EUROPEAN GaNoM
Education, Research & Innovation

GUIDELINES

ORGANISATION OF A STAFF TRAINING WEEK ON EU PROJECTS DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT



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1. INTRODUCTION

Written by a transnational team of EU grant advisors and international relations experts, these guidelines have been designed for **trainers and facilitators** working in Higher Education Institutions in Europe. Their purpose is to:

- Introduce the key concepts and overarching principles **for the organisation of a staff training week**
- Support the **conception of the agenda** for a staff training week on EU project design and management (content, activities, etc.)
- Provide **good practices** to develop sessions dedicated to the upskilling of European project managers and grant officers

These guidelines are combined with a **practical toolkit** which provides support for the implementation of dedicated training sessions (thematic activity sheets, evaluation and ice-breaking implementation sheets, template documents).



They are based on the results of the experimentations **developed during two staff training weeks,** organised within the EU-GANOM project:

- in 2025, Linnaeus University (Sweden)
- in 2026, Universidad de Murcia (Spain)

These experimentations have covered **the life cycle of EU-funded projects**, from project design (proposal writing, evaluation) to project management (budget, project implementation, monitoring and evaluation, sustainability).

2. RATIONALE OF THE STAFF TRAINING WEEK

The implementation of a staff training week on EU project design and management covers both education and research programmes (mainly Erasmus + and Horizon Europe). This training week aims at achieving both **individual and institutional capacity building** and developments :

Upskilling of staff members in HEIs

Upskill staff members in HEIs working on EU projects (EU grant advisors, international relations officers, financial and administrative managers etc.)

Increase knowledge and practical skills for:

- EU project design (proposal writing, logical frameworks, evaluation expectations)
- EU project management (financial reporting, audits, impact assessment, planning sustainability etc.)
- Synergies between funding programmes and administrative practices in HEIs

Foster exchanges of best practices

Network development between staff members in HEIs working on EU projects

Foster networking opportunities, which will increase :

- Mutual knowledge (institutionnal, inter-personnal, areas of expertise)
- Ideas for new projects on both Erasmus+ (KA2, KA3, Jean Monnet, experimental calls) or Horizon Europe calls.

Foster networking opportunities

Share best practices related to EU project design and management

- Exchanges of experience between peers
- Problem solving
- Complementarity of expertise

3. PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE AND SELECTION

1 TARGETED PROFILE FOR PARTICIPANTS

The proposed staff training week on EU project life cycle targets professionals who directly work on EU funding projects (Education and Reseach) or/and impact project lifecycles in HEIs, such as:

- EU project advisors, managers and coordinators
- International Relations Officers (IROs)
- Research officers and European project advisors
- Financial officers dedicated to EU grants' justification

2 SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

The selection of participants should be based on a formal application procedure.

Applicants should provide an application file, composed of a CV (English) and a dedicated form, which should include:

- Description of their expertise in EU projects (either management or design)
- Institutionnal, professional and personal motivation

It is recommended to use the following **selection criteria**:

Experience in EU projects

In order to avoid disparities in level of knowledge and expertise, it is possible to:

- Set a level of expertise required for the staff week
- Group participants by experience level and split specific tracks (e.g., Beginners vs. Advanced Project Design)

Linguistic skills

In order to ensure good communication with participants and relevant exchanges during the staff week, you should require a B2 level in English for all participants

Geographical balance

Limit participation to a maximum of 2 participants per institution and balance regional representation (e.g., North, South, East, and West Europe)

Bear in mind that your staff training week can involve participants from the Balkans and Ukraine, as organisations from these regions participate to EU-funded projects.

Balance of expertises

Arrange a combinaison of profiles (managers/developers) and expertises (research/education) to foster further exchanges of practices, upskilling and potential for future synergies

Impact (individual and institutional)

Ensure:

- Alignment between motivation and staff week objectives
- Potential transfer of skills and practices in participants' institutions

TIPS

DO

- After the application process, ask selected participants for **specific project pain points** related to EU project design and management to **tailor the workshops' content**
- Arrange a mix of participants according to their field of expertise (education/research) and profile (EU project design or management) to ensure **balance of expertises**

DON'T

- Accept participants who have no connection to EU projects simply to fill seats: it dilutes the quality of peer-to-peer learning

4. FORMAT AND RANGE OF ACTIVITIES

1 ORGANISING TRAINING CONTENT

The proposed staff training week should include a variety of training sessions formats to ensure a balance between plenary sessions (ex: presentations) and group sessions (ex: workshops).

It is recommended to include the following three types of formats:

Reverse Panels

Invite experienced guest speakers (internal to your institution or from external organisations) to discuss a EU project management or design related theme

Examples: round tables ; conferences ; lectures etc.

Workshops

Organise collaborative discussion sessions or exercises to foster exchanges of practices, peer-to-peer upskilling and resolution of problems

Examples: world Café; troubleshooting sessions; post-it workshop etc.

For further details, check the dedicated workshop sheets in the toolkit.

Creative sessions

Arrange practical sessions where participants co-develop ideas related to EU project design or management

Example: co-write an Erasmus+ KA220 or Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) in Horizon Europe proposal based on a real topic

2 ORGANISING SOCIAL CONTENT

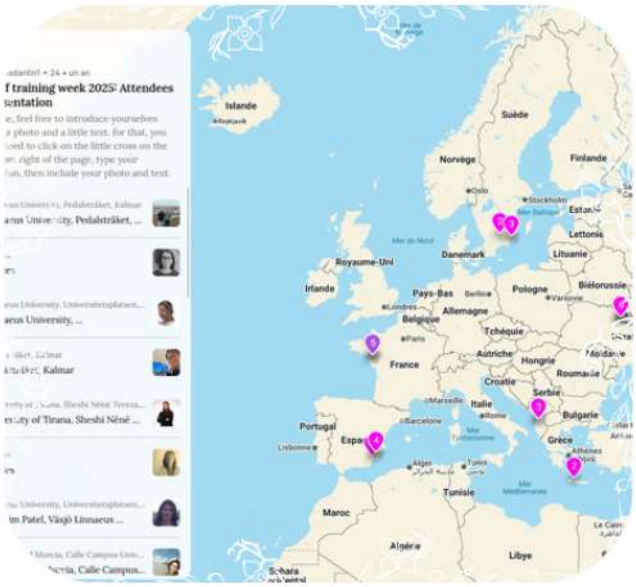
The proposed staff training week should also include activities which foster **informal exchanges** between participants and increase **inter-personal knowledge between peers**.

It is recommended to include the following:

Ice-breaking activities

Standard introductions such a plenary oral presentation should be avoided as it tends to be too long. Instead, ice-breaking activities can be organised **both virtually** (before the staff training week) and **on-site** (at the beginning of the training).

Idea for virtual introduction of participants :
Use an interactive digital map (example: Padlet) on which participants place pins showing their current project networks and expertise



Idea for on-site activity: wool ball ice-breaker
It is a fun, interactive activity where participants throw a ball of wool to each other while sharing facts on a defined topic, creating a visual web of connections. *For further information, check the dedicated sheet in the toolkit.*

Networking and informal social sessions

These activities are key to provide informal space for discussions between peers, building confidence between participants, etc. The staff training week can include some of these activities:

- A guided city walk, organised with the local tourism office
- A guided campus tour, organised with local members of faculties or student representatives
- A networking dinner featuring local gastronomy

Group Photo

Book a professional photographer or contact the audiovisual service of your institution to take pictures of the group.
It is recommended to plan this session on the first day.

3 CHOOSING THE MAIN TOPICS

EU project lifecycle, for both research and education programmes, covers a variety of phases, topics and focuses. To ensure synergies between expertises of participants, it is recommended to choose topics which can **be relevant for both project design and project management** and/or **different EU funding programmes.**

Here are some examples:

Project design

- Needs analysis
- Logical Framework Approach (LFA)
- Impact and evaluation
- Structuration of projects
- Budget optimisation (lump sum)
- Planning sustainability
- Plan project risks

Project management

- Lump sum management
- Reporting
- Consortium coordination
- Risk management
- Solving management issues
- Dissemination and communication strategy
- Planning sustainability
- Intellectual property (IPR) management

TIPS

To ensure participants' satisfaction with the agenda, their involvement in activities and balance of workload

DO

- Maintain a 60/40 rule: 60% structured content/workshops and 40% informal networking, reflection time, or cultural events.
- Guest speakers: think about coordinators of projects within the participating institutions or key experts that you are working with!
- Suggest a multicultural "fika" for coffee breaks: ask participants to bring and present their national food specialities (example: 1 country per day). *Fika isn't only about eating cake and drinking coffee, it's about getting together and informally having a chat.*
- Include a "Bring Your Own Project" (BYOP) approach: if a session is dedicated to a case study, allow participants to display a real, active EU project that they work on.
- Keep heavy technical/financial related sessions for mornings and keep interactive sessions post-lunch.

DON'T

- Pack afternoons with dense, lecture-style PowerPoint presentations.

4. PLANNING THE STAFF TRAINING WEEK: STEPS AND IDEAL TIME SCENARIO

1 IDEAL PLANNING TIMELINE

9 months before

Fix dates of your staff training week
Ideal duration for a staff training week on EU project is **4 or 5 days.**

If structured as a Blended Intensive Programme (*see details in section 5*), two additional activities should be organised remotely:

- A pre-week webinar: plan this session approx. 2 weeks before the physical week to introduce tools/concepts/agenda and organise a first ice-breaking activity
- A post-week Webinar: plan this session 2 weeks after the staff training for evaluation and final deliverables presentation

7 months before

Plan the draft agenda
Prepare a draft agenda of the staff training week, including the main topics which will be covered, and the typology of activities (conferences, workshops, social activity, etc.)

Prepare the application form template *(it is recommended to use a ditigal survey tool)*

6 months before

Launch the promotion of the staff training week and the application process

- Publish it on the **IMOTION platform** (the central hub for European staff weeks : http://staffmobility.eu/)
- Send targeted emails to partner universities in your alliance and other relevant cooperation networks
- Set the application deadline for **Month 4**

3 - 4 months before

Close the application process and proceed to the selection of participants

- Eligibility check
- Selection based on pre-defined criteria

Confirm selection to applicants

- Send the results to **all** applicants (selected, placed on the reserve list, not selected)
- Prepare and issue formal invitation letters (necessary for Erasmus+ staff mobility grant approval)

3 months before

Final content and organisational arrangements

- Define and validate final formats of sessions
- Secure internal/external speakers
- Arrange workshops' moderators (internal), if necessary
- Arrange preparation meetings with speakers and moderators, if relevant
- Book rooms for the sessions (on campus, etc.) based on the activities to be organised
- Arrange catering (coffee breaks, restaurant etc.)

1 month before

Arrange the last preparation activities

- Send a practical info pack to participants, including information about:
  - Exact location(s) of activities and directions to get to the location(s)
  - Transports (how to get to your city, transfers to city centers, local transportation, etc.)
  - Recommended hotels
  - Food and restaurants in the city
  - Pre-readings (if relevant)
- Set up a communication tool for the group of participants (Teams, WhatsApp, etc.)
- Organise the pre-week webinar session online, if planned
- Prepare the name badges and welcome kits (with or without goodies)

DO

- Plan the staff training week during a **pleasant season** or according to the **local/regional agenda** of the city
- Secure backup rooms and alternative speakers early as agendas may evolve rapidly
- Guest speakers:
  - Invite experts from relevant national or EU networks and association (examples: EUF; EUA; EARMA; etc.)
  - Invite EU project evaluators to cover some specific issues or best practices related to project design

DON'T

- Change the core dates once announced. Participants rely on early bookings for affordable flights and rigid institutional mobility approvals

5. BUDGET

1 DEFINING NECESSARY BUDGET ITEMS

In order to implement the staff training week, it is recommended to plan the necessary budget for:



Catering & Hospitality
This budget may include:

- Coffee breaks
- Networking lunches
- Official welcome or farewell dinner

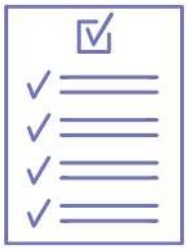
It may be adjusted according to the number of participants and guest speakers/moderators.



Experts and speakers
This budget may include:

- Honorariums
- Travel and/or accomodation expenses

If budget is limited, you can plan virtual presentations from speakers. This will reduce this budget item costs.



Logistics
This budget may include:

- Rental of special institutional halls
- Technical support
- Transportation for cultural visits



Materials
This budget may include :

- Printing of documents such as badges or agendas
- Promotional merchandise *if your institution's policies allow it*

2 FINDING BUDGET FOR YOUR STAFF TRAINING WEEK

In order to fund the planned activities and cover expenses, you can explore the **following financial sources**:

Internal budget

Budget from relevant university support services (example: International Relations Office) or faculties

Erasmus + funds (Key action 1)

Through the implementation of the staff training week as a **Blended Intensive Program (BIP)**, you can be provided with budget to support the activities.

This source of funding (400 € per participant, 8 000 € max.) requires to comply with some rules:

- Combine a physical activity (5-30 days) in a host institution with mandatory virtual activities (ex: pre-week webinar) before or after the mobility
- Organise the week with at least 2 other partner institutions owning a valid ECHE chart
- Include a minimum of 10 participants

Added value: reduces financial constraints, enables combination of staff and students

Constraints: administrative paperwork (mobility and training contracts to gather as proof)

Registration fees

The budget of a staff training week can be provided by setting up fees for participants.

Though, please keep in mind that this option can reduce the number and quality of applicants.

6. DELIVERABLES, RECOGNITION AND EVALUATION

1 DELIVERABLES

Participants should walk away with tangible assets, not just their notes.

At the end of the staff training week, it is strongly recommended to provide participants with **presentations** (used in plenary sessions with guest speakers and experts) and **reports of workshops** detailing group inputs and reflections.

These deliverables should be made available on an **open shared plaftorm**.

2 RECOGNITION

In order to ensure formal and/or informal recognition of the training for participants, these tools are recommended:



Certificates

Formal **Certificates of Attendance** stating the dates and number of hours completed.

This document is crucial for participants for Erasmus+ grant justification and mobility recognition.



Digital Badges

Open or digital badges can be created by the host institution. They showcase the skills developed during the staff training week.

They certify both participation and soft skills/learning outcomes.

3 EVALUATION METHODS AND TOOLS

The evaluation of activities and of the staff training week in general is important. It will enable you to get valuable feedback on:

- The quality of content/social activities/formats
- The relevance of speakers and experts
- The benefits and impacts for participants
- Improvements that can be made

You can choose and/or combine different timing and tools for this evaluation:

At the end of each day

Objective:
Adjust and improve the pace and, organisation of the following days

Recommanded format:
Live feedback

Tool: digital polling (e.g., Mentimeter, wooclap)

At the end of the week

Objective:
Get detailed feedback on each training days and on the whole agenda

Recommanded format:
Live feedback

Tools:
- Digital polling (e.g., Mentimeter, wooclap)
- Five fingers evaluation *(see evaluation sheet available in the toolkit)*

After the staff training week

Objective:
Get detailed feedback, with focus on added value, benefits for participants and recommendations for improvements

Recommanded formats: Asynchronous or synchronous

Tools:
- Online questionnaire (e.g. Google Forms or Qualtrics)
- Post-webinar session online with a polling *(using an interactive platform such as slido or wooclap)*

DO

- Tie the distribution of the attendance certificates to the completion of evaluation to ensure a 100% response rate and relevant feedback

DON'T

- Let the momentum fade: share the follow-up contact list, photos, and digital toolbox within one week after the end of the staff training week

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