

In this briefing sheet, detail is provided on the expectations of NA staff, and others, in relation to the assessment comments prepared and submitted by experts. On pages 2-5, examples are also provided.

Introduction

Whilst there is no requirement for NAs to involve external experts in final report assessment for Small-Scale Partnerships, due to the limited amount of funding being accessed (less than €60,000), there are cases where NAs opt to involve external assessors in final report assessment activity. Whether assessments are undertaken by internal or external assessors, there is a minimum quality requirement for assessment comments and a secondary review should always take place. It is the ultimate responsibility of the NA to ensure that an assessment (comments and scores) meets minimum quality standards and that the resultant comments can be used to provide feedback to beneficiaries.

In all cases, NAs should ensure that each quality assessment is **Coherent, Comprehensive, Consistent, Courteous and Concise** (the Five Cs model) as per the descriptions below:

| Coherent | Comprehensive | Consistent | Courteous | Concise |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| comments should be easy to understand even for a reader that has not read the application or the final report. | comments should cover each of the final report assessment criteria and should incorporate address all key aspects. | comments should be easily aligned with the scores that have been awarded for each criterion and should be within the predefined scoring ranges. | comments should be polite and respectful and should avoid first person references (for example, I think that, I expect that). | whilst exceptions exist, comments should be of a standard size, as determined by NA staff (for example, 1-2 paragraphs per assessment criterion). |

As a result of reviewing a final report assessment, the NA might ask an assessor to revisit or revise their assessment, especially where the Five Cs are not satisfactorily addressed. In no situation, however, should an NA propose changes to the scores attributed by an assessor, asking instead that assessors, themselves, ensure consistency between scores and comments.

Regardless of the score given for any individual assessment criterion, experts must assess the final report in full, providing comments for each of the four criteria (Relevance; Quality of Project Design and Implementation; Quality of Partnership and Cooperation; Impact) as well as comments on the application as a whole, the latter providing a cumulative analysis of **strengths** and **weaknesses** associated with overall project delivery.

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Example Comments: Positive Final Report Assessment

RELEVANCE

Overall project delivery is **wholly consistent** with the objectives and priorities of the selected action, with targets for education-industry collaboration **fully achieved** and with notable improvements evident in each of the participating regions, as a consequence of the delivered actions and activities.

It is **clear to see the benefits** of participation for each of the participating institutions. The value of participation is especially **evident** for the coordinating institution who has not previously participated in this type of cross-border exchange and partnership activity, and who has **clearly benefited** from the development of new partnerships and in learning from other partners and stakeholders in their own country and in wider partner countries.

QUALITY OF PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

The original goals and objectives of the project were clearly stated and **eventual project delivery is consistent** with this initial vision as well as with the initially identified needs for cross-border exchange on successful models of industry engagement in the design and delivery of education.

All planned activities were **delivered effectively**. The adopted methodology **aligned well** with overall development ambitions in all but one country and with the need for change in this case is **convincingly argued and appropriate**. Targets for employer engagement were **met and exceeded** and **appropriate mechanisms** were introduced to measure achievement. Budget attributions are mostly consistent with original planning with no substantial deviations.

Whilst not originally anticipated, efforts were made to involve employers who actively recruited from disadvantaged or less-educationally-active audiences, providing **positive case examples** and being **especially well aligned** with Erasmus+ programme ambitions for access and inclusion.

Digital tools were forecast as a means of aiding industry collaboration and engagement and appropriate platforms were quickly identified and **effectively employed** throughout the project, each **appropriate**.

Green and eco-friendly actions were not specifically targeted by this partnership.

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☞ QUALITY OF PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION

The project brought together newcomer and less experienced partners to exchange practices and experiences in the engagement of employers and wider industry partners in the design and development of education programmes. All partners were **actively and effectively engaged**, as per the original vision for project delivery.

Task attribution was **consistent with the original workplan** and all participating organisations were **actively engaged** in delivering the targeted actions, outputs and events. It is **especially positive** to see partner using local employer support networks, including Chambers of Commerce, to promote their project goals and activities.

Communication efforts relied on face-to-face project meetings, as well as wider digital and virtual exchanges, the latter **especially useful** in engaging busy industry partners. Project management and coordination efforts are **clearly described** and **served the project well**, keeping partners and wider stakeholders informed of progress at key stages in the project lifetime.

☞ IMPACT

Participating **institutions have clearly benefitted** from their cross-border collaboration and exchange, and the **necessary efforts have been made** to promote key successes to internal and external stakeholder audiences, including local policy actors, with a view to widening participation in the future.

The benefits and perceived impact on individual participants (employers, educators, learners) are **clearly defined and credibly evidenced** through localised evaluation data for each of the participating institutions and regions.

Clear evaluation measures were put in place, allowing the benefits of employer, educator and learner engagement to be **effectively recorded and assessed**. Certification efforts are **especially encouraging and welcomed** by all core participant groups, including local industry partners who can now promote their role in aiding future course development.

Dissemination actions **positively included** local face-to-face seminars to promote successes and achievements to key stakeholder audiences as well as the use of existing digital marketing platforms and local networks, **each well suited to the size and scale of the partnership**. Plans for continued employer engagement are **especially positive**, as are plans for extending the reach of the cross-border partnership to engage wider staff members.

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Erasmus+

Enriching lives, opening minds

Example Comments: Less Positive Final Report Assessment

☞ RELEVANCE

Overall project delivery is **only broadly consistent** with the objectives and priorities of the selected action, with targets for education-industry collaboration **limited to a single country** and **limited insight given** into how institutional improvement might have emerged as a consequence of the delivered actions and activities.

The benefits of participation are **not well argued**, with **little said** of how the different activities and exchanges might influence change in the delivery of future programmes and services and how this goes beyond what a single partner might achieve through local development actions. The original vision was strong in this respect but the final report **does not elaborate sufficiently** on the overall value of transnational exchange.

☞ QUALITY OF PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

The final report **does not convincingly relay** how well the original goals and objectives of the project have been met. There is some evidence of exchange with industry partners, and among partners from the participating countries, but crossover is **limited** and overall achievements are **not clearly defined and described**.

Whilst the majority of the planned activities appear to have been delivered, a local focus was ultimately adopted with **lesser effort given** to transnational crossover, learning and exchange, which is a definite change in the overall methodology and for which there is **insufficient argument** provided in terms of rationalising this change. Targets for employer engagement were met but with **little effort made** to deliver on original employer evaluation and feedback goals. Budget attributions for evaluation activity are reported yet there is **no evidence** of how these funds were actually used, which is a **shortcoming**.

Whilst anticipating the involvement of disengaged learners in the planned industry visits, promoting possible future career pathways, **no insight is given** into specific methods of involvement or engagement among this key learner audience, which is a **significant deviation from original plans** for end beneficiary engagement and efforts to involve those with fewer opportunities.

Digital tools were forecast as a means of aiding industry collaboration and engagement yet with **limited insight given at the project end** in terms of how the adopted digital platforms were selected and used.

Green and eco-friendly actions were not specifically targeted by this partnership.

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☞ QUALITY OF PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION

The project brought together newcomer and less experienced partners to exchange practices and experiences but the value of cross-border collaboration and engagement is **not well argued**, including as a means of building capacity among newcomers.

Task attribution is **mostly consistent** with the original workplan but a purely localised model of delivery was adopted rather than encouraging crossover and exchange among partners from different countries and regions and this **significantly impacts** on the range and extent of the planned partnership and exchange activities.

Communication efforts relied mainly on localised meetings and exchanges with industry partners yet **much of the required detail is lacking** at the project end.. The value and purpose of digital exchanges is **not fully described** and there is a **clear gap in reporting** on cross-border collaboration and exchange, and on overall partner coordination.

☞ IMPACT

Participating **institutions have reportedly benefitted** from localised employer engagement activities but with **little said** of specific ambitions for continued employer engagement or of plans for future partnership and exchange with transnational partners. This is a **definite shortcoming**.

There is a **notable lack of insight** into the benefits of cross-border and multi-actor collaboration and perceived impact on one or more beneficiary audiences (employers, educators , learners). The final report **does not convincingly address** this aspect.

Evaluation measures were planned but there is **no evidence of evaluation activity** through which the different beneficiary audiences might provide feedback on their engagement in the project. Cross-border collaboration and exchange is also **not convincingly addressed** in terms of evaluating how this might have helped to deliver change or improvement for one or more of the participating partner institutions.

Local dissemination event were valid and extended to relevant stakeholder audiences. **Little is said** of existing employer networks or of how these were (or could be) used to engage employers, including through the marketing of initial project achievements. **No reported efforts** to employ digital marketing strategies, which is a **shortcoming**.

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