SUSTAIN E+
TRAINING

SUSTAIN E+ PROJECT

MODULE N°2
SUSTAINABLE ERASMUS+
PROJECTS PROPOSALS

Content

1. Introduction to the topic

This second module of the Sustain E+ training programme is about thinking about the sustainability of Erasmus+ projects since the project proposal, or project definition. This preparatory phase of the project is essential to ensure the future sustainability of the project. A well defined project, with a clearly established work plan, that includes already green practices in its administration and working procedures, but also mobilities and entire activity, will for sure get a better chance of sustainability and success during its implementation and over time.

As we learned during the Module 1 of this course, the environment and fight against climate change is one major priority in the different Erasmus+ calls.

The programme supports the use of innovative practices to make learners, teaching staff and youth workers true actors of change (e.g. save resources, reduce energy use, waste and carbon footprint, opt for sustainable food and mobility choices, etc.). Priority is also given to projects that – through education, training, youth and sport activities - enable behavioural changes for individual preferences, cultural values, awareness, and more generally support active engagement for sustainable development.

Resource: Oecd.org

Therefore, organisations and participants involved should strive to incorporate green practices in all projects when designing the activity, which will encourage them to discuss and learn about environmental issues, to reflect about local actions and to come up with alternative greener ways of implementing their activities.

2. Learning objectives

The competency addressed in this module is the set up of a project proposal that takes into account the green and sustainable aspects.

In this chapter, we will focus on:
- Problem solving techniques aligned with SDG
- Definition of projects priorities, needs, and objectives.
- Building of a sustainable logical framework
- Processes of project proposal development
- Design of a project idea aligned to sustainable objectives

By the end of this module, learners will be able to:

- Define a problem and set up associated objectives of sustainability
- Build a sustainable logical framework
- Understand the importance of well defined indicators

Environment and fight against climate change is one key transversal priority of the Erasmus+ programme, which will thus support actions in this field. But it is possible to go further in the implementation of sustainable projects if those, even if aligned with other priorities, are designed with a circular concept in mind since their conception.

For this, there is a need to develop this idea further and develop a specific method that can be applied by any professional working with Erasmus+ projects for the design of sustainable Erasmus+ projects. In other words, time has come to apply to the project itself the sustainability that it promotes to engage others.

There is a need for guidance to conceptualise projects that are greener from the beginning, starting with the project proposal that should be systematically associated with an environmentally sustainable and optimised work plan, to follow with greener implementation of activities, including travelling, production of results, dissemination, etc. For this reason, we want to provide learners with instructions encouraging them to have greener behaviours as well, while participating in Erasmus+ projects and beyond.

3. Learning contents

Chapter 1 – Sustainable and Social Problem solving methods in Erasmus+ actions

1.1 Problem solving methods for social problems

Problem-solving is a key soft skill, needed in many disciplines and many aspects of everyday life. It consists of the ability to use a method or technique in an orderly manner to find a solution to a given situation or difficulty. It is essential in the set up of an Erasmus+ project, that should start with the identification of a problem, or need related to education, youth or sport.

Also, it is fundamental to be able to detect those needs and approach them with a logical framework so you can address them properly.

Many different methods were developed by experts for problem-solving, such as the GROW model (Goals-Realities-Opportunities-What Can I Do Now), the PDCA model (Plan-Do-Check-Act), the OODA loop (Observe-Orient-Decide-Act), or the SMART system to define a goal (Specific-Measurable-Attainable-Realistic-Timely).

In this chapter, we will focus on 3 specific concepts related to problem-solving that are associated with sustainable and social problems: Design Thinking, Social Innovation and Human Centred Design.

1.2 Design Thinking

What is Design Thinking?

Design Thinking is a user-centred and action-oriented methodology, whose objective is to generate solutions according to problems detected in a certain framework.

One of the most important features of this tool is that it is fully oriented to the user (in the case of Erasmus+ project, we usually refer to target groups, or beneficiaries).

For this reason, the learning results and services generated appropriately through Design Thinking add value to people, as they have been designed for this purpose.

The current boom and popularity of Design Thinking come from its ability to generate innovative solutions in very little time. It offers project managers a methodology to rapidly advance and test their hypotheses and kickstarts a creative and innovative culture within partnerships and classrooms.

How does it work?

The materials used for the Design Thinking techniques are available to anyone: markers, sheets of paper, sticky notes, coloured pencils, glue and a camera. These are the tools to promote visual communication, which is fundamental in the method. A picture is worth a thousand words. Most importantly, an image can evoke endless ideas, as it opens up interpretation. Design Thinking is developed by following a process in which different characteristics can be valued:

The generation of empathy: we must understand the problems, needs and desires of the target groups, who should be involved in the solution we are looking for (participative methodology). Regardless of what we are developing, it will always involve interaction with people. Meeting them is the key to a successful outcome.

The team: In Design Thinking it is essential to work as a team. The more diverse it is, the better. There must be at least one person with knowledge of the methodology who knows how to guide the process. Although it must have a stable nucleus of people who participate until the end, others may be added depending on the phase in which it is, for example, in generating ideas or building indicators.

Importance of piloting actions: The generation of results challenges the fact that every idea must be validated before it is assumed to be correct. Design Thinking encourages the identification of failures so that when we find the desired solution, they already have a possible solution.

The attitude: In the Design Thinking method, attitude is essential. It is necessary to be curious, and observant. In any detail, it is possible to find important information. It is needed to be empathetic, both with people and with their circumstances. Being able to put yourself in the shoes of the other. Question the status quo, and do not carry prejudices or assumptions. Being optimistic, losing the fear of being wrong and seeing mistakes as opportunities. All this is in an atmosphere where playfulness is promoted. It's about enjoying the process, and as a result, reaching a state of mind in which people's potential is unleashed.
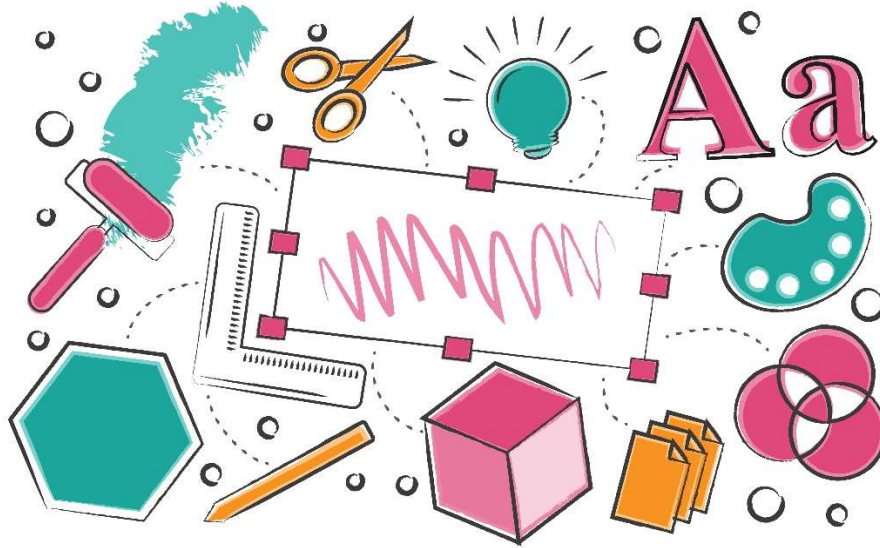
Source: www.rawpixel.com

What is the process?

The process of *Design Thinking* is made up of five stages. It is an iterative process, it is not linear, since it is a process that serves to address complex challenges composed of the so-called *wicked problems,* problems that are complex to define and solve. And that will be discovered throughout the implementation of the process of *Design Thinking*. At any time it is possible to take steps backwards or forward in the process of *Design Thinking* if it seems opportune, jumping even to non-consecutive phases. It begins by collecting a lot of information, generating a large amount of content, which will grow or decrease depending on the phase you are in. Throughout the process, this content is refined until a solution is reached that meets the team's objectives and surely, it even surpasses them. The implementation of an Erasmus+ project and its work plan can typically align to the different phases of the Design thinking method, as shown here:

Empathy phase: The process of *Design Thinking* starts with a deep understanding of the needs of the target groups addressed and involved in the solution that we intend to develop, and also of their environment. The team must be able to put itself in the shoes of these people to generate solutions consistent with their realities. Thus, the objective of this phase is to identify relevant wants and needs for the beneficiaries. Techniques typical of the Empathy phase are the in-depth interviews, surveys or Focus Group, among others.

Definition phase: Second stage of the process. Here, we organise all the information collected to identify all the areas of opportunity from which it can offer solutions relevant to the wishes and needs of the beneficiaries. The most common technique in this part of the process is Clustering, which consists in the first place of the dumping of the information that we have compiled in post-its. Second, in the grouping of those post-its according to their content. And, in third and last, find a phrase that synthesises the information of each of the groups.

Source: https://xn--designthinkingespaa-d4b.com
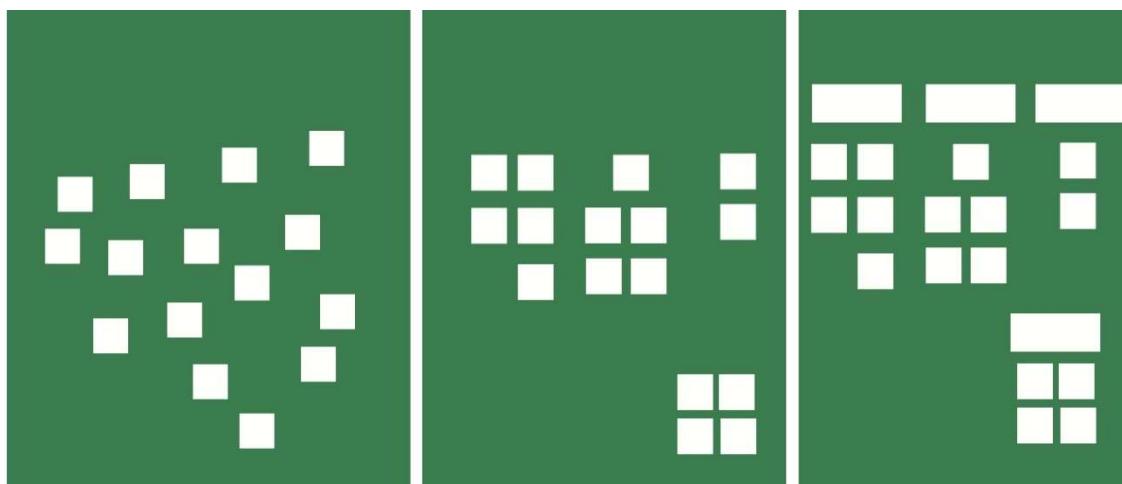
The phrase of the synthesis, which it must build with a self-explanatory sentence that contains a subject and a predicate, will be the one that will give rise to the challenge. This is formulated through a question and always begins with the construction: "how could we do to + phrase of the synthesis".

Ideation phase: Once the problem/need is established (which can also be reformulated or refined), we move on to the design part of the solution. The Ideation phase is about giving as many ideas as possible that respond to the challenge posed. It is the moment of brainstorming and other tools that encourage finding as many ideas as possible.

Prototyping phase: From the ideas generated, a selection is carried out, and these are then prototyped. The prototyping phase is the one in which shape ideas, and make them tangible. In this way, it can show them to the beneficiaries, who can give feedback and say to what extent the solution that we are designing for them adjusts to their needs or desires. Depending on the moment in which you meet, the prototyping will be more or less basic. There are many ways to prototype, in an Erasmus project, the prototyping phase usually corresponds to an internal or

external review made by a panel of experts. We prototype to fail quickly and cheaply. We are looking for the user to tell us if the path we are taking in the design of the solution is adequate or not as soon as possible.

Testing phase: It is the moment when we show our solution prototype to the archetype for which we are designing. The validation phase requires preparation: we will have to set the objectives, build the guide and, finally, show the target groups our solution. This phase is not yet the exploitation of the solution, it is about learning from user feedback to later make a new, improved version of our solution. In Erasmus+, this corresponds to the piloting phase, which engages the target groups, and serves to validate if a new tool, training material, learning platform, learning activity… actually meet its objectives. The process must go through all phases at least once. However, we can feel free to return to one of them if we consider it important to do so, as long as that does not paralyse us or slow down the process too much.

1.3 Erasmus+ and social innovation

What is Social Innovation?

Social innovation is not only about making stakeholders grow but about helping society to prosper. It refers to the process of developing and implementing new and effective solutions to solve social or environmental problems, in such a way that they satisfy current social needs better than before, having a long-term impact.

Source: www.freepik.es

In today's hyper-connected world, the social problems of a country can also become our problems. The fight against climate change, the crisis generated after Covid-19, political upheaval, sustainable development issues... All these problems that must be addressed also generate great opportunities of action. The prosperity of a society is not measured only by its economic prosperity, but also by its environmental and social prosperity: Is there peace and happiness in society? Is there freedom? Is there financial well-being? All of this, among other things, determines social prosperity. Thus, socially and economically "healthy" societies know how to give an innovative approach to their social problems.

The variables of social innovation

According to ESADE Business & Law School, there are 5 variables for the global debate about social innovation:

Impact and social transformation. The goal of social innovation must be to solve some social problems. The term "social" encompasses environmental, ethical or economic challenges, or encompasses all dimensions.

Intersectoral collaboration. Social innovation does not occur in isolation. Often there are spaces where the private, public sector and other groups work.

Economic sustainability and long-term viability. Although it seeks to solve social problems, emphasis is also placed on self-sufficiency and results-orientation in the financial strategy.

Type of innovation. In general, there are two types: open innovation and closed innovation. The first is based on the fact that those interested are free to copy an idea and adapt it. The second is based on intellectual property, whereby the knowledge belongs to the author. The first type is usually more common.

Scalability and replicability. In this increasingly global world, social innovations can be replicated elsewhere and scaled up. Furthermore, most environmental and social problems are global.

How to get started with social innovation?

To help you get started, we propose 4 steps that can help you with your social innovation initiative:

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Involve your team: Achieving social innovation takes time and commitment. At the same time, knowing that you are working to improve society can motivate your team to persevere in working for social innovation.

Build partnerships: Together we go further and better, for example, a partner with a relevant organisation at EU level that provides complementary expertise to yours will help you achieve your goals. It may happen that you, as an organisation, have more means, access to the target group, or infrastructure and that your partners will be able to provide you with more expertise or knowledge about methodologies or technical solutions.

Establish indicators that help you measure the impact of your actions: It is not only a request from Erasmus+, it is about verifying that an innovative idea that we believe solves or helps to solve a social problem is being effective.

Promote a culture of innovation in your company: To ensure that innovation matters, keep the following recommendations in mind:

- Form a team with different profiles and sensitise them about innovation and its opportunities: the diversity of skills, competencies and training in a team will allow better ideas to be generated and projects executed more successfully.
- Invest in training for innovation: provide your team with the information, tools and skills necessary for them to innovate.
- Make time and space for innovation: Allow the team to "pause" their usual tasks and give them time to brainstorm. Do not forget to make the necessary resources and space available for the innovation process to occur.

Source: www.freepik.es

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1.4 Human-centred design: user-friendly results that solve real problems.

As project writers, we may be delighted with our results, but find that the outcomes do not reach our expectations: after a long and costly development time, some projects are forced to accept that they have failed to meet expectations and beneficiaries needs: they have solved a problem that beneficiaries did not consider such a problem or their product shows many weak points. Human-centred design reduces the questions in the development process, involving beneficiaries from the beginning in the creation of a new or improved result.

What is human-centred design?

The human-centred design has been created to improve product development and to avoid product orientation errors. The term is defined in the **ISO 9241-210: 2019 standard**; as an approach to developing interactive systems that aim to design them in a way that is useful and easy for users. To do this, it focuses on users, their needs and expectations, taking into account the human factor (physiological and psychological), as well as knowledge and methods related to usability.

Source: www.freepik.es

Principles of human-centred design

In its 2019 version, the ISO standard lists six principles that define Human-Centred Design:

1. **The design is based on a clear understanding of the users, the usability and the environment:** the idea is that developers not only understand the users but also the purpose, the way and the environment in which they are going to use the product.

2. **Users are involved in the entire design and development process:** potential users are continuously involved in the product development process. Instead of asking them to rate an idea and a prototype, the intention is to research their needs and integrate them directly into the product design. For this, field studies (observations) can be used at the beginning of the project and user tests after the completion of the first version of the project.

3. **Design is developed and optimised through user-centred evaluation:** This principle emphasises that user testing is not only done at the end of the development process but should be an integral part of product development, user feedback should already be implemented as soon as it has been done.

4. **It is an iterative process:** on many occasions, users are not able to indicate what they need and how they imagine the product. The optimal solution must be obtained through several feedback loops and dialogue with users.

5. **The design takes into account the entire user experience:** In the past, user experience has been repeatedly associated with intuitive operation, although this covers more areas. The objective should be to make the experience as pleasant and simple as possible, to generate positive emotions and make the user want to repeat.

6. **On the design team, there are people with multidisciplinary skills and perspectives:** development teams should be made up of experts from different disciplines. Only if different experts come together and if they all bring their different perspectives, is it possible to spot the blind spots and make a successful human-centred design project.

The 4 phases in the human-centred design process:

Human-centred design distinguishes between four activities or phases that make up the development process:

1. Understanding and description of the context of use.
2. Definition of usage requirements
3. Establishment of design solutions
4. Testing and evaluating solutions

There can be repetition within the different phases. There are no fixed methods to perform the human-centred design process. Entities can use those field research, idea development, and product testing methods that have been helpful in their experience.

designed by **freepik**

Source: freepik

Why is it worth focusing on people

The human-centred design offers numerous advantages. It can be used to develop both physical and digital products and activities. The latter especially benefit from this approach, as their level of success depends on interaction with users/beneficiaries.

- **Better productivity:** developers can use their resources more specifically thanks to early feedback collection.
- **Lower training costs:** applications that emerge from a user-centric process are intuitively understood, reducing the need for training to use the solutions proposed.

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- **Performance:** with this approach, stakeholders can meet the real needs of users and solve application problems much better.
- **High beneficiary satisfaction:** the process generates a very good user experience that very few methods can match.
- **Less stress:** constant feedback from users minimises risk, so the work environment will be more relaxed, which favours the creativity of the team. Users' stress is also reduced, as they receive a problem-solving product that is easy to use.

Source: www.freepik.es

More and more, entities are applying the human-centred design approach even though they do not explicitly call it this way. Thus, the development of a product, in isolation from its environment, is something that is less and less common, since it has been proven that the risk that the product is not accepted or does not have the expected reception.

1.5 Practical activity

Work on an online collaborative workspace with Jamboard

https://workspace.google.com/products/jamboard/

Jamboard is a Google workspace tool designed to visualise ideas in a new and collaborative way. Thanks to this tool, you can sketch ideas whiteboard-style, thanks to an interactive Canvas that you can share with your partners from any place.

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For this activity, we invite you to brainstorm with colleagues from different countries on Jamboard and establish a list of at least 3/4 synthesised needs, taking as a basis one of the following topics:

- Environmental impact of textile industries
- Language education for migrants adults and inclusion
- Youth skills and green jobs

1.1 Sustainability of the project over time

One of the basic requirements of an Erasmus plus project is its sustainability over time. Partners are requested to make an action that is not only useful for its beneficiary, but also that will answer a need and have an impact on the long term.

One of the recurrent question in all application forms of the Erasmus+ calls is to explain how the partnership will ensure the sustainability of the project: how it will contribute to the development of the organisations in the long-term or how do partner plan to continue using the project results or implement some of the activities after the project's end?

Thus, while applying for a project, partners should consider the following actions:

- Development of an exploitation plan
- Maintenance of the project results after the funding will end: how to sustain the project economically, and engage the partner in the necessary updates
- Maintenance of dissemination activities
- Replication of the activities over time, especially when those include on-site training: how to engage new participants, commit them in learning activities, etc.
- Creation of a network of entities that can be interested in the project results.
- Eventual synergies with other fields of education or sector.

1.2 Request for inclusive action and active participation

Another request is the development of inclusive actions. Some basic elements of inclusion should be:

- Including people in situation of vulnerability among the target groups
- No discrimination can be applied at the time of selecting both the working team and the participants other than the relevance of the profile to the project needs and target groups. In the same way, partners should commit to guaranteeing gender equality.

- Identifying the specific needs and challenges faced by the vulnerable public that you are trying to reach, to develop targeted and effective interventions.
- Dissemination activities should be inclusive and sent on channels that are relevant to meet publics at risk.
- Interventions should be culturally sensitive and respectful. Partners should avoid stereotypes in the contents and will make sure that the collaborative activities have an inclusive nature.
- The main results of the project should be accessible online and be totally free of charge, in respect of the OER principles. Partners have to grant access to the material without any conditions.

As for participation and civic engagement, here are some recommendations while building your project proposal. Your project should at least:

- Promote the Erasmus+ programme while implementing actions, and evidence the co-funding by the European Union
- Use a participative or collaborative methodology, that will engage the target group, open a space for dialogue among the target, and initiate to structured debate and democracy at small scale
- Include the social and intercultural competences as background benefits of the transnational collaboration in your project.

1.3 Environmental Sustainability

In addition to complying with the formal criteria and setting up sustainable cooperation arrangement with all project partners, the new programme specifically points out the environmental sustainability of the project

In that way, as an horizontal aspect, the guide of the programme details that Projects should be designed in an eco-friendly way and should incorporate green practices in all its facets.

Organisations and participants should have an environmentally-friendly approach when designing the project, which will encourage everyone involved in the project to discuss and learn about environmental issues, reflecting about what can be done at different levels and help organisations and participants come up with alternative, greener ways of implementing project activities.

The same application form leaves a specific question to be answered by the consortium related to the green practices incorporated during the different phases of the project. Here you have some thoughts about how to raise this issue.

1) Promotion of the Green practices among the core results of the project
Partners should investigate and focus on the green practices that will be promoted among the main topics of the project. For instance: the target group will increase their knowledge in the field thanks to the training programme developed and will be able to deliver assessment in this field having a positive impact on the community.

2) Implementation of green strategies
As part of the learning by doing method chosen for this project, the target group will have to develop internal green strategies that will thus apply on their own behaviours.

3) Implementation of Green practices in the project management
As a new practice in the implementation of Erasmus+ project, you could create a "Green Committee", responsible for checking the sustainable behaviours and green practice of the partners all along the implementation of the project, providing recommendations for the implementation of activities with the lowest environmental impact possible. It might be for instance recommendation for the travels (including transports, hosting, green behaviours onsite) but also for the events, promoting green purchase, recycling, smart use of technologies and energy, etc.

1.4 Practical activity

Create your own Green Committee.

This Committee will be responsible for checking the sustainable behaviours and green practice of the partners all along the implementation of the project, providing recommendations for the implementation of activities with the lowest environmental impact possible.

It might be for instance recommendation for the travels (including transports, hosting, green behaviours onsite) but also for the events, promoting green purchase, recycling, smart use of technologies and energy, etc.

How many times a year will it meet?

Which partners will be part of the committee?

Are you able to create a small green plan for your project? (Don't worry if you are not capable yet, you should be able to be once you finish all the training)

Chapter 3 – Step by step of an Erasmus+ eco-conception

3.1 Eco-design principles

Eco-conception is defined by the European Commission (Directive 2019/125/EC) as the "integration of environmental characteristics into the design of the product with a view to improving the environmental performance of the product throughout its life cycle"

We can define the eco-design concept as: Methodology for product (project) design in which environmental impacts are considered at all stages of the conception and development process to achieve results that generate the least possible environmental impact throughout their life cycle.

The objective is, therefore, to reduce environmental burdens by increasing efficiency and including the project life cycle concept.

We can make a simple definition of the project life cycle as the consecutive and interrelated stages of a project system: from the initiating and planning, its implementation, piloting, and exploitation, until ceases to be used.

We are going to talk a little about Eco-design strategies from the point of view of Erasmus+ project life cycle, that could be summarised as follows:
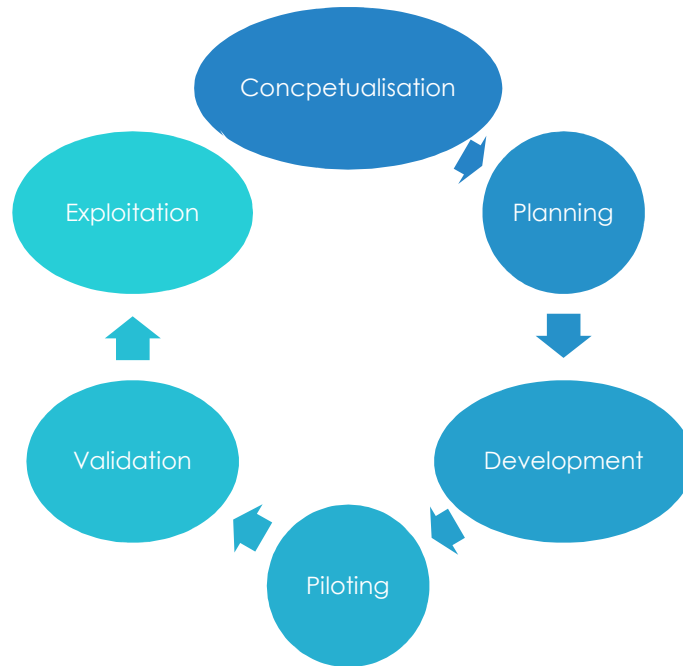
Source: MEUS

At each stage of this project life-cycle, you should identify the main source of contamination and intend to limit them and reduce your impact. Some basic tips will be:

- Reduce the use of materials and use of low-impact materials
    - Use of recycled materials,
    - Renewable energy
    - smart use of digital devices (switch off devices during pauses, etc)
    - reduce prints and gadgets (digital promotion
- Optimisation of the development efforts
    - online management systems and smart coordination
    - avoid duplication of works
    - LEAN management
- Smart mobilities
- Distribution/exploitation optimisation
    - Online systems that are environmentally efficient
    - sustainability and replicability over time

In the next chapter, we will review the main sources of impact along Erasmus+ project life-cycle, and introduce some of the basic green practices that should be introduced at the conception level. For now, we will focus on the step by step

conceptualisation of the project in line with Erasmus+ sustainability requests and eco-design principles.

3.2 Set up of a logical framework

According to the European Commission, a **Logical Framework** is a **matrix** in which the intervention logic (overall objective, purpose, expected results and activities), assumptions, objectively verifiable indicators and sources of verification are presented. It is used as a management tool to *improve the design of Interventions*. It involves identifying strategic elements (inputs, outputs, outcomes, impact) and their relationships, indicators, and the assumptions or risks that may influence the success or failure of a Project. It thus facilitates planning, execution and evaluation of a development Intervention, and is therefore present and used in different phases of the cycle of operations.

For Erasmus+, we recommend the set up of a logical framework that include the following information, that will be prior to the project writing and help you in making sure that you answer to the sustainability request of the programme at all stage:

- Project priorities (to be selected among the priorities presented in the programme guide every year)
- Needs
- Objectives (including specific objectives)
- Target groups (main target groups and secondary target groups)
- Work packages with main activities and results
- Milestones and Indicators

Your logical framework should evidence the relation between each element of your work plan and the priorities, needs and objectives of the project, and show how each activity actually answers to an identified problem/needs, and is involving / addressing your target groups. You should also take care in including transversal activities such as project management and monitoring, quality or dissemination.

You might build a logical framework using an Excel file (Table) or other matrix tools.

With this tool in hands, you might already start looking at responsibilities among your partnership, making sure that your partner's profile responds to the needs in competences of your project, and that you are able to bring all the required expertise.

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK
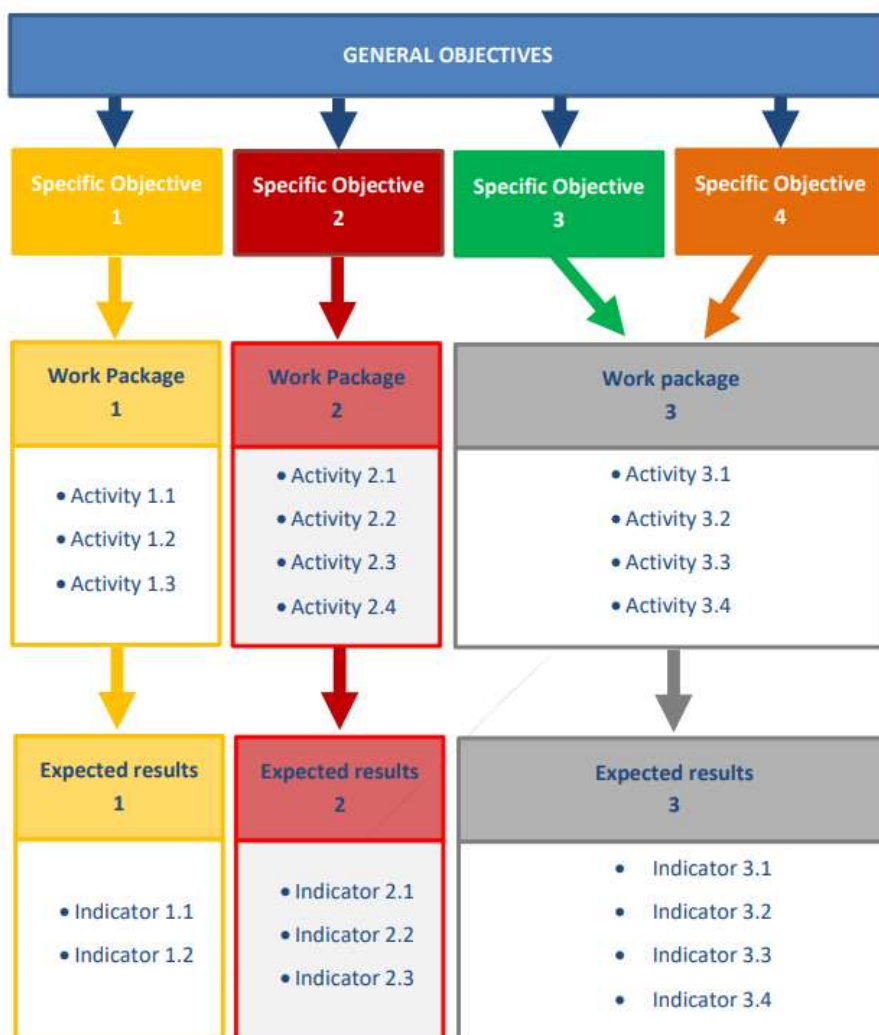
Source: Handbook on the lump sum funding model, Leargas, 2022

3.3 Set up of indicators

Associating indicators to your logical framework is probably the best way to ensure that your action achieves its objectives in terms of sustainability. Leargas national agency (Irish National Agency in charge of Erasmus+) provided in its Handbook on the lump sum funding model 2022 full indications on how to build indicators. Here is what they say:

What is an indicator?

An indicator is the measurement of a value in view of an objective to be met. An indicator can be quantitative or qualitative:

- Quantitative: defines measurable information about quantities, facts, and can be mathematically verified;

- Qualitative: describes events, reasons, causes, effects, experiences etc. Qualitative indicators can be made quantitative through scoring methods

Quantitative and qualitative indicators complement each other: in addition to quantities and facts, it is also important to measure qualitative elements, so that the assessment on the achievement (or non-achievement) of objective is not purely mechanical.

There are two main kinds of indicators:

- Elementary Indicators: provide basic information on which other indicators can be built. Ex: Number of trainees, number of participants to a meeting, number of visits to a website, etc.

- Derived indicators: based on the calculation of the ratio between two elementary indicators. Ex: number of students who passed a test, participants to a conference who presented a paper, visitors to a website who downloaded a document, % budget used, etc. (Leargas, 2022)

At each stage of your project, referring to the logical framework mentioned earlier, you should then establish indicators of sustainability, inclusion and participation for your project. Those can be in the short term, during the project implementation, or in the long-term, indicators of performance in the following years after the project will end.

Examples of indicators could be:

- Calculation of the environmental impact of the project

- Number of green mobilities/ number of direct flights / use of alternative transports during the mobilities

- At least 20% of participants to all activities with backgrounds making their participation in EU projects more difficult

- Gender parity in the project activities

3.4 Sustainability in the project Gantt chart and budget

Another preparatory phase that is part of your project conceptualisation will be the set up of a Gantt Chart and budget.

Here is an example of Gantt chart given by Leargas:
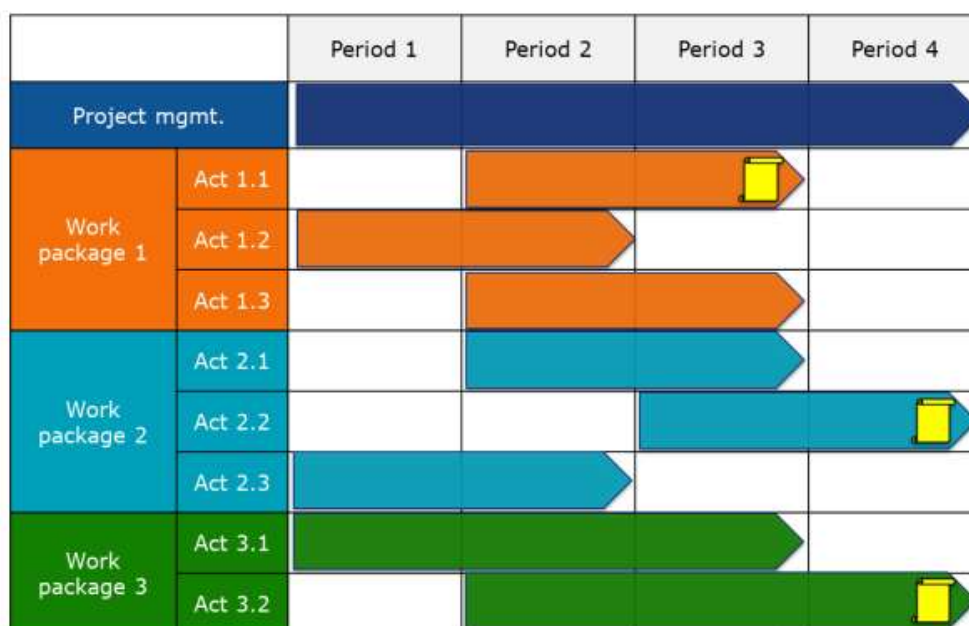
The Gantt chart supports the temporality of the project and shows how the different activities will take place overtime. This plan should be done with the sustainability objective in mind. Different elements can influence the project sustainability, for instance, when (and where) the mobilities will take place: is it possible to combine several mobilities together so as to limit the journeys? Or the timeline of piloting activities: the energy needed to host the onsite activities won't be the same at all periods of the year. Depending on the country, you will have a lower impact in spring or summer, etc.

The same goes with the budget: you should establish a smart and efficient budget that offer the best quality – sustainability - price, for this, you should make sure that:

- The tasks are well allocated among partners so the partner having more expertise and being able to perform the task in the most efficient way is in charge.

- The number of days needed for each activity is well calculated.

- Consider that replicability of methods and activities will lower the cost of exploitation of materials over time.

- The destination chosen for the mobility are the most central ones, enabling a maximum of partner to have direct flights

- If several partners come from the same country, privilege mobilities in this country

3.5 Practical Activity

Management work package

The managerial part of a project is generally presented as the first work package needed in your work plan. It will be transversal to all the projects and set the main rules of monitoring, including the quality and sustainable aspects.

We propose you here to design the management work package (WP) of your project, using a logframe matrix of your choice.

You should include in this matrix at least:

- Needs
- Objectives
- Activities
- Indicators

Eventually, you can also add a Gantt chart of the different activities that you intend to implement.

Chapter 4 – Identification of the main sources of impact of E+ projects and introduction to Green Practices

4.1 Introduction

Thanks to Erasmus+, "countless students, apprentices, teachers and trainers, youth workers and young peoples involved in non-formal learning, studied, trained or gained experience above". (annual report Erasmus+)

"With a budget of €3.37 billion, 2019 was yet another record year. The programme supported close to 940 000 learning experiences abroad, financed more than 111 5000 organisations and funded almost 25 500 projects". This growing trend has been confirmed by the new funding period and the new Erasmus+ programme started the year 2021. Also, it is to be noticed that such a number of projects and mobility initiatives also generates an important environmental impact, associated with as much transport, but also supplies for the implementation of the projects, buildings, papers, food, among others.

Resource: Green Erasmus.org

This impact was already recognised, and some actions have been taken, for instance with the Green Erasmus higher education project, to encourage students to have more sustainable behaviours while going abroad for their studies. However, there is a clear lack of action that tackles the problem at its roots, meaning the design and implementation of Erasmus+ projects by professionals that organise the mobilities.

A sustainable design of Erasmus+ projects, and an optimization of project production management (including different tools for circular production leann

management, continuous improvement systems etc …) would thus have a significant impact on our environment, by its direct decrease of contamination thanks to clean activities, but also thanks to the externalities made possible by educating Erasmus+ participants to take sustainable habits.

The inclusion of SDGs concerns into European projects (such as equality, work, innovation …) will also increase the quality of projects, supporting the achievement of these goals.

4.2 Green practices among project management

We spoke before about the "Green Committee" that each project should have to check the sustainable behaviours and green practice of the partners all along the implementation of the project, providing recommendations for the implementation of activities with a lowest environmental impact as possible. But, which could be these recommendations? It might be for instance recommendation for the travels (including transports, hosting, green behaviours onsite) but also for the events, promoting green purchase, recycling, smart use of technologies and energy, etc.

Resource: 99designs.com

During the different modules of this training you will learn more detailed info about all the green aspects you can implement in your project, but now, we are going to make a small introduction of some of them:

- Working Procedures
- Meeting or Trainings
- Food Sustainability

4.3 Working Procedures.

Good working procedures improve efficiency in every field, even in relation to the reduction of environmental impacts. You will learn more about working procedures in Module 3, but, here you have some highlighted tips:
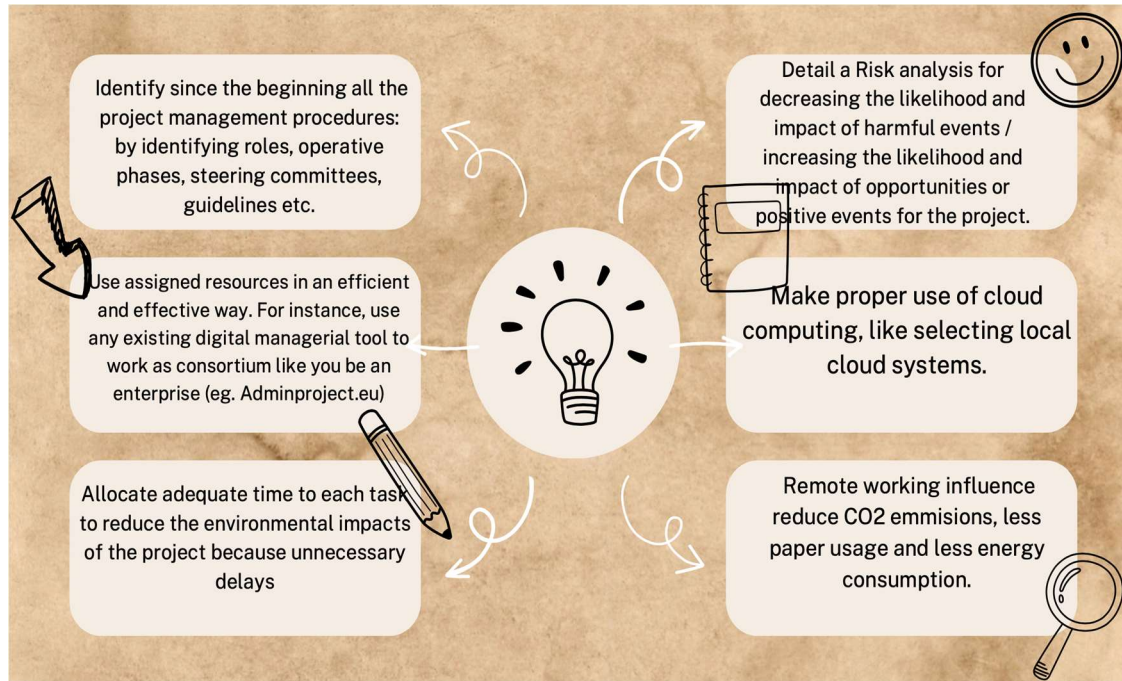
4.4 Meeting or trainings

During the Module 7, you will learn more detailed info about meetings or training, but here you have some tips in advance. Related with travelling:

- Try to limit the trip over time, the duration of the trip will also increase the impact. For this, the agenda of the meeting should have clear objectives set up to save time, management strategy to get to the point, etc.
- Whenever it is possible, combine trips located in the same country or close in time to limit the impact.
- Choosing the most centrally located and best connected city with all partner's locations will reduce the distance to cover by the whole consortium.
- If you have to travel by air, sometimes you can choose a sustainable airline that offers more eco friendly options for all travellers.

- Walking, cycling and public transport are the most sustainable transport modes due to their lower emissions
- A certificate related to Sustainable Tourism means that the hotel/accomodation meets the highest environmental standards in the market.

Resource: Greentourism.com

During the meeting we can recommend for instance:

- Zero paper meetings. One ton of recycled paper is equivalent to saving the lives of 17 adult trees.
- As for the use of computers, make sure that those are switched off during the breaks or when they are not necessary (any break over 1 hour).
- Issuing digital certificates instead of paper certificates avoids paper consumption and waste generation.

4.5 Food sustainability

The food sustainability could be applied to both, Meeting or training and Events.

Resource: Sustainweb.org

Here you have some good practices to implement:

- In coffee breaks, local sustainable food should be preferred, if possible without chemical agents and homemade. Also avoid small packaging (individual sugar, milk, etc). Propose local sustainable products; fair trade coffee.
- The use of reusable materials, such as cups, spoons, etc. that can be washed and reused is more ecological that using recyclable materials.
- Use biodegradable or recyclable products (napkins, bottles, paper), for example, biodegradable and non-disposable coffee capsules,
- Issuing digital certificates instead or paper certificates avoids the paper consumption and waste generation
- Make a prior calculation of quantity of goods needs according to the number of participants and don't buy too much to avoid waste generation
- Prepare recycling bins for selective sorting of waste. This will allow them to give them the best treatment.
- Give excess of food to charities or participants when possible.
- Messages to raise awareness of the attendees will make sure that the waste gets to the correct deposit for adequate treatment.

4.6 Practical activity

Green practices

Taking in account your ongoing project or project proposal, are you capable o answering the question related to green practices that Erasmus+ application formf picks up?

"How does the project incorporate green practices in different project phases? Maximum (3000)"

NESTA, 2020, *Toolkit for social innovation*, retrieved from OVTT in February 2023. ovtt.org/en/resources/nesta-toolkit-to-social-innovation/.

This toolkit promotes open social innovation, and is ideal for inventing, adopting or adapting ideas that offer better results in the market from innovation management. This catalogue is the result of the study of hundreds of innovation tools applied today, offering a documented battery of applied tools, fast and easy to use in any context and organisation to enhance their capacity for innovation.

Erasmus + programme, 2022, *Handbook on the lump sum funding model*, KA2, retrieved from Epale website in February 2023. https://epale.ec.europa.eu/system/files/attachments/handbook-on-ka2-lump-sum-funding-model.pdf

This project handbook provides recommendations based on the Erasmus+ programme and aimed at supporting applicants in the preparation of projects with recommendation for drawing a logical framework, indicators, budget and timeline.

European Commission, 2020, *Logical Framework matrix*, called Logframe, retrieved from EC wikis in February 2023. https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/ExactExternalWiki/Logical+Framework+-+Logframe#LogicalFrameworkLogframe-4.1.1AccessorCreateaLogframe

This tool proposed by the European Commission can be used for the set up of European projects. It is fundamentally used for projects of higher complexity than the Erasmus+ project, however, it is an interesting tool to understand how the project action should be built.

Harvard Business School, 2020, *What is Human-centered Design?*, retrieved from Harvard Business School Online website in February 2023. https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/what-is-human-centered-design

This online documentation includes a free e-book on the topic.

European Commission, *Eco-design for sustainable products*.

https://commission.europa.eu/energy-climate-change-environment/standards-tools-and-labels/products-labelling-rules-and-requirements/sustainable-products/ecodesign-sustainable-products_en

This webpage from the European Commission provides references of European regulation in the field, especially the Ecodesign directive 2009/125/EC and the proposal for new regulation launched in March 2022.

6.1 Exploitation of the practical activities given in the module under the trainer perspective

Practical activity 1 – Work on an online collaborative workspace with Jamboard

Type of activity: collective, by groups of 5-10 person

Time: about 30 minutes

Material: online computer

Description:

This activity is aimed at exploring an online application that is used for brainstorming in a team. In this activity, we recommend the use of Jamboard. Alternatively, other online dashboards can be used, such as Miro. Here the idea is to invite people from different geographical places to collaborate together to establish project needs and elaborate first ideas that can later be used for building a project idea and logframe. For this, we propose 3 topics to start to work on, but you can choose any other topic that is more relevant for the participants to this activity.

Source: rawpixel.com

This brainstorming activity should be structured into 3 different steps, as explained in the course section relating to design thinking:

- 1st step: expression of any idea related to the topic. Here, each participant should write on post-its the concepts that are, for him/her, related to this topic. In particular, they should express the needs identified in relation to the topic, mention the target groups, stakeholders, and eventually solutions.
- 2nd step: classification: The team should then work together to regroup the different ideas expressed in categories. At this stage, they can still add new ideas, or remove some that in the end seem less relevant.
- 3rd step: Wrap-up. In the end, you should be able to summarise each of your categories by a short description that covers the general idea expressed.

Practical activity 2: Create your own Green Committee.

Type of activity: Individual or collective

Time: 15 minutes

Material: none - discussion

Description:

This activity should be a reflexive activity in which participants envisage the creation of a green committee for their project. They should envisage here different elements such as:

- Participants in the Green Committee: profile and responsibilities
- Objectives (eventually milestones)
- Assigned tasks
- Method for the measurement of the compliance of green objectives
- Timeline of activities
- Etc.

There is no correct or incorrect answer in this exercise. The objective is to engage debate and raise awareness on this function.

Practical activity 3: Management work package

Type of activity: Individual or collective

Time: 30 minutes to one hour
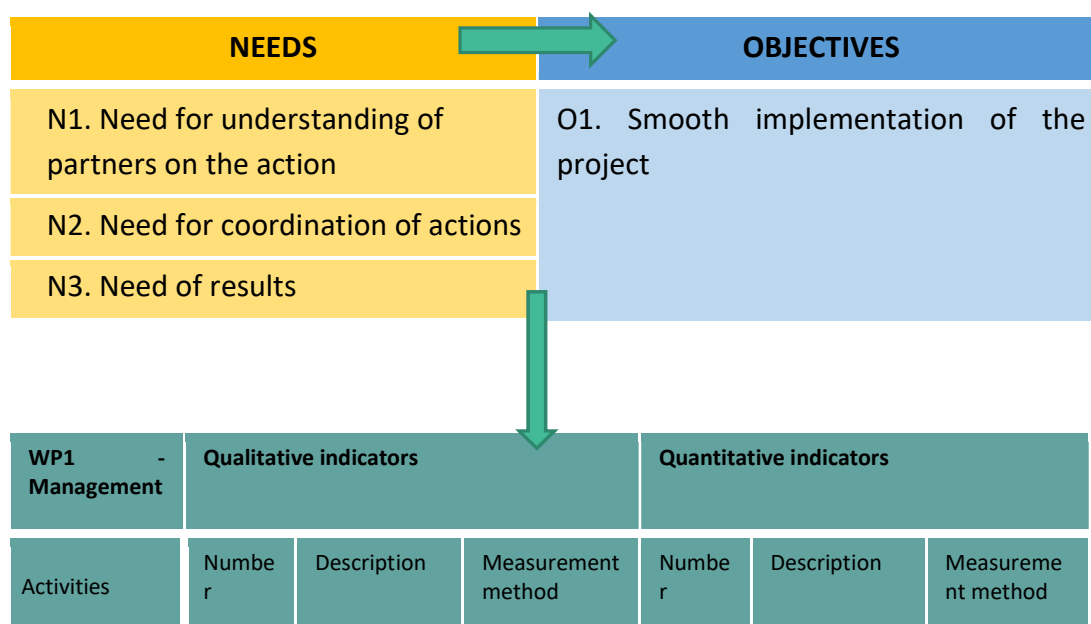
Material: Computer

Description:

This activity is about exploring the use of a logical framework. Mastering the logical framework will strongly support the future development of a project application form and the writing phase of the proposal, this is why we consider it a key step to the conceptualisation of the project in general. Thanks to this tool, it is also easier to make sure that sustainable components are well integrated at all the stages of a project proposal.

The exercise here focuses on the project management part, which is the most transversal one and can apply to any project and topic. However, it might also be interesting to apply this exercise to other parts of the project, and eventually to build an entire logframe corresponding to a future Erasmus+ project.

The course gives example of a logframe template proposed by the leargas National Agency, however, this template is an example, and can be further developed and adapted. We request to include additional elements in the exercise so participants have to develop their own tool and tables. For this, they can work either on a matrix app, or on Excel, words, or any programme enabling the draw of tables and graphs.

Here is an example of what could be developed to answer this exercise. It is not a correct answer, just a proposal that can surely be improved. Any participant should create its own version.

NEEDS	OBJECTIVES					
N1. Need for understanding of partners on the action	O1. Smooth implementation of the project					
N2. Need for coordination of actions						
N3. Need of results						

WP1 - Management	Qualitative indicators			Quantitative indicators		
Activities	Number	Description	Measurement method	Number	Description	Measurement method

A1.1 Project management board	IQL1.1	Clear and mutual understanding of partners roles	Quality and frequency of communication inside the partnership	IQT1.1	Full development of results	List of 27 deliverables to be issued
A1.2 Project documentation (Partnership Agreement, project handbook, etc)	IQL1.2	Clear and mutual understanding of partners roles	Clear description of roles in the Project documentation	IQT1.2	Access of all partners to the Project documentation	Exhaustive list of staff, registration on Admin
A1.3 Project meetings	IQL1.3	Active participation of partners	Quality of communication inside the partnership reported in satisfaction surveys	IQT1.3	Full commitment of partners	Participation of all partners to all meetings, reporting of work done. Frequency
A1.4 Technical follow-up	IQL1.4	Absence of technical barriers that prevent the work to be done	Follow-up of Gantt Chart	IQT1.4	On time delivery of results	Follow-up of Gantt Chart
A1.5 Administrative and financial follow-up	IQL1.5	Claimed funds are appropriate with regards to the results achieved	Timesheets and use of time.	IQT1.5	Use of funds	100% of the Budget claimed.
A1.6 Interim and final reports	IQL1.6	Overall quality of the reports	Reports approved with high score	IQT1.6	Issues of reports on time and according to requests	Reports approved

Practical activity 4: Green practices

Type of activity: Individual

Time: 30 minutes

Material: Computer

Description:

This exercise is about entering in the writing phase of the project proposal. It does not have any correct answer. This question comes from the application form of KA220 proposals. It refers expressly to the different project phases. Thus, some elements that you might consider for answering this question are:

- Promotion of the green practices at the phase of the project conception phase (way the research phase was performed)
- Implementation of green practices in project management. (Implementation of a green Committee, use of tools to measure the project environmental impact, etc).
- Implementation of green practices in the project development (green mobilities, use of materials, etc)
- Promotion of the green practices among the core results of the project

6.2 Other practical activities

Practical activity: get inspired by the theory of change

Instructions

The theory of change is an inspiring tool to conceptualise a project idea, starting from a given situation and exploring how to improve it. Here is a short summary of the Theory of Change (ToC):

According to most common definitions, change is an act of becoming different, transformed, evolved, modified, or replaced. It is also the act of causing someone or something to become different, for instance influencing someone's behaviour.

Theories of change have a long history if we consider evolutionary theories such as Auguste Comte[1], or conflict theories such as Karl Marx[2].

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[1] In the 1800s, A. Comte developed a theory on the superiority of human beings over the rest of livings explained by evolution

[2] In the 1850, Karl Marx developed the theory of Class conflict, promoting change through social revolution

However, we will here focus on the current Theory of Change which emerged in the 1990s as a modelling methodology that is currently used to promote social change, also commonly called ToC. This current theory would find its origins in Peter Drucker's work on the management by objectives (1954), which requires a set of higher and lower objectives to achieve the main goal. It was further developed at the Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, bringing together in the 1990s several methodologists that worked on model and evaluation programs to evaluate community initiatives. It was finally popularised by Carol Weiss, who used the term **Theory of Change** as a way of describing all the small steps that enable achieving a long-term objective.

Nowadays, the ToC is a methodology that is used in companies, but also by charities, associations, NGOs and governments to promote social change by anticipating the impact of determining actions. It consists of mapping interventions and their outcomes with a series of indicators that all together will allow the organisation to move towards a long-term outcome.

In other words, the ToC is a description (also called a map) of how to achieve the desired outcome and how the change will happen in a particular context. The map will focus on the different activities or interventions that will support reaching the objective and identify the conditions that must be in place for the goals to be achieved.

The Theory of Change relies on a causality "If-Then" principle:
- **IF** I do this
- **THEN** I will obtain this

THEN consists in an anticipation of possible results based on assumptions. All elements are placed in a diagram that will form a logical framework where all actions are related and where each precondition (or action) achieved contributes to reaching the main goal.

Starting from this information, build a situation, propose interventions and set up a desired long-term outcome that might support your project idea.

Type of activity: Individual or collective

Time: 30 minutes

Material: Board

Description:

This activity is aimed at introducing the learner to another tool that can support the conceptualization of a project. To answer this exercise, the learner might build a matrix that will help them in writing down their ideas. The following schema is an example of the shape that such a diagram could look like. Its complexity will of course vary depending on the complexity of the long-term outcomes, its context and related assumptions, and the necessary steps required to achieve this goal.
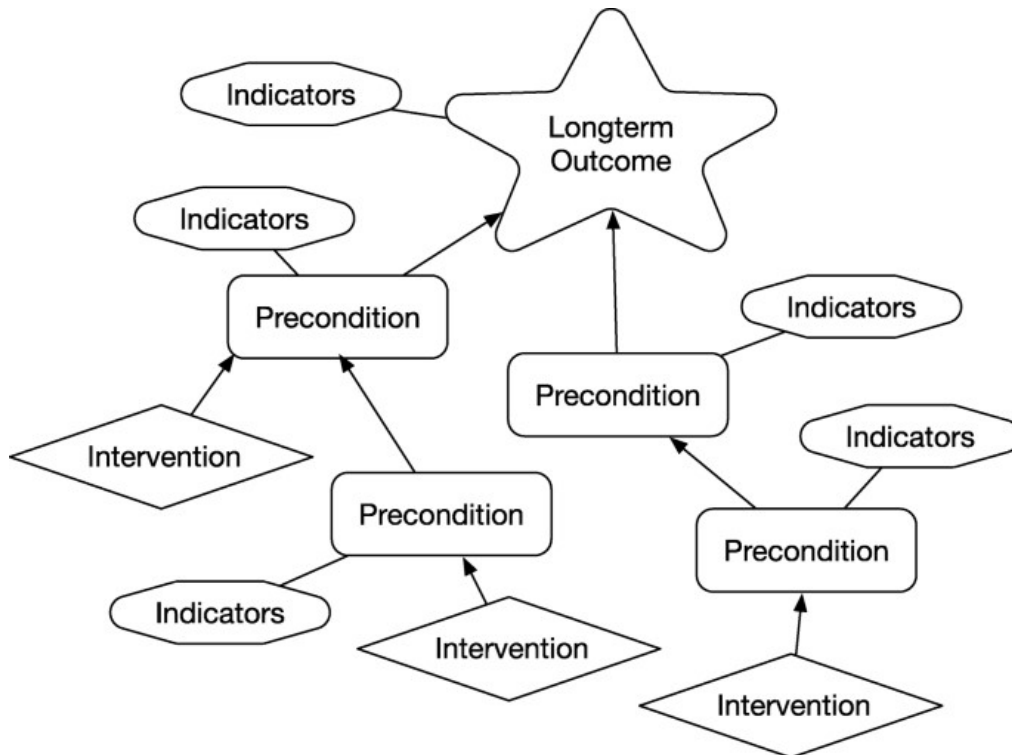
Assumptions: Assumption1, Assumption2, Assumption3

Source: https://rj-keller.com/theory-of-change-examples-in-education

For the implementation of this activity, you can support the student with step by step instructions. The centre for Theory of Change[3] has established 6 main stages to develop a map for achieving your objective:

1. Identifying long-term goals

The first step, naturally, will be to determine the long-term objective, or desired situation. Where do we want to go? How do we want the situation to become in the long-term? These first key questions will help us to visualise our objective and compare it to the current situation, which will help us to draw a complete journey including the different steps to overcome and the elements to be changed.

2. Backwards mapping and connecting the preconditions or requirements necessary to achieve that goal and explaining why these preconditions are necessary and sufficient.

What conditions are required for a given long-term outcome? What precondition do we need to reach these conditions? The mapping work starts from the final objective and goes backwards to the initial situation, drawing all the connections and steps required to cause the direct change. This creates a "Pathway of Change".

3. Identify your basic assumptions about the context.

The centre for Theory of Change identifies 4 types of assumptions:
- Assertions about the connections between long term, intermediate and early outcomes on the map;
- Substantiation for the claim that all of the important preconditions for success have been identified;
- Justifications supporting the links between program activities and the outcomes they are expected to produce;
- contextual or environmental factors that will support or hinder progress toward the realisation of outcomes in the pathway of change.

4. Identify the interventions that your initiative will perform to create your desired change.

From the previous steps, we can add to our map of preconditions the different interventions that would help us reach the situation taking into consideration the different assumptions made during stage 3. Interventions are the direct action that you will implement through your initiative to generate the change.

5. Develop indicators to measure your outcomes to assess the performance of your initiative.

This process must of course be accompanied by indicators that will enable us to evaluate the impact of the intervention and observe if the interventions reach the expected results. If not, it means that the map will need to be corrected or adapted.

6. Writing a narrative to explain the logic of your initiative

Finally, as it is important to be able to communicate an action and its objective, you might prepare a narrative that will explain your project.

Practical activity: project abstract

Instructions:

The project abstract is another key document that you will need to issue during the preparation phase of your project. It consists in a summary of the main ideas and motivation of your project that you will share with your eventual partners to invite them to participating in your project.

What information should you include in your project abstract?

Type of activity: Individual

Time: about 15 minutes

Material: Paper and pen or computer

Description:

This activity is aimed at getting further in the understanding of the key information and structure of an Erasmus plus project. In this activity, we do not ask the learner to write an abstract, but rather to think about how this document should be structured and what information it should provide so as to convince other partners to take part in the project.

Some basic information that it should include are:

-   Call you intend to apply to

- Duration and budget
- Motivation/background information
- Needs
- Objectives
- Target
- Basic WP and structure
- Desired partners and profile

Then, you can complete this exercise with further activities, for instance:

- Write a project abstract
- Prepare a questionnaire addressed to your partners and think about what information you will need from them to complete your proposal.

Practical activity: create your project Gantt Chart

Instructions

Using the following template, draw a Gantt Chart for your project.

Name of the project:

PROJECT TIMETABLE																									
		nov-23	dic-23	ene-24	feb-24	mar-24	abr-24	may-24	jun-24	jul-24	ago-24	sep-24	oct-24	nov-24	dic-24	ene-25	feb-25	mar-25	abr-25	may-25	jun-25	jul-25	ago-25	sep-25	oct-25
Project activity*	MONTHS	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	M11	M12	M13	M14	M15	M16	M17	M18	M19	M20	M21	M22	M23	M24
WP1 Project management																									
A1.1 General coordination and monitoring																									
A1.2 Quality, inclusion and risk																									
A1.3 Green management																									
WP2																									
A2.1																									
A2.2																									
A2.3																									
WP3																									
A3.1																									
A3.2																									
A3.3																									
A3.4																									
WP4																									
A4.1																									
A4.2																									
A4.3																									
WP5																									
A5.1																									
A5.2																									
A5.3																									
A5.4																									

Doc= initial documentation produced by responsible partners
Fin= financial documentation to be provided
Rep= report

Type of activity: Individual

Time: about 1 hour

Material: Computer/ Excel table

Description:

This template proposed is taken out from the previous period of Erasmus+ programme. It however remains a good tool to plan a project over time, and is a good document to be attached to a project proposal. This is why it is interesting to be familiar with such a document that supports the project writing and visualisation of project activities in a timeline.

To fill this kind of document, you should:

- List all the activities that will take place in your project, using numbers to structure them, for instance:
    o WP1 – Management
    o WP1/A1 – Set up of management structure
    o WP2 – Research
    o WP2/A1 – Survey
    o Event 1 – Presentation of result x
    o Mobility 1 – place
- Then, insert this list in the left column, and mark with different colours the time that you need to implement the activities, fixing a beginning and end. Some of the activities will last for the entire project, typically, the ones relating to the management, quality or dissemination of the project. Others will be limited over time.

6.3 Tips and examples of best practices to apply this module to your own training activity

This module is very linked to the project writing activity. Some universities periodically offer courses on European project writing, and some of them are free. So a good thing would be to combine this module with courses dedicated to project design.

Some examples:

Erasmus+ project writing: A guide for beginners, from EU YouTH website

Erasmus plus and EU Project Management and Design Training course, from Erasmus training courses

European project Design and management, from the Public Open University of Zagreb.

You should check on Epale platform to access information on current courses.

Module assessment

Question 1 – LogFrame

a) I don't need a logical framework for mi Erasmus+ proposal (1 point)
b) A logical framework is a tool used for Horizon project mostly (2 points)
c) A logical framework will help me structure my ideas (3 points)
d) A logical framework is a fundamental preliminary step of any project writing activity (4 points)

Question 2 – What should I include in my LogFrame

a) The reference to studies that evidence the need for my project (1 point)
b) The list of needs, objectives, activities and indicators (4 points)
c) The most relevant information from my abstract (3 points)
d) The project motivation (2 points)

Question 3 – What should I do to assess my project needs

a) I should make a brainstorming with my colleagues (2 points)
b) I should consult my target groups (3 points)
c) I should perform a desk research (1 point)
d) All the above (4 points)

Question 4 – Environmental concern in my project proposal:

a) I should talk about the environmental concern only if it is one of my selected priorities (2 points)
b) It must be present at all staged of my application, starting from the conception phase (4 points)
c) It is irrelevant. (1 point)
d) It is a transversal concern and I should address it somehow (3 points)

Question 5 – What can I do to ensure a green management of my project?
a) Have a green committee (4 points)
b) Create a green practice guidelines (3 points)
c) Avoid unnecessary mobilities (2 points)
d) Promote green behaviours (1 point)

Question 6 – Which of the following are the main social and sustainable problem solving methods

a) GROW, PDCA, SMART (1 point)
b) PDCA, OODA, ToC (2 points)
c) Design Thinking, HCD (4 points)
d) GROW, ToC , HCD (3 points)

Question 7 – What are some of the main sources of impact in a EU project

a) Heating buildings (2 points)
b) Water consumption (1point)
c) Energy waste with computers (3points)
d) Meeting or Trainings activities and mobilities (4 points)

Question 8 – What are the steps of design thinking?

a) Plan, Do, Check, Act (1 point)
b) Empathy, Definition, Ideation, Prototyping, Testing (4 points)
c) Brainstorming, building, testing, correcting (3 points)
d) Find a problem, find a solution, involve the targets (2 points)

Question 9 – What are sustainable working procedures?

a) Use assigned resources in the most efficient way possible (4 points)
b) Stay home (1 point)
c) Seek for productivity (2 points)
d) Seek for positive social impact (3 points)

Question 10 – What are the benefits of focusing on people while designing a project?

a) Better competitivity and position on the market (2 points)
b) Less stress, more financial profit (1 points)
c) Better productivity, performance, beneficiaries satisfaction (4 points)
d) Better beneficiaries satisfaction and workers commitment (3 points)