

Guide to a Successful Partnership



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INTRODUCTION

This Anglo-French programme enables schools from the two partner countries to implement projects for educational cooperation using ICT.

Inter-Action is part of one of the strands of the international strategy of schools, particularly at upper secondary level: strengthening exchanges with partner countries and the use of foreign languages.

This guide is based on the thoughts of Inter-Action project coordinators and is intended to help the whole of the teaching team of the partner schools to ensure the success of their partnership. Compiling this document would not have been possible without the responsiveness and cooperation of the Inter-Action schools who we thank for their involvement.

Content

This guide focuses on the management of projects, the pedagogical aspect having already been addressed in Micheline Maurice's "Road Map" (<http://crdp.ac-versailles.fr/carnetderoute/>).

Rather than being a simple reminder of the objectives of the Inter-Action programme, "The Guide to a Successful Partnership" aims to emphasise the role of each individual in the implementation of an exchange project and offers some recommendations for managing it.

The section "Overcoming Difficulties" provides an overview of recurring difficulties and some tips for resolving them.

Finally, the last section provides future project leaders and their teams with useful tools and links for the smooth running of the project, both in practical and pedagogical terms.

The Inter-Action team congratulates you on having chosen this programme and wishes you every success in your future partnership.

Section 1: General Information on the Inter-Action Programme

About the Programme

www.inter-action.eu

The Inter-Action programme was drawn up between France and England at the beginning of the 2001 school year. It comes under the educational agreement signed by France and England. It is a programme of partnerships between English secondary schools and the *sections européennes* of state secondary schools in France.

In September 2003, the management of the Inter-Action programme was transferred to the *Centre international d'études pédagogiques* (CIEP) in France and the Schools Network (formerly SSAT) in England. The *Direction générale de l'enseignement scolaire* (DGESCO) and the *l'Inspection générale de l'éducation nationale* (IGEN) are involved in steering the project.

327 partnerships have been created since 2001.

Objectives

The Inter-Action programme enables selected schools to be put in contact with a partner school and to work jointly around a project which draws not only on language skills but also on the use of ICT. The Inter-Action programme includes a partnership conference at which schools can share information and get to know one another. Applicant schools commit to attend if they are selected and this conference usually takes place in January-February alternately in London or Sèvres (CIEP).

Programme Objectives for Learners

- Communicating using the partner's language and gaining a better understanding of certain aspects of their culture;
- Developing a joint piece of work around a shared project in a foreign language;
- Gaining and investing in ICT skills.

Programme Objectives for Teachers

- Developing pedagogy for projects and exchange working;
- Encouraging inter-disciplinary and intercultural dialogue;
- Developing pedagogical innovations using ICT (podcasts, videoconferences...).

Programme Objectives for Schools

- Creating sustainable links to Europe through a partnership;
- Consolidating the part played by the *section européenne* in the school strategy.
- Contributing to the promotion of Modern Foreign Language learning

The Inter-Action programme encourages the implementation of cross-curricular exchange working based on ICT. They can be combined with other programmes such as European Union programmes or other initiatives under the Franco-British cooperation banner.

Stakeholders

For whom is the programme intended?

- In England: (Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland are not involved in the Inter-Action programme). The recruitment of English schools involves various types of English schools with one or several specialisms such as languages, sport, science, engineering, the arts, humanities, mathematics and IT, music, technology and business.
- In France: *State collèges* (lower secondary schools) and *lycées* with a *section européenne* taught in English.

What are the selection criteria for the Inter-Action programme?

- The availability of IT equipment and skill in the teaching team;
- Training a cross-curricular team on the partnership project;
- Being flexible enough in terms of requirements to be able to adapt to the needs of partners;
- Involving the school in the project (inclusion of the project in the school strategy, continuation of the partnership by the school every year).

Section 2: Recommendations



Schools are matched based on a **virtual/ exchange/ project**.

Each of these three words is important and defines the essence of an Inter-Action Partnership: a project managed on the basis of linguistic, pedagogical and cultural interaction through ICT.

What is a Project?

A project is a set of activities organised in phases or stages and which makes up a management plan allowing the achievement of a specific set of objectives.

A project will have a specified length (even if the partnership itself has an unlimited duration); clearly defined objectives; constraints (technical and human).

The Project Phases

The Pre-Project Phase

This phase should lead to the decision by the head teacher on whether to begin the project or not. A period of reflection may be required prior to his or her commitment.

The Project Planning Phase

This is the phase for designing the project.

This phase should allow the project to be organised and the “management tools” involved in running it to be determined, that is, the teaching team, the coordinator, assessing available equipment etc.

The Project Implementation Phase

This is the project implementation phase. For the project leader it is the steering phase.

Project Review Phase

An evaluation must be conducted at the end of the project in order to capitalise on the knowledge gained. An evaluation form is sent to you in March every year as long as the partnership is declared to be active.

All too often this phase is neglected. Yet it allows improved management of follow-up and helps the project achievements to be transferred to other partnerships.

Several factors will affect the smooth running of your project(s) throughout the partnership.

The experience of coordinators from previous years serves as an illustration here (*quotations in blue*).

Factors in the Success of a Project

Formulating your project

- Have an idea for a project that corresponds to the genuine expectations of partners;
- The objective must be included and shared by all project stakeholders;

“Choose a project with potential and that is motivating for learners”.

“Remember that it is not about school trips but virtual exchanges. Schools trips are an additional extra for the project.”

“Remain consistent in terms of the respective programmes”

Putting together the necessary skills, defining responsibilities

- The coordinator must be motivated and competent;
- The responsibilities of the different stakeholders should be clearly defined; you should know who decides and who approves;
- Have the necessary resources available;

“Ensure that the project is achievable in terms of the technological and computer resources of the schools: webcam, broadband internet, video projector, videoconferencing facilities etc.”

- Maintain motivation within the team;
- Keep up team spirit;

“Keep the team well informed about the projects, documents exchanged, activities (monitoring or coordination where relevant)”.

Grasping the complexity

- Split the project into simple units;

“Offer varied simple, realistic and technically achievable activities in order to encourage communication and motivate learners”.

“Offer a project in stages, with an unambitious start, while the project gets up and running”.

- Describe the tasks clearly;

“Adapt activities to timetables”.

- Plan for checks;

- Plan, measure, correct and coordinate;

“Draw up a strict plan and stick to it”.

“The perfect equivalence of groups (language ability, age, and numbers) is impossible, you have to adapt”.

Starting and ending the project well:

- A good start (getting off on the right foot);

“Don’t be too ambitious in the beginning: the first year is the most difficult. Don’t create frustration on the part of learners and teachers”.

- Implementation mastered (produces results);

- A conclusion (end each phase of the project with an evaluation);

“Make consistent efforts”.

Anticipating risk

- Have several alternative scenarios;

“Have several ideas for projects and/or activities in the event that something doesn’t work as planned.”

“Give your partner your timetable in order to identify any daily constraints on either side and identify constraints in the school calendar prior to drawing up the project”.

- Carry out regular checks;

Ensuring that interpersonal and human factors are well integrated

- Interpersonal and human factors are of crucial importance;

- Timely training of stakeholders;

- Communicate effectively (not too little, not too much);

“Regular communication, if possible weekly, with all partners (coordinators, headteachers, teaching teams etc.)”.

- Take ownership of change;
“Constantly call yourself into question”.

Putting in place appropriate project management tools

- The tools must serve the needs of the project;
“Prioritise on-line meetings where possible”.
- The project leader must choose and adapt the tools;
“Have multiple communication aids in the project: email, blogs, videoconference, forums etc.”
“Know about related funding opportunities”.

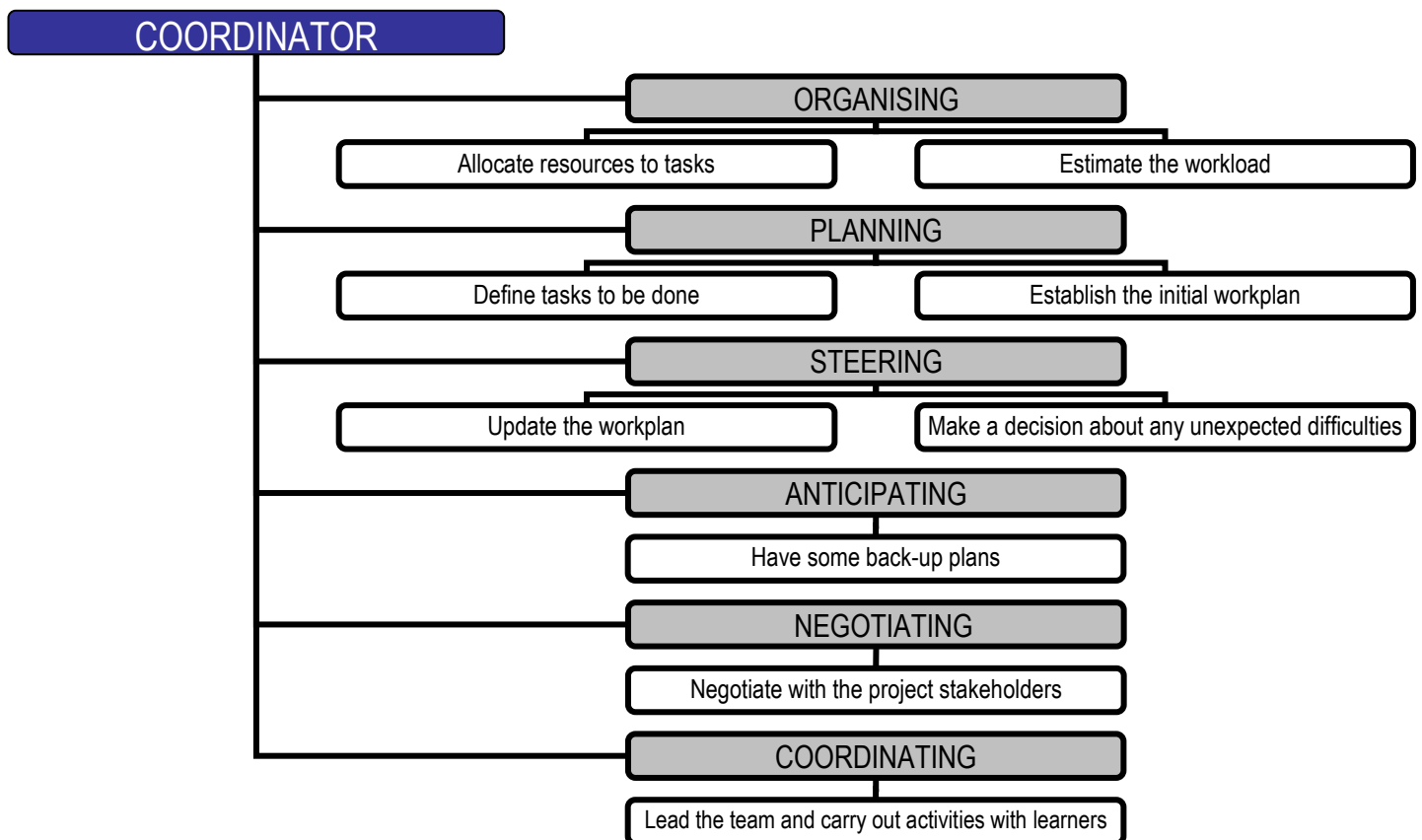
Section 3: The responsibilities of Inter-Action stakeholders

A project cannot be conducted alone and each individual must understand his or her role, taking into account each other's concerns.

This is why it is necessary to ensure that the activities put in place throughout the project meet the expectations of all partners and particular those of the target group: the learners.

A Wide Range of Skills

Project management draws on a wide range of skills: organising, planning, steering, anticipating, negotiating, and coordinating.



A list of stakeholder responsibilities has been drawn up in order to help you identify what is expected from everyone in managing the project.

Let's start with the headteacher, the senior management team and the board of governors which, as administrative and pedagogical bodies have a very important role in managing the project.

The Administrative and Educational Bodies of the School:

BEFORE THE PARTNERSHIP

- Include the partnership project in the school's strategy;
- Inform the teaching and administrative team about the possibility of a partnership with an English/French school;
- Suggest a motivated coordinator;
- Adapt the coordinator's timetable so that he or she can fulfil his or her role in the right conditions.

BEFORE THE CONFERENCE

- Sign the school's Charter of Principles and send it to CIEP/The Schools Network.

DURING THE PARTNERSHIP

- Ensure regular monitoring of the project's progress;
- Ensure that the coordinator has all the necessary means (resources and help from colleagues) to support the project throughout the year in the best possible way;
- Provide the teachers involved in the project with the necessary equipment for activities to run smoothly;
- Ensure effective technical assistance in the shape of an ICT contact;
- Support the coordinator in the event of a problem;
- Ensure that the coordinator is accessible to learners and members of the project team;
- Get in touch with the head teacher of the partner school;
- Find out about related funding opportunities for exchange projects;
- Inform CIEP/ The Schools Network and the partner school in the event of a change of coordinator and find a replacement;
- Send the project coordinator (and not a representative) to the conference
- Inform authorities if a student exchange is planned

However, although certain responsibilities fall on the school authorities, the “project head” within the school remains the coordinator who has, therefore, a key role in the smooth running of the project:

The Coordinator:

BEFORE THE CONFERENCE

- Draws up a list of needs (necessary materials for conducting the project, teacher profiles etc.);
- Puts together a cross-curricular team around a partnership project;
- Checks that the ICT equipment is sufficient for a virtual exchange project;
- Gains knowledge of the English school system;
- Looks at the school calendar of your country (holidays, bank holidays) and ask for timetables from each teacher on the team;
- Puts together the material to take and give to the partner during the conference;
- Signs the Charter of Principles
- Uses the period between the partnership notification and the conference to consider the details of partnership working.

DURING THE CONFERENCE

- Prepares rough project outline (several outlines with different adaptable ideas) with the partner;
- Draws up an action plan with the partner coordinator;
- Gives the French partner the calendars and timetables of each member of the team involved in the project;
- Gives the partner coordinator documentation on the school, its geographical and cultural environment;
- Analyses what could go wrong (“Risk Analysis”) and suggests a solution for each type of situation (see section “Overcoming Difficulties”).

DURING THE PARTNERSHIP

- Consults the head teacher regularly and organises meetings with the pedagogical team to update him or her on the advancement of the project;
- Is easily reachable by partners, teachers, head teacher and the CIEP/ The Schools Network;
- Notifies the partner and the CIEP/ The Schools Network in the event of changes in contact details or the team members;
- Contacts CIEP/ The Schools Network and notifies the head teacher if there are difficulties;
- Puts different project stakeholders in contact with each other (partners, learners, parents ...);
- Cooperates with the CIEP/ The Schools Network for any monitoring or evaluation issue, particularly by responding to the evaluation questionnaire;

- Responds to the partner within a short timescale of two weeks maximum;
- Treats all personal information received under this project as confidential and oversees publication authorisation (text, images) for any later distribution of photos or work of learners;
- Knows child protection laws / Criminal Records Bureau (CRB);
- Prioritises virtual exchange rather than school trips;
- Respects cultural and teaching differences;
- Understands that the partner is often very busy;
- Draws up an action plan and a plan for difficulties in cooperation with the whole teaching team;
- Shares teaching resources and practices with the partner;
- Offers a range of activities with teaching aids.

In addition, it is essential for the project to be owned by a cross-curricular team of teachers.

The Teaching Team

THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT

- In the event of a problem contacts the coordinator;
- Evaluates the situation with the coordinator regularly;
- Prepares learners for this experience;
- Gives the partner a realistic overview of the learners involved in the project;
- Suggests ideas to the coordinator, be proactive
- Supports the coordinator.

Let's not forget the main target of the project:

The learner:

THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT

- Provides the teacher/coordinator with useful information for drawing up the project;
- Works as a team;
- Behaves responsibly;
- Gains some autonomy;
- Makes efforts to communicate and adapt;
- Takes initiative during the project.

Finally parents also have a role to play in this project management.

Parents:

THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT

- Sign the photo consent form;
- Motivate their child to communicate in a foreign language;
- Support their child and the pedagogical team throughout the project.

Section 4: Overcoming Difficulties

Certain recurrent difficulties are listed here but they are far from being insurmountable if tackled in stages.

What to do if?

“My partner doesn’t answer my emails”

- Look at the school calendar given during the conference to check that the partner isn't on holiday;
- Wait for at least 2 weeks as the partner may have other priorities;
- Check that your email is working and has enough capacity;
- Try to contact your partner by another means (telephone, by going through the head teacher of the partner school or through another member of the teaching team);
- If after a month there is still no reply, notify the organisation in charge (CIEP or The Schools Network) and await an answer.

“I no longer wish to or can no longer carry out my functions as coordinator”

- Inform your head teacher, members of the teaching team and your partner;
- Inform CIEP or The Schools Network;
- Try to find a replacement;
- If you find someone who wishes to oversee the project, give him or her the necessary information to take over management of the project.

“The project does not meet my expectations, it isn’t user-friendly”

- Talk about it with the teaching team;
- Try to find a compromise with the partner by thinking about the project in a long-term perspective: if the project does not meet your expectations now, it may evolve with time;
- In the event that no compromise can be envisaged, notify CIEP / The Schools Network so that they can perform their role as a mediator.

“Our timetables or school calendars are not compatible for videoconferencing”

- Notify the head teacher so that he or she can make possible changes to the timetable this year or next.
- Introduce other types of activities or use other formats while you wait for the situation to improve.

If you are engaged in the e-Twinning portal:

“I can’t use the eTwinning platform”

- Contact the ICT contact in your school;
- Take a self-training course on the eTwinning site;
- Contact the CIEP/ The Schools Network to be put in touch with technical support;

- Ask your eTwinning office and/or Local Authority for a training day.

“My school is underequipped in ICT resources”

- Emphasise to your head teacher/local authority the importance of having a range of ICT resources in the context of a virtual exchange project;
- Request an eTwinning training course in your school to benefit from the computer resources related to this training;
- Mention it to your partner and adapt the project activities together according to the available ICT resources;
- Check whether you can do some activities in another school close to your own.

“My partner didn’t come to the conference”

- Try to organise a reciprocal visit to each other’s schools as part of another programme (Short professional stay programme, Comenius observation trip) ;
- Try to use distance exchange tools to put in place your project.

“I lack time”

- Try to rearrange your timetable;
- Tell your partner and colleagues about it (including the head teacher).

“I have the impression that my partner does not feel fully involved in the project”

- Talk about it with the teaching team and head teacher;
- Diplomatically tell your partner what you are experiencing and try to understand their reasons and if they really are less motivated;
- Review your way of managing the project;
- Talk to your partner to clarify their objectives and available resources;
- Adapt your project to the situation.

“My partner does not want to organise physical learner exchange”

- Remember that the main objective of the Inter-Action programme is to put in place virtual exchanges between schools;
- Put off the issue of school trips so as not to break off the partnership.

Section 5: Tools and Useful Links

Websites

Programme Websites:

- Inter-Action Site: www.inter-action.eu
- CIEP Site: <http://www.ciep.fr/francobrit/index.php>
- The Schools Network Site: <https://www.ssatrust.org.uk/Pages/home.aspx>.

Sites on Learner and Teacher Mobility:

- Emilangues
<http://www.emilangues.education.fr>
- Learner Mobility
<http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid21457/mobilite-des-eleves.html>
- education.gouv.fr, Franco-British cooperation:
<http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid21445/cooperation-franco-britannique.html>
<http://eduscol.education.fr/D0156/angleterre-partscol.htm>
- Comenius
<http://www.europe-education-formation.fr/comenius.php>
- Leonardo da Vinci
<http://www.europe-education-formation.fr/leonardo.php>
- Lefèvre Scholarships
<http://www.britishcouncil.org/schoolpartnerships-france-lefevre-trust.htm>
- School Partnerships
<http://www.britishcouncil.org/fr/france-education-cooperative-echanges-scolaires.htm>
- Jules Verne Programme
<http://www.ciep.fr/programme-jules-verne/index.php>
- Programme Séjours professionnels / Short professional stay programme
<http://www.ciep.fr/en/sejours-professionnels/index.php>

Tools

Pedagogical

- Road Map: <http://crdp.ac-versailles.fr/carnetderoute/>

The road map is a pedagogical support tool to help you to draw up a distance exchange project. This guide was drafted by Micheline MAURICE.

- Etwinning Platform: <http://www.etwinning.fr/>

ETwinning, transversal measure of the European Commission's integrated "[Education and Lifelong Training](#)" programme, is an electronic twinning operation between European primary and secondary schools.

This platform includes pedagogical and logistical tools which will enable you to successfully conduct your distance exchange project.

- Emilangues site: <http://www.emilangues.education.fr/formation/boite-a-outils>

Non-exhaustive selection of I.T. tools for searching for information and resources during the preparation of classes but also to design your own resources (visual, audio and video) to subsequently offer them to learners in the classroom. The section "use in the classroom" presents IT tools that can be used for pedagogical purposes in the classroom with learners. They allow you to communicate in innovative ways and to work more easily according to an action-focused approach.

Institutional

- Comenius school partnerships:
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/comenius/handbook08_fr.pdf

We wish you the best of luck for your partnership,

The Inter-Action team



Department for
Education

