# Integrating EU-funded projects in organisations and their ecosystems

EUROPEAN GANOM
Education, Research & Innovation

Co-funded by the European Union

## Educational Material Identity

Integrating EU-funded projects in organisations and their ecosystems

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Digitalisation by UoC:



**Estimated Time: 40 minutes**

# Explanation of buttons and icons

# Contents


- Structure
- Main Goal
- Expected Learning Outcomes
- Keywords
- Educational Material
- Activities
- Literature references

# Structure

Main Goal
Learning Outcomes
Keywords

Educational Material

Activities

Literature References

# Main Goal

This training course aims at providing knowledge and best practices related to the integration of EU-funding projects (research or education) in institutional ecosystems, namely at:

- Local level (organisations)
- Regional, national and EU levels

It focuses both on pre-award (project design) and post-award (project implementation) phases.

# Expected Learning Outcomes 1/3

## Knowledge level

Learners will be able to understand:

- The importance of integrating EU-funded projects into local, regional, national, and EU ecosystems during both pre-award (design) and post-award (implementation) phases.
- The role of internal collaboration between project coordinators, grant advisors, and support services (finance, HR, IT, academic affairs)
- The need for alignment between project objectives and the strategies of local ecosystems (research labs, faculties, organisations)
- The best practices for stakeholder involvement
- The role of external stakeholders in ensuring project relevance, impact, and sustainability
- The importance of flexibility and adaptability in stakeholder engagement to maintain a dynamic and responsive process

# Expected Learning Outcomes 2/3

## Skills level

Learners will be able to:

- Design and implement strategies for integrating EU-funded projects into local, regional, national, and EU ecosystems
- Develop a stakeholder mapping and analysis
- Create and maintain internal working groups Formalise management and cooperation processes in a handbook or guide
- Adapt dissemination tools and communication strategies
- Promote citizen participation and engagement
- Monitor and evaluate stakeholder engagement

# Expected Learning Outcomes 3/3

## Attitudes level

Learners will be able to develop:

- A collaborative mindset, valuing teamwork and interconnection among internal and external stakeholders
- Adaptability to respond to the evolving needs and contexts of stakeholders and ecosystems
- A proactive approach to stakeholder engagement, anticipating challenges and opportunities for collaboration
- A commitment to sustainability, ensuring that project results are transferable, impactful, and beneficial to broader communities
- Cultural inclusivity, recognising and respecting the diversity of stakeholders and their perspectives
- A results-oriented focus, prioritising tangible outcomes and benefits for stakeholders and society

## Keywords

- Internal support services
- EU-funded projects integration
- Ecosystems (local, regional, national, EU)
- Stakeholder engagement
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Project design
- Local coordination
- Dissemination
- Governance bodies

# Interconnection and cooperation within organisations

## 1) Local cooperation and coordination within the organisation for project design and submission

During the project preparation phase, a good proposal relies on:

- A solid collaboration between the project coordinator(s) and grant advisors
- Close collaboration between all relevant support services (HR, finance, IT, etc.)



## Interconnection and cooperation within organisations

These collaborations will ensure a smooth **coordination and validation of all project aspects** and **internal requirements**. It will also ensure:



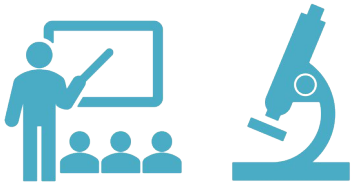
Alignment with the objectives and strategies of local ecosystems (research lab, school or faculty, organisation)



Coherence with the local needs and contexts (local financial processes, staff capacities for support, respect of decision-making processes etc.)



Local synergies (links with faculty or lab events, activities etc.)



Re-use of the results after the project ends (research lab, faculty, institutional level etc.)

> increasing the impact and sustainability of the project

# Interconnection and cooperation within organisations

Within this rationale, project coordinator(s) and grant advisors should collaborate with **internal support services** within their organisation, such as:

- Finance
- Human Resources
- International Relations Office
- Academic or Student Affairs
- Innovation

It is also recommend to work closely with relevant **governance bodies** (research lab, faculty or school level etc.).



# Interconnection and cooperation within organisations

## # Example

If an Erasmus + KA2 project intends to provide academic developments at higher education level (ex: new courses or educational modules), it is essential that:

1. The consortium will be able to **experiment these developments in local context(s)** during the project lifetime
2. These new developments will be **transferable for involved faculties or departments** after the project ends (ex: a training programme will integrate a new course)

In such cases, project teams should collaborate with the following staff members and/or services:

- Educational engineer(s)
- Head(s) of targeted Bachelor or Master programmes
- Teachers and researchers involved in the targeted programmes,
- Academic Affairs office (or equivalent)

# Interconnection and cooperation within organisations

## 2) Efficient implementation through local coordination and interconnection of services

When an EU funded project is selected (by the European Commission or National Agencies), EU grant advisors are key players to set-up and coordinate an **efficient local cooperation** and **interconnection of support services** from the launch of the project.

This interconnection of services ensures that:

- The involved internal services are regularly **informed about the project** and its progress
- The organisation is **engaged** in the project and shares its vision and values (**adhesion**)
- The organisation arranges relevant **logistic, financial and administrative support** for its implementation

# Interconnection and cooperation within organisations

The local interconnection and cooperation between project teams and internal services is even **more relevant and needed when support staff members**:

- Do not speak English (low direct communication capacities with the consortium)
- Do not have experience on EU funded projects (low expertise on eligibility rules etc.)



TIPS!

**Good practice:**

Arrange local cooperation and interconnection even before the signature of the Grant Agreement!

# Tips for success

## #1 Set up an internal kick-off meeting

**When?** Before the official start date of the project and/or before the consortium kick-off meeting

**Who?** Project Coordinator(s), grant advisors, Finance services, Head of research lab or faculty etc.

**Why?**

- Introduce project objectives, activities and expected results
- Distribute roles at local level
- Agree on deadlines, tools and tasks in relation with key project aspects: results, dissemination, reporting etc.
- Introduce key eligibility rules related to the EU funding



# Tips for success

## #2 Arrange internal work group(s) with relevant services

- Plan regular meetings with these working groups
- Meetings with financial services should be arranged every 6 months and before reporting periods




Some meetings can be led by EU grant advisors but project coordinators should be involved in meetings **as much as possible**.

If relevant, you can also involve some administrative staff members in some of the project's working group or governance bodies.

## Tips for success

### #3 Formalise management (project and local) and cooperation processes into a single document (handbook, guide)

- Should be drafted in the **language of the organisation**
- Should share relevant **project information** (synthesis of objectives, planned activities and deliverables, deadlines, budget distribution, EU eligibility rules etc.) and display local **task distribution** and **deadlines**

This document can be used by project coordinators, support services as well any new staff members (administrative, research, academics) joining the team during the project lifetime.

It ensures continuity in the administrative and financial support provided to the EU project, and should be updated continuously.

# Interconnection with local, regional and EU ecosystems

In the context of **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs), the EU has increasingly focused on projects that directly contribute to these global objectives. SDGs implementation must be actively supported by communication and actions that engage with **citizens, national, regional, and local authorities, media, civil society organisations, the private sector, and stakeholders**.




**Stakeholder engagement** is key for the societal impact of EU-funded research and educational projects. Outcomes of EU projects should, indeed, target **broader groups of stakeholders than the direct beneficiaries of the project**.

# Interconnection with local, regional and EU ecosystems

## 1) Embedding stakeholder engagement in project proposals

For both Erasmus + and Horizon Europe cooperation actions, the connection with stakeholders is key for:

- **The relevance of project consortia:** depending on calls, non-research or educational partner organisations should or are strongly advised to join consortia.
- **The relevance with targeting impacts and outcomes:** it ensures the results of the project are interesting for civil society, industry and/or citizens and that they can change behaviours, mindsets, etc.



# Interconnection with local, regional and EU ecosystems

## Planning the involvement of stakeholders

A wide range of internal and external stakeholders can be involved in EU projects. The type of organisations to involve, from civil society, depends on the topics of research or educational projects. The objective is to **bring them on board**, ensure their **engagement** throughout the project lifetime and make sure they are **interested in the results**.




**Good practice:**

Prepare a **stakeholder mapping and analysis** to map the most relevant stakeholders linked with the project ambitions and values. This tool can be used to identify who needs to change their behaviour/mindsets/processes to ensure your project vision.

# Interconnection with local, regional and EU ecosystems

## Example for EU research projects



Horizon Europe proposals should target these types external stakeholders:

1. **Private industrial actors**: facilitate the industrial-economic use and exploitation of research results
2. **Socio-economic actors**: link the project with labour market or societal needs
3. **Civil society**: foster social and citizens acceptability and dissemination to wider audience etc.

# Interconnection with local, regional and EU ecosystems

**Why involving external stakeholders?**

Reaching out to relevant stakeholders, from proposal stage and during project implementation, will ensure that the project trajectory is **aligned with:**

1. **Policies**, forthcoming **reforms** or **strategic plans** at local, national or EU level
2. Current and forthcoming **needs** (ex: labour market)
3. Civil society and **citizens' interests**



# Interconnection with local, regional and EU ecosystems

**How to reach external stakeholders?**

Project coordinators and EU grant advisors should involve their **innovation services, incubators, regional authorities as well as institutional networks** to get in touch with potential local, regional or national companies and organisations.




**Good practice #1**

Work with regional representation offices (if existing) in Brussels as well as policy makers (regional authorities, national research centres, ministries, etc.)

**Good practice #2**

Use the networks or events in which your organisation is involved, such as EARMA (research), EUF, ERACON (education).

# Interconnection with local, regional and EU ecosystems

**How to involve external stakeholders during project implementation?**

EU projects can involve external stakeholders as:

- Direct beneficiaries of activities but also as (future) target groups of users for deliverables and results
- External advisory boards
- Peer reviewers (quality assurance of activities and deliverables)
- Targets of communication actions

Their involvement, from proposal stage, ensures that:

- Society understands the project's vision
- Social, environmental, and economic benefits of projects are translated into tangible values
- Targeted communities influence the design and use of innovation or educational advances

# Interconnection with local, regional and EU ecosystems

TIPS!

**Best practices**

- Be clear on how stakeholders can engage in project activities
- Also look for **citizens' participation** and engagement
- **Avoid rigid formalisation** of stakeholder engagement (maintain flexibility and openness to encourage a dynamic and responsive engagement process)




Adapt your dissemination tools and communication language according to targeted stakeholders for:

- Educational and research **vulgarisation**
- Efficient sharing of your project vision
- Promoting project **results** which can benefit to them

# Literature References


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