

2nd Network Meeting of the Learning Network on Transnational Mobility Measures for Disadvantaged Youth and Young Adults

Rome, 20 – 21 June 2013

MINUTES

ATTENDEES: *see list of participants (internal section TLN Website)*

SUMMARY OF SESSIONS

1. WELCOME

Monica Lippolis, Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs, Italy

Susanne Strehle, Federal Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs, Germany

The meeting was opened by **Monica Lippolis** on behalf of the General Director. She welcomed all delegates and highlighted the crucial importance of the activities of this Network as one of the programmes to address youth unemployment in Italy.

Thanking the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and ISFOL for their first-rate preparation of the meeting, **Susanne Strehle** took over and reported on the achievements of the Network since its last meeting in Berlin in February 2013:

- The Network welcomes the Basque Country as an official new partner.
- All external experts have now been appointed: Dr. Bernhard Boockmann and Andrea Kirchmann from IAW in Germany for Task N (Evaluation), Andrew McCoshan for Task D (Quality), and Søren Kristensen from Techne for Task B (Eligibility). The experts are present in the current meeting.
- Due to the excellent work of all partners who have taken over responsibility for individual tasks, the Network has achieved its set milestones for the first quarter of the project period. Susanne Strehle explicitly thanked all delegates for their various contributions.
- A regular newsletter has started to inform network members about the ongoing activities within the individual tasks as defined in the programme. This will be continued throughout the rest of the project period.

2. EVALUATION CONCEPT

Dr. Bernhard Broockmann and Andrea Kirchmann, IAW, Germany

In their overview presentation, Bernhard Broockmann and Andrea Kirchmann pointed out that the evaluation will take a process-oriented approach. It is meant to serve a practical instrument for ongoing quality development and quality assurance within the Network.

The evaluation is based on three different processes: one for the Network as a whole, and one for each of the two Working Groups. The two central tools are

- the '**key questionnaire**', which serves as a regular survey among the network members, and
- the '**network journal**' which tracks the ongoing operations and keeps record of all activities and targets.

Mr Boockmann and Ms Kirchmann stressed that the quality of a process-oriented evaluation relies on information and input provided by the group of people involved. They therefore kindly ask all partners for an ongoing collaboration.

ACTIONS

Evaluation team: Send out key questionnaire to all attendees after the Network meeting.

All partners: Send back key questionnaire to evaluation team within one week.

 **Related Document:** *Task N_Evaluation_Rome.pdf*

3. WEBSITE

Stefan Höhn, Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Germany

Stefan Höhn reported that substantial progress has been made in terms of the programming of the first part of the Network website. The internal section is nearly completed and will be made accessible to all partners via login and password shortly. It can then be used as a project library where all documents are stored according to tasks. In addition, for future meetings, all preparatory material (i.e. presentations and readings) will be made available on this platform.

The second module of the website, which is the external part, will be completed by the end of the summer 2013. The Network website address is: <http://www.tln-mobility.eu>.

ACTIONS

Germany: Upload all existing documents onto the internal section of the website by the end of July 2013. Send out user login and password to all partners together with the minutes.

 **Related Document:** *Task J_Website_Rome.pdf*

4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND FURTHER STEPS FOR MAIN TASKS IN 2013

TASK A DESIGNING AND DRAFTING A TIMETABLE FOR COORDINATED AND NATIONAL ACTION

Rosalba La Grotteria, Province Autonomous of Trento, ESF office

Rosalba La Grotteria gave a brief overview on the progress on this Task to date. Overall, drafting an adequate timetable for the coordinated call is extremely difficult since the new ESF Operational Programme is not yet ready. There are also no clear indications yet as to when this is expected to be the case. Despite this major obstacle, a first timetable has been developed, based on the feedback on the questionnaire which was sent out to all partners in spring. With only five partners who have responded, and the information provided being indicative, this schedule should be taken as suggestive at this stage.

Based on a two-stage selection process, the current proposed timeline is:

MAY 2014:	Launch of common call (with the OP hopefully ready by 12/2013).
MAY – AUG 2014:	Preparation of national/regional calls.
SEPT – OCT 2014:	Launch and open the window for national/ regional calls.
NOV – DEC 2014:	MAs to pre-select projects and insertion of pre-selected projects into the partner search database.
JANUARY 2015:	Partner search Forum.
JAN – FEB 2015:	MAs to make final selection of transnational partnerships; final conference.

Susanne Strehle pointed out that the European Commission has expressed strong interest in the results of this Network as a pilot initiative for coordinated calls in other policy areas. Although the project period will officially end at the end of February 2015, she is therefore confident that the Commission will make available additional resources for the Network to finalise its activities. This was supported by Allan Mercer who stressed that the Commission is actually keen to create a bridge between the old and the new programming period.

In terms of the timetable, several partners advised that the network members could start earlier than May 2014 to prepare their respective national and regional calls. In addition, the timetable should also cater for new Member States who might be joining in launching national or regional calls. Those might then e.g. require more time for drafting their calls.

It was decided that, for now, the proposed timetable will be kept as it is until further notice on the development of the ESF OP. However, in September, an updated version will be sent to all partners with the feedback from this meeting and any new information from the Commission. The updated version might also include two options for launching the coordinated call.

ACTIONS

Trento / Germany: Update timetable and send revised version to all partners in September 2013.

 **Related Document:** *Task A_Timetable_Rome.pdf*

TASK C DEFINING THE TARGET GROUP 'DISADVANTAGED YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS'

Susanne Zander, Swedish Board for Youth Affairs

Following on from the discussions at the first Network meeting, **Susanne Zander** presented an updated version on the option paper to define the target group of 'disadvantaged youth and young adults'. She referred to the NEET definition and highlighted the fact that, in addition to the definition, it is crucial to collect and document information on the participants and on the method applied in order to evaluate the actual impact of the measures.

The following discussion revolved around the question of how far the coordinated call should go in defining concrete requirements for evaluation. Partners also reflected on the question of the appropriate age limit; a potential focus on 'vulnerable' groups; on whether the target group definition should include a definition for young people and young adults who are still in education or training but faced by the threat of unemployment; and whether the Call should definite a certain 'gap time' of unemployment in which young people would not yet be able to access mobility measures.

After a tour de table, it was agreed to focus on the following three NEET groups as key target groups for the coordinated call:

- **Conventionally unemployed** (long-term and short-term);
- **Unavailable**: young carers, young people with family responsibilities, and young people who are sick or disabled;
- **Disengaged**: young people who are not seeking jobs or education and are not constrained from doing so; and **discouraged** workers, young people who are pursuing dangerous and antisocial lifestyles.

Partners furthermore agreed to set an **age limit of 30 years**, however, with the option to raise the age threshold for those member states, whose current labour market conditions require an extension of the age range.

It was decided not to include a definition of a gap period or an explicit reference to young people faced by the threat of unemployment.

Regarding the definition of evaluation criteria, partners agreed to keep this non-mandatory for the coordinated call, but to formulate recommendations for Member States to take into account when drafting their national and regional calls. It was also suggested that partners should look into the possibility for funding for a cross-country evaluation within their respective ESF budgets.

ACTIONS

Sweden: Summarise results in a one-page document which can then be added as an annex to the coordinated call.

 **Related Document:** *Task C_Target_group_Rome.pdf*

TASK D SETTING UP QUALITY CRITERIA FOR TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITY MEASURES

Sabina Schlinke, Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs Germany

Andrew McCoshan, Expert Quality

The work on Task D was divided into three parts:

- Part I:** Report on the progress of the working group and the option paper on quality by Sabina Schlinke and Andrew McCoshan.
- Part II:** Formation of small groups to discuss preferred options and comments on suggested quality criteria for the preparatory phase by the Working Group.
- Part III:** Presentation of results from the smaller groups to the whole group and agreement on next steps.

Part I:

Andrew McCoshan started his presentation by referring to the agreed network definition of **quality as ‘what is necessary to ensure that the desired outcome is achieved’**. When identifying and agreeing the required quality criteria for the three phases of preparation, implementation and follow-up, it is crucial to consider both the effectiveness of the measure for the participant, and the efficiency in terms of the procedures for transnational collaboration.

Based on this understanding, in the revised version of the option paper on quality, the Working Group has suggested a total number of 28 main and sub criteria for the preparation stage, 7 for the Implementation stage, and 9 for the Follow-Up phase. Another three are suggested for a networking element. Decisions will now be required with regard to the level of importance of each criteria (is it a ‘must’ or a ‘nice-to-have’?), and on any specifications which might be required. While partners in the Network meeting were asked to focus on the preparatory phase only, the Working Group will then continue by addressing each of the criteria for the other stages.

Part II:

Partners were divided into three smaller groups and were asked to go through the list of the 28 pre-defined main and sub-criteria for the preparatory stage.

Part III:

The presentation of results by the individual groups showed that there is some consensus on a number of criteria. The Network agreed that P2, P4, P6, P13 and P17 are obligatory criteria (‘must’); and P3 and P12 are recommended only (‘nice-to have’). As for the rest, final decisions still need to be taken and some revisions and regroupings are to be made. This will be taken on board by the Working Group and the Lead expert.

In terms of next steps, it was agreed that the Working Group will compile the results from the discussion on the criteria P1-17 and draft a text that can serve as a basis for the preparatory phase in the coordinated call.

In their second meeting in Trento in September, the Working Group will then go through the same exercise for implementation & follow-up phase and suggest a similar text for the implementation phase to Network Meeting in Brussels.

As a result, in October, there will be a draft for preparatory phase and a basis for discussion for the other two phases.

ACTIONS

Germany: Summarise results from the Network meeting discussion to be sent to Working Group members. Prepare 2nd Working Group meeting in Trento in September 2013.

Working Group partners: Confirm individual positions on defined quality criteria for the implementation and follow-up phases.

 **Related Document:** Task D_ Quality_ Rome.pdf

At the end of the afternoon, Susanne Strehle thanked all delegates for their contributions to the various discussions of the day; in particular, for their work on quality in the smaller groups. While it had been a challenging task to go through this within the restricted amount of time available, she felt that this is nevertheless a unique opportunity to acquire in-depth knowledge on each partner's individual structures and hence serves as an excellent preparation for the work on the common call.

She then handed over to Bettina Reuter who took over the role as facilitator for the second day of the meeting.

TASK B IDENTIFYING COMMON CRITERIA FOR THE ELIGIBILITY OF EXPENDITURE FOR TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITY MEASURES

Stefan Höhn, Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Germany

Søren Kristensen, Expert Eligibility

The work on Task B was divided into two parts:

- Part I:** Report on the progress of the working group and the option paper by Stefan Höhn and Søren Kristensen.
- Part II:** Joint discussion on eligibility of costs, division of costs and simplified cost options.

Part I:

Stefan Höhn started the session by giving a short overview on the activities of the Working Group to date. Based on the feedback that seven partners had provided through the questionnaire, the Working Group has started to draw some first conclusions on how to address the eligibility of costs for the coordinated call. Søren Kristensen explained these first findings in more detail and specifically referred to the three dimensions of

- **eligibility of costs,**
- **division of costs** between transnational partners, and
- the potential use of **simplified cost options** such as flat rates, lump sums or standard unit costs.

He summarised that the Working Group had general consensus on three aspects:

1. The coordinated call should put as few restraints as possible to allow for maximum flexibility on the eligibility of costs.
2. The sending country should cover all participant-related costs.
3. Simplified cost options should be used whenever possible.

The following discussion among the Network members aimed at confirming or revising these positions and at giving an opportunity to all members to raise any additional concerns regarding eligibility.

Part II:

The discussion on the **division of costs** showed that there is some experience within the Network on mixed funding mechanisms where costs are shared between the host and the sending country. However, as the majority of partners were in favour of the sending partner to cover all costs, the partners agreed to confirm the Working Group's position. The coordinated call should include a set of specifications to clarify this in more detail.

The discussion on the **eligibility of costs** specifically revolved around costs for partner-finding and project preparation, indirect costs, capacity building, translation and consultancy and evaluation. There is general consensus that all of these costs should be eligible within the coordinated call. However, the specifications should be decided by the Managing Authorities. As it has not yet been agreed whether the Network will go for a one- or two-stage selection process this might also lead to further need for clarification on these costs for the coordinated call.

In terms of **simplified cost options**, partners have deviating experience with using *flat rates* for indirect costs. It was nevertheless decided to recommend the use of flat rates for indirect costs if possible, and to leave it to the MAs to formulate the specifications.

The discussion on *lump-sums* for participant-related expenses showed that although there is general consensus that it would be helpful to introduce and use lump-sums in this way, there are Member States whose regulations do not allow using lump sums as a costing mechanism. Therefore, this question is given back to Working Group to collate more information and develop a proposal on how to address this aspect in the coordinated call.

Similar to flat rates, encouraging the use of *standard unit costs* is strongly welcomed by the members of the network and it was suggested to look into the possibility of using standard unit costs instead of lump sums, if the latter are not eligible as a tool in some of the member states.

In summary, it was decided that the Working Group will develop a set of recommendations for flat rates for indirect costs, for lump sums and for standard unit costs as a substitute for lump sums where these cannot be applied. This will happen by taking on board the new ESF regulations once approved. Based on the agreements of this meeting and the results of the second Working Group meeting in Trento in September, a draft text for the coordinated call will be prepared for the next Network Meeting in Brussels.

ACTIONS

Germany: Compile results from the Network meeting and develop set of recommendations for flat rates for indirect costs, for lump sums and for standard unit costs as a substitute for lump sums where these cannot be applied. Prepare 2nd Working Group meeting in Trento in September 2013.

 **Related Documents:** *Task B_Eligibility_Overview_Rome.pdf*
Task B_Eligibility_Option_Paper_Rome.pdf

TASK E DEVELOPING A PROPOSAL FOR EFFICIENT IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURES ON THE LEVEL OF PROJECT OPERATORS OF TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITY MEASURES.

Joanna Busalacchi, ISFOL – Transnational Cooperation Unit, Italy

By giving an introductory presentation, Joanna Busalacchi started off by reporting on the progress of the activities that were carried out within this Task. She explained that a first set of recommendations for MAs on how to select project operators was developed and discussed in the smaller group meeting in Rome on the 19th of June 2013. The paper is based on the feedback on current mobility programmes that was provided by seven Network members, and the results from the questionnaires that were sent out to project operators earlier in spring. In total, 34 project operators from eight network partner countries and regions participated in this survey.

The draft paper specifically refers to the

- **Kind of implementation structure** that is recommended (size of national/regional project partnership, required members, eligibility of partners)
- Required additional **national/regional/local network**
- Special **competencies of project staff**
- **Gender mainstreaming** perspective.

For each of these aspects, the paper suggests a formulation for the coordinated call. A decision on whether the respective sets of recommendations should be mandatory, recommended or not defined is still to be taken. This was indeed the subject of the discussion that followed Joanna's presentation, in particular with regard to the partnership structure. Partners expressed different views on how to tackle the question on what kind of project partnership should be recommended and which institutions should form part of this partnership. It was advised to draw up a list of potential institutions for the coordinated call but leave the final decision to the MAs.

ACTIONS

Italy: Amend proposal according to the results of the discussion. A revised version will be sent to all partners explaining in more detail the rationale behind the different options. A second smaller group meeting might be organised depending on the second round of feedback obtained.

All Network partners: Provide feedback on revised version.

 **Related Document:** *Task E_Implementation_Rome.pdf*

5. SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

Stephanie Koenen, TLN Mobility External Facilitator

Stephanie Koenen opened the last session of the meeting by giving a brief presentation summarising the results of the discussions and the To-Dos for each of the Tasks discussed.

She then presented a revised version of the Network timetable for 2013 with the following meetings scheduled:

- **Summary of key dates for meetings in 2013**

September 25, 2013	2 nd Meeting of Working Group Quality	Trento
September 26, 2013	2 nd Meeting of Working Group Eligibility	Trento
October 23-24, 2013	3 rd Network Meeting	Brussels / Ghent
November 25-26, 2013	Mid-Term Conference	Berlin
December 12-13, 2013	3rd Meeting of Working Groups	Marseille

Within this context, Bettina Reuter pointed out that the Network was invited to present its work as part of a regional event in Trento during the 2nd round of working group meetings. This invitation was very much appreciated and gladly taken, so that a small group of delegates will join the regional event for a brief panel in the late afternoon (from around 5.00pm onwards) on the 26th of September.

To support the preparation process for the Mid-Term Conference in Berlin, in the final part of the session, participants were asked to provide their input on what they feel would make the Mid-Term Conference a success, and on their view on who should be invited to this event in terms of audience. A summary of results can be found in a separate document.

Susanne Strehle concluded the meeting by expressing once again her sincere gratitude to both, the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies for the generous offer to host this meeting, and ISFOL for the outstanding organisation. She also thanked all experts for preparing the different sessions, and all network partners for their various inputs and the lively and fruitful discussions.

 **Related Document:** *Summary_Session_Rome.pdf*

July 5, 2013
Stephanie Koenen
