

## **Selected aspects of project implementation in a consortium on the example of the MINECROP project.**

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### **Abstract**

The article describes the rules for selecting appropriate members of a consortium that implements a joint project. On the example of the MINECROP project, a step-by-step guide is shown on how to select partners, what risk factors to pay attention to and how to counteract them.

**Key words:** consortium, partners, risk factors

### **Introduction**

The implementation of projects often requires the acquisition of partners who will complement our competences and work towards a common goal. A consortium is usually established at the time of implementation of extensive and complex undertakings that we would not be able to carry out as individual units. By creating a consortium and implementing a project, each involved unit is responsible not only for its own tasks, but for the success of the entire project. Each of the partners brings their knowledge, experience and commitment to the project, which guarantees the success of the entire undertaking from the moment of planning, through implementation, completion and implementation.

### **Selection of partners and rules of cooperation**

The most common form of cooperation is an agreement between the participants. Organisations still remain independent in their current activities, but in the activities related to the implementation of the project, they implement a common financial policy. The essence of the consortium is the obligation of the participants to cooperate and implement the activities specified in the agreement to achieve a common goal.

The selection of appropriate consortium members is an element that appears already at the stage of project preparation. Each partner makes an individual contribution to the success of the work. At the initial stage, it is not possible to identify all potential problems that may affect the success and quality of the results. Key organisations selected for cooperation are assessed in terms of experience, knowledge, human resources or equipment necessary during the implementation of tasks. Choosing partners with whom we have worked before always seems to be the best idea, but it should also be borne in mind that in a new team, cooperation with a well-known partner may not go as well as before.

The basis of success is mutual cooperation, moderate competition, which will make the team more dynamic and at the same time will not hinder the most important element, which is the communication process. Proper communication should take place between the project manager and the project team, but also between team members. Currently, the most popular form of communication are online channels, but this will not replace the bonds created during face-to-face meetings.

## Common Problems

Problems in the implementation of the project may arise at any stage. To avoid them, it is necessary to take into account the most common causes of failure and counteract them from the very beginning:

- unclear responsibilities and responsibilities – each partner should know what is expected of them
- lack of time coordination – project management is based on controlling the time of task completion
- inaccurate definition of "semi-finished products" – failure to deliver precise elements results in stopping the entire process
- lack of involvement of consortium members
- incompetent project manager

The occurrence of even one of the above problems can result in the failure of the project.

## Forming a partnership in the MINECROP project

The consortium was carefully selected based on an analysis of the knowledge, experience and skills of its members. IHAR as a research and scientific institution with experience in agricultural practice was selected as the organization to coordinate MINECROP. Four associations and non-profit organisations and two SMEs that bring together the private and public sectors were selected. Each organization has an individual scope of competence and complements the competences of the other members:

- INNOHIVE, CPIP, INNOHUB, EESTI have experience in developing educational methodologies for VET education, training materials, conducting workshops. The scope of these competences is complemented by the IHAR team, which acts as an education teacher.
- IHAR, ARID and CPIP are closely linked to the target group when developing rural development strategies. They will bring their experience to fully meet the needs of their groups and ensure assessment and implementation during the project lifecycle and beyond.
- ARID, CPIP, EESTI have relevant experience in the field of sustainable development and environmental protection activities.
- INNOHIVE and INNOHUB are experts in the field of open innovation education. Their knowledge will be complemented by expertise e.g innovation in agriculture that ARID offers.
- The INNHIVE and ARID teams have extensive experience in gamification for education, creating online tools for trainers
- ATERMON is a strong IT partner, responsible for exploring the world of MINECRAFT. Focused on game-based learning and participating in the development of OER, it offers its expertise to provide hands-on learning experiences within mass digital education.

The MINECROP project brought together 7 partners from 6 different EU countries to maximise impact and add value. All partners have a wide network of contacts at different levels. INNOHUB is the link with VET centres, educators and stakeholders. ARID and INNOHUB offer services to the public/private sector; CPIP cooperates with small and medium-sized farms, and IHAR operates in rural areas, cooperates with state and scientific organization.

The basis of cooperation between partners is clear and legible communication, which takes place on a daily basis through the selected platform. Admin is used by consortium members to conduct discussions, create tasks, set deadlines for their completion, and store the developed results. Due to the long distance separating the partners, online meetings are one of the forms of meetings. The first meeting of this type took place just after the start of the project. The main objective was to determine whether all partners understood the objectives of the project in the same way and to which target groups the project was addressed. In order to ensure the smooth flow of work, awareness of responsibilities for individual tasks and deadlines for the implementation of individual duties, the partners were informed about the scope of work for which they are responsible during the project. Everyone has access to a detailed scope of duties along with the deadlines set for their implementation. The various elements that make up the main results were discussed and the timing of their implementation was determined by the partnership as a whole. A lot of attention has been paid to undertaking promotional and dissemination activities as soon as possible, which guarantees a wide range.

## Conclusions

The success of any project depends on properly formulated goals and setting target groups to which the project should be addressed. The project consortium must be appropriately selected to complement each other's competences. Each partner is obliged to make an individual contribution to achieve common goals and results. The fluidity of the project also depends on the competence and commitment of the management.

Already at the stage of creating the proposal, the MICECROP project was aimed at creating a consortium with a wide range of competences and experience in project implementation. The general assumptions were consulted with the partners. The project is based on mutual trust based on the experience of previous joint work.

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