



Prepare a Successful Erasmus+ KA1 Project Application

This document is about to help organisations, especially non-governmental organisations (NGOs), to identify a core need in their organisation and then make a successful Erasmus+ KA1 application in order to meet this need.

[Aydın Eğitim ve Gençlik Derneği Project Team](#)

Identifying Organisational Needs

First of all do your own research and organise a workshop with your team (teachers, educators, administrators, perhaps even students) to determine the real objectives and needs of your organisation. You might think that this is a waste of time and energy, especially coming up to a deadline when you should be focusing on project writing.

But, spending 2 hours now (online or face-to-face) will save you a lot of problems and disappointment later. You'll have collected some real evidence of needs that will inform the "Project objectives" section of your application, therefore improving your chances of funding approval. Moreover, you will also ensure that your staff and learners feel more of a sense of ownership and enthusiasm about the planned activities.

*"Plan before
you act!"*

A "How-To" Guide:

Step 1

Before the workshop

- **Consult your management** about the workshop, its objectives, and the participants to be involved. The plan created through it will be a key part of your organisation's future development, so management should be involved from the beginning. The best option is to have management representatives present at the workshop as this will improve the quality of its outcomes.
- **Strategic documents** - If your organisation is in the process of delivering a strategic plan, ensure that this document and its objectives are incorporated into the workshop.
- **Workshop participants** - Ideally, the workshop should include representatives from all target groups: staff (all teams and departments), students, beneficiaries, etc. The number of participants depends on your organisation's size.

Step 2

This workshop is about creativity, ambitions, and the free and open sharing of ideas. Focus on an overall vision for your organisations future, and how this can be facilitated through the Erasmus+ programme. Think about each target group (staff, learners, beneficiaries, etc). What do they need? What does your overall sector need? What are the emerging trends and predictions for the future of your work?

Ask your participants to answer these questions:

Imagine our organisation in 1-3 years.

What would you like it to be like?

What kind of projects would you like to be involved in?

What kind of topics will you cover in your teaching/training?

What do you want to do more of and what do you want to do less?

Think about yourself, your colleagues, students, beneficiaries, etc. Try to be as specific as possible. As this is an international plan, focus on areas that transfer your organisation to a higher European level.

For online group work, try using Google Jamboard, a free interactive tool perfect for brainstorming.

Step 3

Next the participants should group the ideas cultivated by theme (e.g. skills development, infrastructure, learning process, staff competencies, etc.) and formulate objectives for each theme. Objectives should be specific and realistic but ambitious.

Example objectives:

- In 3 years, 90% of our teachers can design their curriculums around the basics of the PBL methodology.
- In 2 years, 40% of our students will have the chance to participate in international internships through the Erasmus+ programme.
- In 1 years, 50% of our staff can use creative problem-solving methodologies in their work.

Step 4

Check all the objectives. Can you point out the objectives that are most closely aligned with the Erasmus+ programme (you should check them in the programme guide). These are the objectives you should include in your KA1 application form.

Choose Activities According Your Needs

1. Involve your team! Conduct a workshop (online or face-to-face) to collect their ideas.
2. Explain the goal of the workshop, which is to brainstorm activities that would help your organisation to reach its objectives.Explain that all ideas are welcome, but to keep in mind that the list of activities that can be funded by Erasmus+ is limited. If it helps, you can give participants our M-Powered course catalogue or other materials as a frame of reference for formulating project ideas.
3. Ask everyone to present the results of their work. During the presentations, try to separate the activities that can be financed by Erasmus+

“Find a job you enjoy doing, and you will never have to work a day in your life.” — Mark Twain

KA1 projects from those that cannot. Different methods can be strategized in at another sessions to realise activities not possible under Erasmus+.

4. Invite the group to reflect. Ask if there are activities they would like to participate in or lead. Maybe there are some they recognise as unrealistic or unnecessary. Ask if there is anything missing.
5. List these activities in your KA1 project application form.

Find Partners who Deliver a Tailored Course

What partners will add value to your projects?

- Partners you can count on. Work with organisations you already know and/ or build new connections in order to expand your network and take full advantage of partnership opportunities.
- Get partners from different parts of Europe. Geographically dispersed partners representing different cultures and perspectives will add value to your project. Also, you want your staff and learners to expand their horizons and learn about new cultures. This is one of the most important goals of Erasmus+ Key Action 1.
- Partners known for quality. Check organisations against the Erasmus+ Quality Standards for courses under Key Action 1.

Choosing partners who deliver

It can be tempting to offer a place in your KA1 project to a hosting organisation you don't know very well because they sound good on paper, or because they would fill a vital gap in your project. However, it can leave you open to some risk. How can you be sure that they will be easy to work with and will bring value to your project?

Unfortunately, you can never be 100% certain as there is always risk in collaboration. However, there are some simple ways to reduce your chances of entering an unsuccessful partnership:

- Get to know your potential partners. Research the kinds of courses and projects they deliver. How long are they in the market? Are there any testimonials from participants on the course quality?
- Maybe you know someone who has worked with this organisation before or participated in its courses? Get some references.
- Organise online meetings. Get a feeling for who they are. Is there rapport between you?
- See how responsive they are. Do they answer your emails and provide all the information you asked them for? If the collaboration is difficult while you prepare a project proposal, it won't get any better if the project is approved.
- Don't be afraid to turn down a partner if you're unsure about working with them. You don't have to burn your bridges! Be respectful. But remember

A good relationship with your partner organisation leads to easy project implementation

that, if the project is successful, you will be committed to working with this organisation for an extended period, so choose wisely.

Your task - find KA1 partner/s:

1. Look at the activities you planned in the workshop. What kind of mobilities will fit here?
2. Get recommendation from your colleagues or partners. Do they know any reliable KA1 partners?
3. Check the School Education Gateway portal. It's a great database of structured courses.
4. If you're interested in structured courses in STEM, CLIL or Digital Storytelling, check our [Aydın Eğitim ve Gençlik Derneği](#) (Aydın- TR) web site or for courses in creativity, work-life balance or project management visit [M-Powered Projects](#) (Leenane- IE)

Avoid Mistakes

Most common mistakes:

- Objectives and activities
- Target group identification
- Project activities
- International cooperation
- Management

Your task

Study these typical mistakes and make sure you won't make them in your KA1 project application. When your application form is ready, before you submit it, give it to another person to read and check against the list I am presenting you below:

Objectives and activities

Erasmus+ KA1 projects encourage applicants to list objectives for their organisation before considering what courses or activities they will involve their staff in. This is an excellent approach because it encourages applicants to link all their project activities into an overall organisational strategy, but it is also demanding and can lead to a lot of mistakes. Common mistakes include:

- Too much focus on activities instead of the objectives to be achieved. It is easier to focus on what we want to do instead of answering the question of why we want to do it.
- Not demonstrating a strong enough link between the organisation's objectives and the target group needs and planned activities. Your project application should read almost like a novel. There should be a clear "plot", and a clear reason as to why you are doing A and B to achieve C. It should be built on

The most common Erasmus+ KA1 application mistakes and how to avoid them

the results of a learner needs analysis and the activities planned should feed into overall objectives.

Target group

- The target group's needs are one of the most important parts of a KA1 application. These projects are always about people at the end of the day, and meeting their needs to achieve overall organisational development. It is vital to conduct research and create a thorough needs analysis. A common mistake is assuming what people need or trying to engineer needs to fit within the project objectives when it should be the opposite way around. Present a clear and logical needs analysis process so that evaluators can easily see how this informed your overall plan.
- Avoid being too general in the description of the identified needs. Don't just say that project management skills need to be developed. What kind of project management skills are needed? Who needs them and why? What impact would skills development in this area have on your organisation's objectives? Be as specific as possible.
- Participant selection criteria that is too general. The evaluators must be convinced that you know exactly who will be involved in planned activities and why. Detailed criteria for selecting participants should be provided and should be clearly linked to your needs analysis.

Project activities

- People often fail to provide enough detail on how the project will be implemented. Be sure to be thorough in describing how participants will be prepared, how mobilities will be carried out, and how monitoring and reporting will take place.
- Dissemination of project results is not adequate for the scale of the project. Sometimes it is too ambitious and sometimes it is not ambitious enough. It is important to plan dissemination effectively to ensure that targets are realistic, and that others will have the opportunity to benefit from project learnings.
- A common weakness in KA1 applications is a lack of detailed description of the courses/ mobility programme or teaching methods. Well presented courses give a clear picture of project activities and results. Your course provider should prepare this piece.

International cooperation

- Erasmus+ is a platform for building a strong European education sector. International cooperation is the perfect tool to enhance this process. It is important to keep this message at the heart of your application and not gloss over it.

Management

- The process for preparing participants for a mobility is not properly described or is inadequate to participants' individual needs. Sometimes, applicants forget about planning pre- and post-mobility activities, which are necessary for successful preparation and project sustainability.

- Monitoring and evaluation processes are not applied to all project activities. For example, the evaluation of participants' preparation for the mobility or the effects of dissemination activities are omitted.
- Follow-up activities are usually planned and described, but sometimes they are only directed to one target group, for example, the wider staff. Applicants should also aim to transfer learnings beyond their own organisations and involve stakeholders. This ensures wider dissemination of the Erasmus+ KA1 programme and the benefits it brings.

Check That You are Ready

A checklist is a list of steps you need to do, verify, check or inspect. Checklists are used in every imaginable field — from programming, building inspections, to complex medical surgeries. Using a checklist allows you to ensure you don't forget any important steps.

Here is a checklist we created at M-Powered for ourselves and for our clients to ensure all important steps are completed before submitting a project proposal.

**Checklists are
the key to
success -
Project
Preparation
Checklist**

PROJECT PREPARATION CHECKLIST

- () The project idea is aligned with my organisation's strategic goals. (You should be able to explain why this project is necessary and how it complements and supports your existing work.)
- () The project proposal meets the priorities and objectives of the Erasmus+ programme.
- () The project proposal corresponds with all formal criteria specified by the Erasmus+ programme.
- () I know the needs of the project beneficiaries. The project goal is to answer those identified needs.
- () I have built a strong partnership with (hosting) organisations.
 - () I exchanged emails or organised a (virtual) meeting with them to explain the project idea.
 - () Partners contributed to the project application.
 - () Partners accepted the project application and/or pre-registered the project beneficiaries in their courses.
- () I made a project timeline or Gantt chart. (You don't need to attach this to your project application. However, all project activities should be carefully planned and take into account other projects and deadlines in your organisation. Remember: your staff will be away for 6 days!)
- () The budget is reasonable and correlates to Erasmus+ budget regulations.
- () The main project components (goals, budget, partner roles) were approved by the management of my organisation.
- () The project application was checked by an additional person before submission.



Acknowledgement

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