning**. They focus on building an international community of schools, teachers and students who work with one another using Internet tools. Both programmes are operated in Poland by the Foundation for the Development of the Education System (FRSE), which is the National Agency (NA) of the Erasmus+ programme, aiming to enable a growing number of participants to develop in a multitude of directions.

The **School Education**[1] field of the Erasmus+ programme includes initiatives that can be undertaken by schools at all levels (from pre-school to secondary school):

- → Under Key Action 1. *Learning mobility for individuals* → projects aimed at improving the quality of education thanks to learning mobilities of educational institution staff to participate in structured language or methodology courses, specialised training events or job shadowing at a partner school or other school education organisation abroad;
- → Under Key Action 2. *Strategic partnerships* → projects involving collaboration of schools from different countries on the same topic or issue that needs to be solved. These projects are to strengthen schools' potential for international cooperation, provide an opportunity to gain knowledge and skills, and ultimately lead to improved quality of education offered by partner schools. The initiatives are supported by international exchanges of groups of students to promote values associated with tolerance and social inclusion[2].

eTwinning projects usually involve the use of new technologies and Internet tools to support collaboration between partner schools, development of language competences and high student engagement. They can have a number of different forms – from short-term projects focusing on a particular issue to long-term and wide-ranging initiatives. These projects are independent of funding.

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1 This Guide shows opportunities offered by the field of School Education. However, schools may also participate **in actions offered by other fields**, such as Youth or Vocational Education and Training.

2 A detailed description of the Erasmus+ programme and its field of School Education can be found in the *Erasmus+ Programme Guide* at ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/programme-guide/introduction/how-to-read-programme-guide_en and on the website of the National Agency for Erasmus+ at www.erasmusplus.org.pl.

This Guide has been developed to present opportunities offered by the above programmes, their flexibility, and also a wider range of potential benefits resulting from these projects. The better thought-out and planned the concept, the greater benefits will be. This is precisely why we are suggesting that you should learn more about the methodology behind it. The starting point should be a needs analysis for the school (identifying areas which could be improved); defining the objectives; planning the activities, which will help to accomplish those objectives; and describing the results, which will address the needs.

Once that process is complete, and once you have determined why you want to implement a particular project and what you would like to achieve as a result, you should choose one of the options offered by the programmes. This choice should be made by considering the school's long-term development plans and its current capacity for undertaking the required actions, which includes experience in carrying out projects and staff availability. Staff Mobility, School Partnerships and eTwinning initiatives, each of them has its characteristic features associated with the nature of a particular action or programme; they can be implemented on a different scale, but they **all provide an opportunity for comprehensive development of the institution** thanks to exchange of good practices, in-service teacher training and fostering competences of project participants. And if you treat the project as a factor, which may contribute to the achievement of your institution's long-term goals (as opposed to a one-off exercise), you will likely reinforce the benefits by converting the participants' personal results into institution-level or even system-level, results.

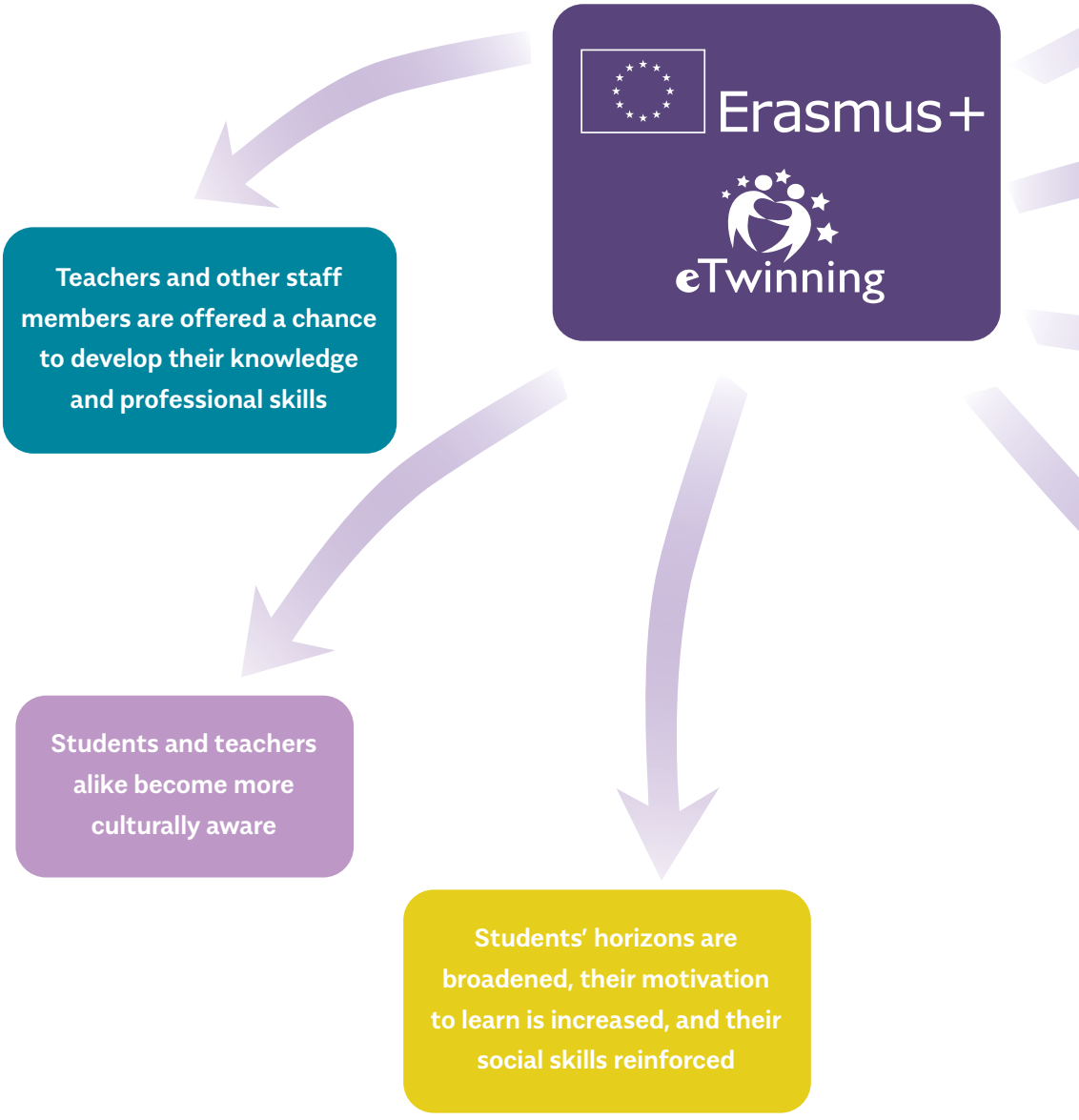
This is why this Guide does not feature instructions for completing application forms[3]. We will, however, tell you what steps need to be taken to develop a quality project. Our experience shows that using the methodology described in this publication has a significant positive impact not only on the quality of the project plan, which increases the chances of receiving funding, but also on the quality of the actions and results themselves.

The structure of the Guide is intended to give readers insights into the methodology of planning specific areas of a project, and information about each project type – Staff Mobility, School Partnerships, and eTwinning. The latter is, however, to be treated as a mere complement to the main content – we simply indicate key elements of each project type, which also need to be planned.

School Education and eTwinning Team

3 Such instructions can be found at erasmusplus.org.pl/eforms.

Benefits of Erasmus+ and eTwinning programmes

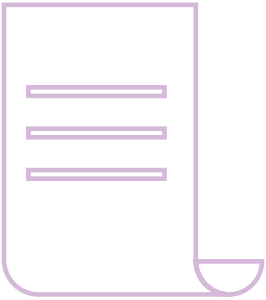


Cooperation is established with other schools across Europe - internationalisation of the school

Language competences of students and teachers are improved through practical language learning

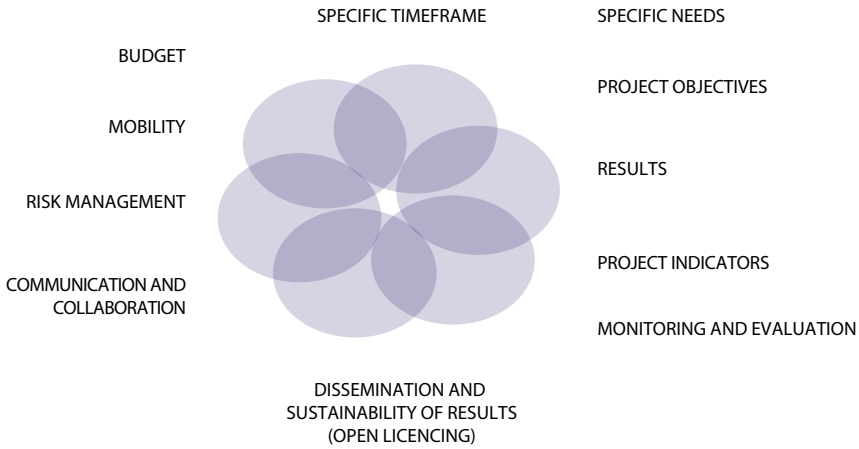
Teachers, other staff members and students have an opportunity to experience other European countries

Skills related to the use of modern technologies (ICT) are developed



1. Project concept

Project – a complex undertaking to be carried out within a specific timeframe to achieve a predefined goal with the use of specific resources.



1.1. Needs analysis

The starting point for any project concept should be the analysis of your institution's needs, or, in other words, the problems, which the school is facing and the required improvements. This may involve, for example, determining the areas of teaching, where results are the poorest or the competences of students and teachers, which the school would like to improve. This initial project planning stage is by no means too early to answer the question: what changes should be introduced in the organisation of work or in the teaching method in order to improve its quality and effectiveness?

Identifying the needs of the institution is a key element of any project – it provides a foundation for building the entire concept and a common denominator in planning subsequent steps. Such an approach supports cohesion of the project as a whole.

Why analyse needs?

- → To gain an insight into the potential and resources of institutions, teachers and students.
- → To be able to plan initiatives that will satisfy the real needs of target groups.

→ To give your activities proper focus and direction, and effectively support the school's development.

A project which responds to properly diagnosed needs is much easier to implement. Furthermore, participants are more willing to engage in activities with a clear goal and specific benefits. In addition, tangible results, such as teaching guides or new teaching methods, developed on the basis of a thorough needs analysis are certainly more useful and adequate, and, as a result, are likely to be used by teachers in their work with students (during and after the project).

How to do a needs analysis?

This process should take place before the project planning phase. Therefore, it should be adequately spread over time, while taking into account how the school's work is organised and appointing persons responsible for its implementation.

1.1.2. Sources of information

A very important element of a needs analysis is to substantiate the choice made – in other words, to describe in detail on what basis the needs have been determined.

→ Documents which can be used to accomplish this task are often in the school's possession – these are, for example, internal and external evaluation reports, student observation sheets (educational and behavioural), results of external exams (such as secondary school-leaving examination), class registers (specific information about the outcomes of teaching a particular subject on a particular level of education) or statistical data provided by education boards and Education IT Centre.

→ To probe into specific needs in a specific area, it is worth using well-designed surveys and/or questionnaires, which are an effective tool for collecting data, both quantitative and qualitative.

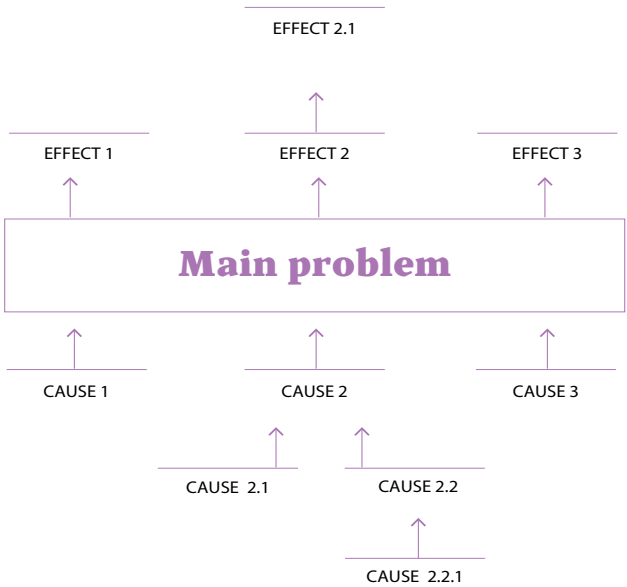
→ *SWOT methodology* can also be useful here, as it determines the strengths and weaknesses of an organisation, as well as the opportunities and threats present in each area.

In-depth analysis – Problem tree

The problem tree methodology enables a comprehensive approach to a problem and identification of its various causes, as well as immediate consequences and delayed consequences. The underlying assumption is that one project will not solve all the problems, or their causes, therefore the purpose of using the problem tree methodology is to indicate the real, critical need, and, at the same time, the most important areas for the intended project activities.

It may turn out that the original main problem is, in fact, an effect, and the project will, therefore, attempt to eliminate the deeper causes of the issue.

Problem tree



Example – Needs analysis

How to translate the above theory into school practice?

- → Let's assume that an institution has identified the following problem: **students' low motivation to learn**.
- → Using the problem tree methodology, the following causes for that situation are indicated: **students are having difficulty with acquiring the teaching contents and achieve poor results** (lack of educational success), and **lecturing is predominant while active learning and problem solving are rarely used**.
- → An in-depth analysis of the causes has additionally uncovered issues related to work organisation at the school: **lack of a sufficient number of teaching hours that would allow devoting more time to students with learning difficulties and lack of equipment, such as modern teaching aids and latest technologies**.
- → The effects of low motivation to learn can include in particular: **poor teaching outcomes** (this is both an effect and a cause of the problem)**, lower attendance, higher number of early school leavers, outflow of high-achieving students to schools with a better position on the education market,** and, as a consequence – **decrease in the school's reputation**.

1.1.3. Precise definition of the problem and identification of project target group

- → A possible result of an attempt to precisely define the area in need of improvement could be narrowing it down to two subjects, e.g. **biology and chemistry.**
- → Incidentally, such narrowing down almost automatically designates subject teachers to be involved in the project (both as participants and members of the school's project team) and helps better identify which students specifically should be included in the initiative. (Which students, from which grades, at which levels of education have the largest problems with motivation to learn biology and chemistry? Do they include anyone with special educational needs?) These are examples of questions which need to be asked to define students as a project target group.
- → In this case, the descriptions of target groups should also include teachers – they should tie them directly to the diagnosed needs and it should be supported by adequate sources of information.

1.1.4. Needs analysis and its relevance to each project type

Action 1. Staff Mobility

- → An institution's needs analysis is the starting point for developing a European Development Plan, which is a key element of any application for funding. The Plan should present the institution's long-term development vision in areas related to improving the quality of education and rising the skills and qualifications of staff. Implementation of this vision will be a direct response to the previously diagnosed needs.

Action 2. Strategic Partnerships and eTwinning

- → Needs analysis at institution level should be carried out before the partnership group is formed. Partners – both in projects under Action 2 and eTwinning – should be selected based on converging or complementary needs. It is then really worth **re-doing the needs analysis at partnership level**. Shared motivation to undertake project activities is the key to their success.
- → Only schools which have registered with the programme on its platform can join an eTwinning project.

Note: Institutions eligible to participate in Erasmus+ School Education projects are designated in each country by the minister for education. The list of eligible institutions can be found on the website of the National Agency.

1.1.5. What else to remember about when planning a project?

- → It is a good idea to start by creating a school project team – those involved in the work on project concept will support each other and, in the case of someone's absence, stand in for each other, so that the continuity of project planning, and later – of project implementation, is not interrupted.
- → It is also a good idea to start looking for project partners well in advance, rather than at the last minute.
  The portals **www.etwinning.net** and **www.schooleducationgateway.eu** have proven to be extremely useful in finding project partners. Once you have registered, you gain access to a forum where you can respond to an invitation to a project or post an invitation yourself. Invitations are also distributed via national Eurodesk offices.

Note: You should also check whether your city, district or municipality has already established a foreign partnership, through which you could find a project partner.

- → It is worth informing school supervisory body as early as at the stage of planning to apply. This will support better cooperation when collecting the required documents or including the project in the budget of the relevant municipality, district or city. Due to the fact Polish schools do not have legal personality, if funding is granted, the party to the financial contract, both in Action 1 and in Action 2, is a legal representative of a supervisory body or the school's management under an appropriate authorisation.

1.2. Defining project objectives

Having analysed the needs and indicated specific focus areas for the project, it is time to define its objectives.

General (main) objective: refers to the most important project assumptions, defines the course of action, and is worded in a non-specific way (e.g. developing language competences or improving the quality of education).

Specific objectives: achievement of the general objective usually depends on achieving specific objectives first; they refer to specific thematic areas or areas of activity; they should be defined in detail and measurable.

Project objectives describe what you would like to achieve by implementing the project or the desired future state, therefore they form the basis for proper outlining of project results.

Any project objective should stem from a problem identified earlier, and the process of its formulation involves converting the identified challenge into something positive. This process is shown in the diagram below:

Problem → **Objective**

Existing challenge → **Vision of the desired future situation**

Therefore, if the school's main problem is, for example, **students' low motivation to learn**, the project objective may be to **increase students' motivation to learn**.

Students' low motivation to learn → **Increased students' motivation to learn**

Defining project objectives

When formulating project objectives, it is worth using a method similar to the problem tree, which helps present specific solutions to previously diagnosed problems.

The objective tree shows the cause-and-effect relationship between individual objectives, while being a comprehensive positive reflection of the needs analysis carried out earlier (see Chapter 1.1. Needs analysis)

Example – Objectives

- → Students' motivation to learn will increase when their difficulties with acquiring knowledge are removed and their achievements are improved, and also when active learning and problem solving methods predominate in the teaching approach.
- → Changes in the organisation of work at school, such as dedicating more time to one-on-one work with students and better equipping the school with modern teaching aids, including the latest technologies, will also contribute to achieving the objective.
- → When students' motivation to learn increases, their learning outcomes will probably also improve, the number of early school leavers will drop, and talented students will inflow into school, thus boosting its prestige.

1.2.1. Precise definition of objectives – SMART methodology

Clearly defined objectives are one of the factors that condition the success of any activity. They will serve as a beacon signposting the direction you head in and will tell you what can be achieved. The most important project objectives – the achievement of which will be a direct response to previously diagnosed needs – should be made more specific. A useful tool here is the SMART methodology, according to which objectives should be:

S	***Specific***	they are described in detail and refer to specific problems of the institution
M	***Measurable***	they translate into results, and are expressed in numbers (quantified) to be presented further in your application
A	***Acceptable / accurate***	they have been discussed and consulted with key project stakeholders; objective accuracy refers to previously diagnosed problems and means that objectives must directly result from the initially described situation and address all causes of the problem
R	***Realistic***	they are achievable through implementation of the project – objectives should not relate to any tasks or areas that will not be covered by the project; planned project activities should be closely related to the objective and clearly contribute to its achievement
T	***Time-bound***	they include the timeframe for their achievement

Project objectives – both general and specific, should, above all, respond to the needs, have direct relevance for the target groups, and be achievable during or at the end of the project.

General objective: Increased students' motivation to learn

SMART objective: Strengthening the motivation to learn biology and chemistry among students aged 15 and 16 in the course of project duration

1.2.2. Project objectives and their role in each project type

Action 1. Staff Mobility

- → Project objectives should form a part of the European Development Plan (EDP), which in itself is a long-term vision for the institution's evolution in a desired direction, far beyond the scope of the project. EDP should not be created for the purposes of the project or its objectives. Conversely, your project objectives should be a tool to implement the institution's long-term plans outlined in EDP.
- → Project objectives should also take into account the professional development of those involved in the project and its direct and indirect beneficiaries.

Action 2. School Partnerships

- → Project objectives should be defined in relation to all schools participating in the project – formulating the objectives and further planning of activities should take place in consultation with project partners.
- → Erasmus+ formulates horizontal priorities for the entire programme, and field-specific priorities. The project must be aligned with at least one field-specific priority or at least one horizontal priority (a maximum of three priorities can be selected). The choice of each priority should be justified in the grant application.
- → A description of priorities and other rules applicable to project implementation can be found in Erasmus+ Programme Guide, in the chapter on Key Action 2. *Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices.*

1.2.3. What to remember about when determining project objectives?

- → Project objectives may be easily definable when the proposed initiative is seen from the very beginning as a kind of educational process – just like every lesson should have clearly defined, operationalised objectives and learning outcomes (growth of knowledge, change of attitudes), any project implemented under Erasmus+ should also lead to such outcomes. Their planning is precisely what goal setting is about!
- → When formulating project objectives, it is important not to set too many of them, so that later on, at the stage of project implementation, you do not face difficulties in achieving them. Like with the diagnosis of needs, also in this case it is recommended to focus on the aspects that are most important. You should choose main objectives resulting from the needs of the institution and project participants, and then formulate specific objectives. The more precisely the goals are set, the easier it is to choose the right tools to achieve them.

1.3. Planning of activities

Once you know what the school needs and what its objectives are, it is necessary to set out the activities that will help achieve these objectives. You need to follow this order to maintain project consistency, and also significantly facilitate the work on the concept as a whole. An intuitive approach, where you first think about what you want to do, or in what action to take part (go on a language or methodology course, send students on a foreign exchange, build a drone, hold an on-line training event), and then you ponder what goals could be matched up with the selected activity, will most likely not produce good results.

So once you have a clearly defined SMART objective: **Increasing the motivation to learn biology and chemistry among 20 students aged 15 and 16 in the course of project duration**, you should figure out what needs to be done to achieve it. Your selection from the Erasmus+ (Action 1 or Action 2) and eTwinning offering will depend on what the school wants to focus on, what its project implementation capabilities are, i.e. what resources it has access to, the level of experience with similar initiatives, and, finally, the school's motivation to engage in new undertakings.

Example – Identification of activities

Action 1. Staff Mobility

The above objective can be achieved, for example, through **the participation of biology and chemistry teachers from a given school in a methodology course abroad organised by an institution, which is a leader on the market of modern and innovative methods of teaching natural sciences.** Teachers would thus refine their methodology skills, which, when implemented in practice, would translate into improved teaching.

Action 2. School Partnerships

The above objective can be achieved by **organising international student exchanges, during which students from all partner schools will participate in workshops run by local cosmetics companies and botanical gardens**, for example.

Students will develop a formula for and make natural cosmetics. In addition, biology and chemistry **teachers from partner schools will meet during the mobility in order to share experiences and draft lesson scenarios that integrate biological / chemical content with the subject of cosmetology and environmental protection**.

eTwinning

Assuming that the project is carried out in a Polish-Greek partnership, the objective can be achieved through, for example, creating an e-book together: an English-Polish-Greek glossary of plants and animals found in both countries, as well as holding joint online conferences during which chemical experiments can be performed.

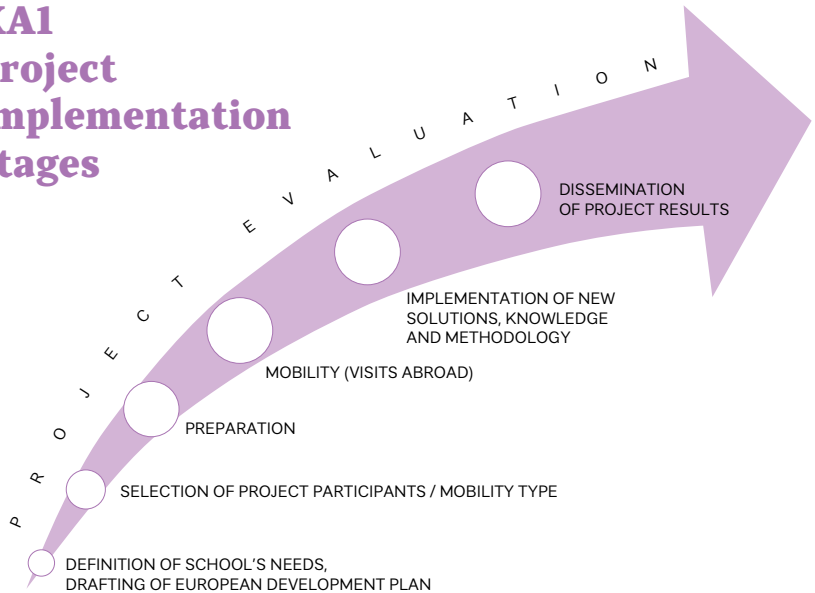
1.3.1. Possible activities in each project type

Action 1. Staff Mobility

As part of the project, school staff can participate in the following types of visits (mobilities) abroad:

- → **courses and training events** – participation in methodology, methodology and language, language or specialist courses or training events abroad (a specific course is chosen at the application stage);
- → **job shadowing** – observation of the work of a school or other foreign educational organisation (the institution is selected at the application stage);
- → **teaching assignment** – teaching at a partner school abroad (the foreign partner institution is selected at the application stage).

KA1 project implementation stages



Remember that mobilities are not the only project activities that should be planned. The project should also include all supporting activities, such as logistics or preparation of participants for their visits. In addition, there should be a well thought-out plan for implementing the acquired knowledge, skills and competences, as well as for dissemination and evaluation.

School Education Gateway – Europe's online platform for schools. It features articles about the main trends in European education. It also provides a catalogue of courses, which can be used in Action 1 projects, and a partner search engine for Action 2 projects. For more information, go to: www.schooleducationgateway.eu.

Action 2. School Partnerships

Mobilities: Projects that involve cooperation between schools can make use of educational mobilities for students (short- and long-term) and training visits for teachers (short- and long-term). During such mobilities, students will, in principle, live with host families, take part in activities organised by the local school or workshops related to the subject of the project. And during training visits for staff, teachers are provided with the opportunity to acquire knowledge through study visits, job shadowing, peer-to-peer training, exchanging good practices and jointly developing teaching materials.

Mobilities:

Activities related to learning, teaching and training

SHORT-TERM EXCHANGES OF GROUPS OF PUPILS	SHORT-TERM JOINT STAFF TRAINING EVENTS
LONG-TERM STUDY MOBILITY OF PUPILS	LONG-TERM TEACHING OR TRAINING ASSIGNMENTS

Long-term mobilities for students involve a longer stay at a school abroad, during which the students participate in classes, follow local curriculum and improve their language skills. And when it comes to a teacher's long-term visit, it involves teaching at a partner school and related professional development. It is recommended to include students in the planning of activities that concern them. The fact that they co-create the project from the very beginning boosts their motivation.

Note: **As early as at the application stage, the contents and objectives of each mobility need to be planned quite carefully, remembering that they must be well aligned with project assumptions and lead to achieving its main objective.**

Local activities: School partnerships should also include local activities, which are implemented in partner schools before and between mobilities. Their structure should be planned in all partner schools, and the scope of activities should cover the topic of the project and address all of its target groups (e.g. themed lessons, workshops, extra-curricular activities – establishing cooperation with institutions outside the school, such as culture centres or libraries). Participants are also encouraged to use the **eTwinning** platform, which offers many ideas for including more topics in the project, pursuing professional development and engaging students in the project. Local activities also include preparations for mobility.

eTwinning

Activities in eTwinning projects

eTwinning primarily involves online collaboration facilitated by a variety of ICT tools. The primary goal of the partners is to communicate and work in international / inter-school teams, as a result of which common outcomes and outputs are created. A characteristic feature of eTwinning projects is their flexibility. The partners can decide themselves about the timeframe for their cooperation and specific activities, select the topic and create a work plan, freely matching it up with, for example, their Erasmus+ projects. They may modify the project as they progress with its implementation, modifying it to respond to changing conditions and needs, for example extend the timeframe or add further ideas to the list of tasks.

Note: It is a good idea to include students in activity planning and tool selection. They often have very extensive knowledge about new technologies, and being able to propose and implement their own ideas boosts their commitment to the project.

TwinSpace – a project space

This is a safe space available only for registered and logged in members of an eTwinning project. On this platform, partners can communicate freely (TwinMail, forum, internal videoconferencing system) and post the results of their activities. Students and parents can be invited by teachers to join them on TwinSpace, and the collected materials can be easily shared with people from outside of the project. TwinSpace is the perfect support for the implementation of Erasmus+ projects!

1.3.2. What to remember about when planning project activities?

Preparation for mobility

Mobilities are not an end in itself for a project. They are, however, a step that brings you closer to reaching the main objective – one which results from the needs of the institution and fits into its long-term development plan. Mobilities have a huge impact on the participants of international visits, so it is worth preparing for them accordingly. These preparations should cover linguistic, cultural and educational areas, so that the benefits of travelling abroad are as far-reaching as possible and bring about the expected results.

Project activities and the core curriculum

Both the Erasmus+ and eTwinning programme assume a synergy with the syllabus and the implementation of the core curriculum. It involves integrating project activities (e.g. organising lessons related to the project or implementing methods learned through the project) into the usual work at school and using project elements on a daily basis during lessons. Such an approach to project activities will help increase their impact on the target group and propagate it throughout the institution, and also creates a better chance of continuing some of the activities after the project is completed. Importantly, it will also help avoid a situation where the project is implemented only after working and teaching hours, requiring teachers and students to devote additional time on the activities.

1.4. Identification of results

All project activities, in addition to bringing you closer to achieving your initial objectives, should also produce certain results.

Project results (effects of educational activities) are an extremely important element of these initiatives. Why? Because **they are the ultimate answer to the need diagnosed at the very beginning of project planning, they fill the gap and contribute to solving the existing problem.** If the problem at school was, for example, low motivation to learn biology and chemistry among students, and the result of the project is an increase in motivation in this area, it can be concluded that project activities have improved the initial situation and filled a certain competence gap.

1.4.1. Result types

The type of results will vary depending on the type of project and the activities carried out. Their nature can also be different – they may include both specific tangible outputs and intangible outcomes.

The results, which the project aims to arrive at should be defined in relation to specific objectives and follow from the activities carried out.

Results

Tangible (Outputs):	Intangible (Outcomes):
lesson scenarios research reports and publications teaching resource packages trained staff lessons taught website	better knowledge improved skills changed attitudes increased competences

1.4.2. Result indicators

The suggested intangible result – **increased motivation to learn biology and chemistry among students** – is correctly formulated, but you should think how you would find out whether the result has actually been achieved. What measures would indicate that your efforts have been successful? To ensure verifiability of key project results, it is a good idea to attach appropriate success indicators to them:

OBJECTIVE: Increased motivation to learn biology and chemistry among students
RESULT: Higher motivation to learn biology and chemistry among students

RESULT: Higher motivation to learn biology and chemistry among students
INDICATOR: 70 per cent of students participating in the project declares higher motivation to learn biology and chemistry in an evaluation survey at the end of the project

1.4.3. Result indicators and SMART methodology

In order to choose the right indicator for each result, it is worth revising the SMART methodology. The same criteria, which helped refine the project's objectives will now help describe its results in more detail. Therefore, it is important to remember that the result (or indicator) should be specific, measurable, achievable and consistent with the objectives of the project, as well as feasible within the adopted timeframe.

Tangible results (Outputs)

'Hard' project results should also be verifiable using relevant indicators – both quantitative (e.g. the number of developed lesson plans) and qualitative (e.g. the quality of these scenarios, assessed by two teachers who have used them).

Intangible results (Outcomes)

Enhancement of competences (whether linguistic, social, or methodological) can also be presented in a measurable way, by referring to the same data sources on the basis of which the need in a given area had been diagnosed, for example:

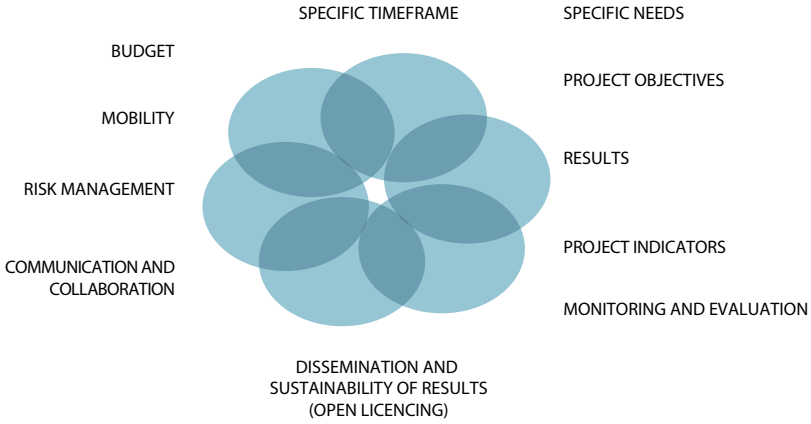
- → level of language proficiency (indicator: increase from B1 to B2, better result on placement test),
- → attitude declarations in an evaluation survey (indicator: student declares motivation to learn at level 4 on a scale from 1 to 5),
- → number of lessons taught using the newly learned teaching methods (indicator: a minimum of 15 lessons have been carried out using the CLIL method in grades 7 and 8).

Note: In order to measure the level of success, you should select relevant indicators, which will enable well-rounded assessment of the key results achieved.

2.
Essential elements of project implementation

The logic of designing a project concept presented in the first part of the Guide does not exhaust all the elements that need to be planned. To prepare a comprehensive plan of an initiative, the following areas should be included:

- → project management method (multifaceted: from financial management and schedule, through ways of ensuring adequate quality of activities and results and anticipating possible risks, to principles of cooperation and communication in the project),
- → method of monitoring project progress and evaluation of activities,
- → dissemination of project results – tools and ways to ensure their sustainability,
- → impact of the venture on target groups and its stakeholders.



2.1. Project management

Because of the multifaceted nature of educational projects and the characteristics of target groups, project management needs to adopt an approach, which will minimise the risk of its failure.

The key elements of the project management process include:

- → **Time management**
  A preliminary work schedule should be prepared already at the planning stage. It will subsequently serve as a reference point during implementation. Timely fulfilment of project tasks and their distribution over time, taking into account how work is organised at the school (school calendar, holidays and mid-term breaks), is a matter that requires prior analysis. However, the work schedule

should be flexible to a degree, so that it can be updated, should any important reasons arise, without having an adverse effect on the project as a whole.

→ **Team management**
When engaging individuals in the work on a particular initiative, it is important to ensure that each participant has a replacement: coordination of activities by a single person, especially in large-scale projects, may prove problematic, and, from the point of view of the whole undertaking, may pose a threat to continuity of its implementation. Therefore, it is recommended to appoint a project team, whose members will support and encourage one other and will share tasks related to project implementation. In preparation for any unforeseen 'act of God' situations and other factors that may affect the participation of teachers or students in a visit abroad, you should always put together a reserve list of mobility participants!

→ **Quality management**
It is extremely important to observe the quality of project activities and monitor the achievement of its results on an ongoing basis. Therefore, an evaluation plan should be prepared, especially for key elements of the project.

→ **Budget management**
Financial monitoring involves regular checking of the level of consumption of allocated funds and if their use complies with the programme's rules.

→ **Risk management**
Determining the ways in which risk can be mitigated requires identifying potential situations that may occur and adversely affect the project. Risks are identified on the basis of our knowledge of reality and what can potentially happen. You can use certain methods that will facilitate the identification of risks, or make it orderly, such as brainstorming or notifications from each member of the project team. After identifying potential risks, they should be analysed in terms of probability of occurrence and their negative effect on the project. Risk-mitigating methods will only apply to those situations that are highly probable and would have significant negative consequences for the implementation of the project. Each risk-mitigating method should specify who will take action to prevent the occurrence of that risk and what actions will be taken if the risk materialises.

→ **Cooperation and communication**
Selection of adequate rules for cooperation and forms of communication can be crucial for the success of projects. Although tasks are divided, responsibilities are assigned and rules of procedure are established for school project teams, these aspects become even more important when it comes to international and intercultural cooperation. The established rules should be

clear, accepted by all, and cover issues related to the division of main tasks, method selection and frequency of contacts in day-to-day communication. It is a good idea to write down your arrangements.

2.1.2. Things to remember when planning a project

Action 1. Staff Mobility

In Staff Mobility projects, a key element of risk management is the creation of a reserve list of participants: in the event of a problem, another teacher will travel abroad and continuity of the project will be maintained.

Action 2. School Partnerships

Although in School Partnerships the success of the whole project is the result of cooperation of all partner schools, the coordinating institution bears a special responsibility. A lot of attention during the preparatory phase should be paid to determining the principles of cooperation and communication and to creating a schedule of activities that will take into account the differing school calendars. Clarifications are also required as regards organisation of the mobility – recruiting host families, provision of accommodation for teachers, and sharing costs between the partners.

2.2. Monitoring and evaluation

2.2.1. Monitoring

Project monitoring involves systematic collection and analysis of information, which makes it possible to verify whether the plan is being implemented in accordance with your assumptions. Monitoring provides the data needed to evaluate activities. The approved work plan, including the tasks and results of the project, is subject to monitoring. This is to check whether they are carried out in accordance with the project schedule and budget. Monitoring of the plan allows you to identify delays, and to motivate the team to catch up. The school management and the coordinating body are often involved in monitoring activities.

→ Project documentation, including the application, recruitment records, attendance lists, student reports, certificates, surveys, interim reports, etc., may also be analysed.

→ The results of monitoring are a source of information required for the ongoing assessment of project progress, as well as ongoing and ex-post evaluation.

2.2.2. Evaluation

Evaluation is an examination of selected aspects of project implementation to check whether the adopted assumptions and objectives are achieved. You can learn, for example, whether participants are benefiting from their participation in activities, whether the results of the project meet the requirements of the people they are intended to benefit, whether the organisation of work is optimal, and whether the objectives are achieved. It is important to examine such areas of project implementation, and the conclusions drawn from the evaluation should support progress of the initiative. The source of data for those purposes may be, for example, adequately planned monitoring of activities.

When to evaluate – Types of evaluation and project life cycle

→ **Ex-ante evaluation** → Before starting any project activities, you may want to investigate the initial state of affairs: learning outcomes, knowledge of students and teachers, level of foreign language proficiency, and the quality of the school's work in the opinion of employees/students/parents.

Note: Performing an ex-ante evaluation is, in fact, a key element of the needs analysis – these processes rely on the same sources of information. When preparing a reliable analysis of the institution's needs, at the same time you perform some initial evaluation activities. See Chapter 1.

→ **Ongoing evaluation** → This is done during project implementation (with reference to the key activities in the project – those that are the most important to the achievement of objectives).
→ **Ex-post evaluation** → At the end of project implementation, you should examine the same areas of participant's competences that were evaluated at the beginning and during the project. Measuring the level of achievement of project objectives and developing appropriate result indicators is an element of ex-post evaluation.

Why is it a good idea to make an ongoing evaluation in projects?
Ongoing evaluation enables you, for example, to confirm whether the teacher's method of teaching works well with the students and whether it helps them better acquire knowledge in a specific area, and in case of unsatisfactory results, it allows you to change the mode of action to avoid failure of the entire project, or its parts. It is, therefore, an important tool for quality management of the initiative!

Elements of the evaluation process:

- → defining the purpose and object of evaluation,
- → selection of evaluation tools (e.g. survey, interview, observations, document analysis),
- → formulation of investigative questions,
- → drawing and formulating conclusions.

In educational projects, evaluation should be planned – you need to create a draft, which covers the key elements of the initiative, and appoint persons responsible for performing this task.

Ongoing evaluation – Example 1:

- → Three biology and chemistry teachers have just returned from a job shadowing visit to Sweden as part of a project under Action 1. Staff Mobility. The sending school, while planning the visit and wanting to determine whether the partnership with the host institution meets the requirements and achieves project objectives, decides to conduct an evaluation.
- → The investigation takes place after the first group of participants returns, and when they are introducing in their classes elements of newly acquired knowledge (i.e. within the process they wanted to improve).
- → The method used is an interview that involves collecting information from the participants, also at the time of implementing the acquired knowledge. The analysis is carried out both in terms of the quality of completed mobilities and the usefulness of the observed methods / tools. The collected information will form the basis for undertaking further project activities and for introducing possible changes in the project schedule, e.g. changing a partner or changing the mobility programme.

Ongoing evaluation – Example 2:

Educational materials were created in the course of a project. We are interested in the following:

1. Are these materials used during lessons by teachers participating in the project and by other teachers?
2. To what extent are these materials tailored to the needs of teachers?
3. To what extent are these materials tailored to the needs of students?

How to obtain this information?

Re. 1–3 – Survey or group interview with teachers who use the materials.

Re. 3 – Traffic lights – Materials have been used in class and students are asked to show a red card (I don't like the materials), a yellow card (I like them, but they need to be improved) or a green card (I like the materials), then the students are put in groups corresponding to the colour they selected and asked to formulate a justification of their opinion and present it to others.

For the purpose of surveying the opinions of students, alternative evaluation methods, including these listed below, can prove effective:

- → traffic lights assessment,
- → evaluation tree,
- → 'bin, suitcase and fridge' method,
- → talking walls,
- → Kahoot app.

Note: Always remember to state the research methods used in your evaluation project.

2.3. Result dissemination and sustainability

Promotion of activities and sharing information about the project are the responsibility of the school undertaking a particular initiative. However, this is different from dissemination of the results of Erasmus+ and eTwinning projects. The latter is aimed at sharing the effects of implemented projects with predefined groups, both at the stage of implementation of project activities and after their completion.

Dissemination differs from information-sharing and promotion, because:

- → it is not focused on providing information about the project only,
- → it involves taking steps aimed at multiplying the benefits (e.g. interesting local activities) or using the results developed in the project (e.g. teaching methods, lesson scenarios, teaching materials),
- → it should reach a group of project stakeholders via properly selected methods and tools – other than those used for promotion purposes, such as leaflets or brochures.

Note: Every dissemination activity is promotion, but not every promotional activity is dissemination.

2.3.1. Internal dissemination

The purpose of internal dissemination is for the effects of the project to reach the widest possible target group within the institution (as specified in the grant application). It is worth stating, for example, that the newly learned work methods

or teaching materials will be shared at subject-specific team level (at a minimum) – with teachers not directly involved in the project. However, it is a good idea to include a larger number of teaching staff members in those activities so that they can improve their professional skills through open lessons or training meetings, and then introduce such new solutions in their classrooms. When planning dissemination, it is worth focussing primarily on activities within the institution, and then plan external activities.

2.3.2. External dissemination

External dissemination goes beyond the walls of the school implementing the project and includes activities that aim to share the effects of the initiative with other schools with a similar educational profile in order to benefit more people, rather than just those covered by the funding. The target group of dissemination activities can include representatives of local authorities or the school governing body. They can also be used (through, for example, information channels) to share information about the project and contribute to changing the perception of the school's problems.

Channels	Tools
Websites, social media	social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest), TwinSpace, newsletters, articles, photo stories, videoconferences, webinars
Face-to-face contact	presentations, meetings, conferences, teachers' meetings, subject-specific teams
TV, radio, press	reports, press articles, interviews with participants, coaches and instructors
Events	conferences, seminars, exhibitions, trade fairs, galas, symposia
Publications	leaflets, brochures, guides

2.3.3. Dissemination channels and tools

In Action 2 and eTwinning projects, the partners often decide to disseminate the project via TwinSpace. It enables them to post materials, which become immediately visible to other registered users and allow students to work directly in a safe and private space.

Because selected items on TwinSpace can be easily made public, the partners can decide which parts of their work will appear on the publicly accessible website and which will remain available exclusively to the cooperating students and teachers.

→ Dissemination of results, whether electronically or in a more traditional form, such as a book or publication of articles in the local press, should aim to inspire more

teachers, share your experiences and skills with them, and create a good practice that could be adopted in other schools.

Erasmus+ Project Results Platform – a space where the beneficiaries of Action 2 under the Erasmus+ programme are required to post the results of their projects – is available to all on an open licence basis. The platform also contains project descriptions, examples of good practices and success stories.

2.3.4. Sustainability of results

It is also important that project results are incorporated into the educational practice of the school, so that the benefits are truly long-term.
Sustainability of results is important because:

- → it is an indicator of success, i.e. using the project results in the long-term, e.g. through commercialisation, accreditation or inclusion in day-to-day activities,
- → it is a determinant of project quality,
- → it provides the opportunity for a much larger group of people (rather than the participants of the project alone) to benefit from the results achieved, even after completion of the project.

How to achieve result sustainability?

It seems that the answer to this question lies in the way the school is organised. The use of new teaching methods or aids can be included in the subject-specific curriculum, while social and educational issues, which projects are often about, can be included in the school's preventive and educational plan or teaching plan. It is important to ensure that the results of the project are embedded in the school operations, so that teachers and students can easily use them on a daily basis.

2.4. Impact

Properly planned and implemented project and dissemination activities result in an increased impact of the project on the environment.

It might seem that small school projects with small budgets or with no funding could not have a great impact on the environment. However, changes initiated by international cooperation are often very relevant not only to their participants. It is essential that they translate into the operations of the whole school, methods of working with students, staff's approach to education, greater openness of teachers,

and their willingness to continue learning and improving their qualifications. It is also worth thinking about the wider impact of the project at the level of the municipality, district or region by involving representatives of local government or education authorities in your activities.

Therefore, specific dissemination activities addressed to relevant groups and the involvement of the project team in their implementation should be planned very carefully already at the stage of developing a project concept.

In order to determine whether those addressees have been reached, and, at the same time, to be successful in ensuring an impact on the school and its surroundings, it is necessary to think, from the very beginning, how you will verify if your actions have had any effect, i.e. to plan the evaluation of your activities.

Generating the desired impact of the project should be synonymous with achieving its objectives – that is, introducing beneficial changes that are the answer to the needs diagnosed at the beginning. These changes should form a part of the school's long-term development strategy and contribute to the improved quality of its operations and to its internationalisation.

At times, the impact of the project goes well beyond the expected minimum and the changes are more wide-reaching than initially assumed, influencing the entire school community, parents, the local community, culture institutions and other organisations cooperating with the school, as well as local and education authorities. One proof of the project's impact on the school and other educational institutions is the undertaking of new challenges – namely, new international initiatives. Impact is also indicated by the growing number of projects implemented under the Erasmus+ and the eTwinning programme.

Erasmus+ Project Results Platform serves the purpose of dissemination and exploitation of the results of projects financed under the Erasmus+ programme. It strives to share information about project results and successes on a wider scale and to facilitate the exchange of information and promotion of good practices. More information about the platform can be found at: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/

Examples of completed projects

Erasmus+ School Education
Action 1. Staff Mobility

Beneficiary: Zespół Szkół Prywatnych Sp. z o.o.
Project title: Developing a methodology
for bilingual teaching of English
Project description can be found at:
erasmusplus.org.pl/projekt/angielski-inaczej

Erasmus+ School Education
Action 2. Strategic Partnerships

Beneficiary: Szkoła Podstawowa nr 1 w Mosinie
(Gimnazjum nr 1 w Mosinie)
Project title: Brains at school – knowledge is power!
Project description can be found at:
erasmusplus.org.pl/projekt/brains-at-school-knowledge-is-power-mozgi-w-szkole-wiedza-jest-potega

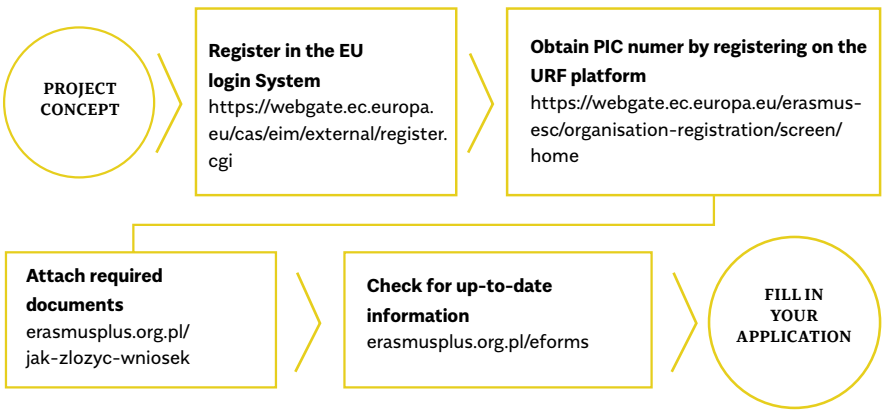
eTwinning:

Beneficiary: Zespoł Szkolno-Przedszkolny w Purdzie
– Szkoła Podstawowa im. Tadeusza Pezały
Project title: Yes, I can! – motivation in the classroom
Project description can be found at:
etwinning.pl/yes-i-can-motivation-in-the-classroom

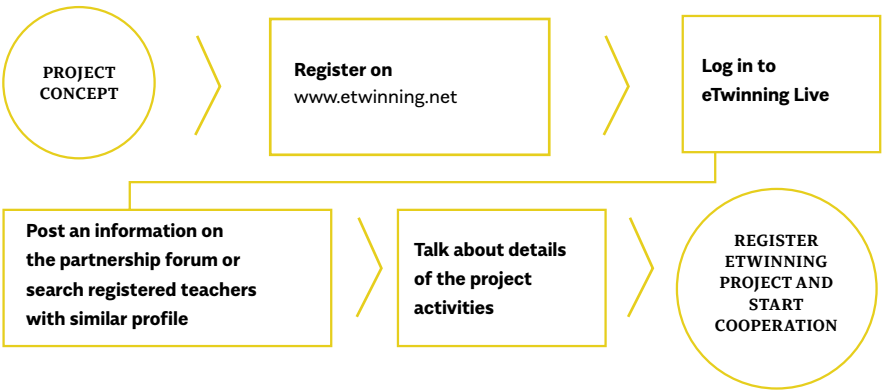
Practical tips

Once your project concept is ready, you can proceed with the formalities associated with participation in Erasmus+ and eTwinning programmes.

Erasmus+



eTwinning



Links:

National Agency's website:
www.erasmusplus.org.pl
eTwinning Poland:
www.etwinning.pl
Erasmus+ programme website operated by the European Commission:
eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus
European eTwinning portal:
www.etwinning.net
School Education Gateway:
www.schooleducationgateway.eu
Erasmus+ project results platform:
ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects

Publications:

Erasmus+. Praktyczny przewodnik dla dyrektorów szkół (Erasmus+. Practical Guide for School Leaders)
www.schooleducationgateway.eu/guideforschoolleaders/downloads/pl/Practical-Guide-for-School-Leaders-PL-FINAL-PDF

Analiza potrzeb – pakiet edukacyjny PAJP, cz. 5 (Needs analysis – Educational package from the Non-Formal Academy for Project Quality (PAJP), Part 5)
www.mlodziez.org.pl/sites/mlodziez.org.pl/files/publication/2565/pajp_v_www.pdf

Edukacja międzykulturowa – pakiet PAJP, cz. 2 (Intercultural education – Package from the Non-Formal Academy for Project Quality (PAJP), Part 2)
www.mlodziez.org.pl/sites/mlodziez.org.pl/files/publication/448/edukacja_miedzykulturowa_pajp_czesc_2_pdf_16004.pdf

Podziel się sukcesem. Upowszechnianie rezultatów w projektach edukacyjnych (Share your success. Dissemination of project results in education projects)
czytelnia.frse.org.pl/1504/

Daj się odnaleźć! Narzędzia prawne i techniczne do upowszechniania rezultatów w projektach edukacyjnych (Make yourself visible! Legal and technical tools for dissemination of results in education projects)
czytelnia.frse.org.pl/daj-sie-odnalezc-i

eTwinning. Step-by-step registration and tools
czytelnia.frse.org.pl/program-etwinning-2015

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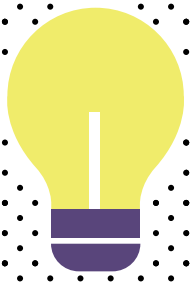
Foundation for the Development of the Education System (FRSE) operates as the Polish National Agency of the Erasmus+ Programme implemented in the years 2014-2020. FRSE is also responsible for other European educational and information initiatives in Poland: eTwinning, Eurodesk, Eurydice, Europass, ECVET and EPALE. The Foundation also supports cooperation with countries in the East via the Polish-Lithuanian Youth Exchange Fund, the Polish Ukrainian Council of Youth Exchange and SALTO-EECA Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre. Since 2014, FRSE has been involved in the implementation of the Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development.

The Foundation organizes many educational events including competitions promoting projects' results. It coordinates the European Youth Week and coorganizes events in the framework of European Day of Languages. It also conducts research and has a publishing house which issues, among others, such quarterly magazines as Języki Obce w Szkole (*Foreign Languages at School*) and *Europa dla Aktywnych* (*Europe for the Active*).

www.frse.org.pl



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