



## MODULE 2

### Let's get started: the programme for your mission

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You have completed Module 1 and now have a better understanding of CONNECT, and have gotten to know each other and each other's cultures better. Now it is time to get to business and start looking at the programme of your knowledge exchange mission!

#### Module 2: Learning objectives

This module will enable you to:

- Jointly develop an effective and realistic programme for your knowledge exchange mission;
- Involve the appropriate stakeholders in your knowledge exchange mission

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2.1: Developing your programme

- Read the chapter;

Chapter 2.2: Involving the right stakeholders

- Read the chapter;
- Completed the assignment 2.A – submitted a filled out the 'knowledge exchange programme template' to the CONNECT team. Readings:

## 2.1 Developing your programme

This module will help you to finalise an effective and appropriate programme for the knowledge exchange mission. This is a joint activity that you will have to do together with your partner municipality. First, read the sections 2.1 and 2.2. These will provide you with all the information you need to design a great programme. Once you have finished the readings, Assignment 2.A will guide you through the process of actually developing the programme, using our template for the 'knowledge exchange programme' ([here](#)). Finally, you will have to share the definitive programme with the CONNECT team for feedback, as also described in exercise 2.A.

#### Setting the mission objectives:

As part of your programme you will have to agree on the concrete objectives of the knowledge exchange. You will base these objectives on the request for assistance and the offer from the visiting municipality. These objectives should be:

- **Shared** – both visiting and receiving municipality should agree on the exchange objectives;
- **Clear** – to both visiting and receiving municipality. You want to make sure that both partners have the same understanding of the mission's objectives. Do not leave the objectives too vague, make sure they are specific;
- **Relevant** – make sure that the objectives are relevant to the challenge the receiving municipality faces;
- **Realistic** – discuss with your partner municipality about what is feasible to achieve during the exchange mission. Be ambitious, but within what is possible, in terms of time and means.

## Define your programme:

You will jointly design your programme based on the request, the offer for assistance and your exchange objectives. For a large part you are free to design the programme according to your needs. However, there are a few elements that – based on past experience - we highly recommend you include:

- **Introductions** – You will be spending an intense few days together, so spend some time to get to know a bit more about each other. Visitors will always appreciate a tour of the offices and it is worthwhile to have some space for a round of introductions of the people working for the receiving municipality. This is also the time to discuss the work done on intercultural communication in assignment 1.C.

In the beginning people often do not know what is expected of them, they often feel self-conscious and are unwilling to join in. This is where **ice breakers** are useful, these can help you to get to know one another better and buy in to the purpose of your collaboration so that you become more productive. For inspiration watch this video:



- **Meet the Mayor** – If possible do try to schedule an introduction meeting with the mayor. This is an important first step in building partnership and trust. Furthermore, it ensures that the mayor is aware of your programme and helps guarantee political commitment for the actions you want to undertake.

General tips for a meeting with the Mayor (or other politician):

- Prepare a short introduction about your municipality, you may wish to bring a message from your Mayor for example
  - Tell the Mayor, what will you do in the municipality and with his staff during your mission
  - You may wish to prepare some questions to the Mayor.
  - Bring small illustrative items related to your municipality (leaflets, flags, badges, booklets)
  - Also, the level of formality of such meeting can vary from country to country; inform with the focal point of your partner municipality what can be expected.
- **Discussion of programme and objectives** – One of the first things you will have to do is discuss the programme and objectives you have agreed on. You want to make sure

that everyone understands what will happen during the knowledge exchange and that everyone's expectations are well understood.

- **Joint evaluation workshop** – As you will read in module 3, you will need to start with evaluating the knowledge exchange during the mission, for joint learning purposes.

Besides these highly recommended programme elements, we also have a few tips for programme design:

- **Open space** – Do not be afraid to leave some open space in the programme. You will need time to accommodate the unexpected.
- **Field visits** – Where relevant, you can jointly visit certain sights, organizations or implementing agencies of the municipality. This might help to illustrate/visualize the current challenges.
- **Gender equality** – CONNECT aims to promote gender equality in all its activities. This is why we highly encourage the CONNECT participants to ensure a good representation of women's voices in all project activities. Also, this is why we monitor gender equality, by asking for the gender on the attendance lists.
- **Social activities** – Make some time for social activities. While the primary goal of the exchange is professional, it is also an opportunity to share each other's cultures. For example, you have a small budget for a closing dinner (see financial guidelines, module 3)
- **Working & lunch hours** – Different countries have different working and lunch hours. Some cultures start early, others work late. Make sure you discuss these particularities to avoid any misunderstandings.
- **Breaks** – Ensure you have enough breaks. We are always tempted to get as much into a day as possible, but no one can keep their focus without breaks. You can also use an energizer to renew the energy in your group. [Here](#) you will find 100 examples of energizers, for your inspiration.
- **Weekends and public holidays** – Weekend days and public holidays are not considered working days. Please make sure to check if the proposed period of your exchange does not coincide with public holidays – it would be a shame if the partner municipality is closed on one or more days during your visit. CONNECT has specified financial guidelines for weekend days; please check the financial reporting guidelines in module 3 for more information on this.
- **Exchange** – the goal of CONNECT is to enable colleague-to-colleague learning. Make sure you create plenty of space for dialogue and exchange. Also, think carefully about what the best forms are to enable such exchange.

Potentially interesting videos, with regard to chairing meetings etc.:

*How to run a group meeting:*



*Simulated meeting to learn more about chairing a meeting:*



- **Plan the next steps** – Use the time you have together to plan the next steps that have to be taken to translate the knowledge exchange into tangible results for the receiving municipality. Jointly you can think of questions such as: Do you need to change policy or regulations?; Do you need to mobilise resources?; Do you need to change the attitudes of people?; Which stakeholders do you need to involve? This component will help to set priorities for the (near) future, as well as concrete actions. Documents listing answers to these questions are also relevant deliverables/outputs to share with the CONNECT team after the exchange. We will go into the reporting requirements in more detail in module 3.

## 2.2 Involving the right stakeholders



As we keep emphasizing, CONNECT is about facilitating knowledge exchange. Although CONNECT can only facilitate a short exchange mission, we want to ensure that this mission can benefit the greatest number of people. This is why it is important to think carefully about who you can involve in your programme. We believe that two organisations should always be involved:

1. the EU Delegation in the partner country, since the EU finances the exchange, and,
2. the national association of local or regional governments (i.e. the organisation representing local or regional governments at the national level), as an organization that can disseminate the knowledge to a wider audience in the partner country, and beyond.

Below we have set out some information on how you can involve both of these stakeholders.

However, beyond these two actors, you will want to involve a wider range of stakeholders that are relevant to the challenge you will be addressing. To help you identify the right stakeholders we have formulated a few questions.

- Who inside the receiving municipality should be involved in what part of the programme? What elements of the programme are relevant for the people at implementation level and when do you want to involve the decision makers?
- You might want to involve other, relevant external actors. Depending on the theme you are working on you could think of: private sector, public companies, public private partnerships, research institutes, universities, NGOs, local experts, media, regional governments, unions, etc.
- It is not necessary for stakeholders to be present at every part of the programme. Think carefully about which information is relevant to whom and when you might want feedback and input from whom.
- In selecting your stakeholders, you will want to consider three key factors: (1) how much influence do they have on the theme you are working on; and, (2) how much they are affected by the theme you are working on; (3) can they play a role in disseminating the knowledge that is shared to a wider audience? If the answers are 'very', 'very' and 'yes' you should definitely invite them for (part of) the exchange.
- Stakeholder identification is also a shared responsibility. The receiving municipality will have the best insight into the local context, but the visiting municipality will have a fresh outsider's perspective and might be able to help identify new stakeholders that should be involved, but are not yet included.

Stakeholder mapping is a useful exercise when defining the right/relevant stakeholders. You will find a video with instructions on stakeholder mapping here:

## 2- Prioritise your stakeholders



### The European Commission



As you know, the European Commission co-funds CONNECT. Therefore, it is important to keep them informed of – and involved in – the knowledge exchange mission. The CONNECT team will put the EU Delegation in touch with the partner municipalities and propose that they meet you and/or attend some of the exchange sessions. The CONNECT team can help you to follow-up on this and arrange the practicalities with the EU Delegation. The purpose of this is to give the EU Delegation

a chance to meet the participants of the programme they fund, observe the work done by you and discuss its benefits and limits, as well as possible follow-up activities.

### The National Association of local governments (in the country of the receiving municipality)

The national association of local governments in the country of the receiving municipality play an important role in the CONNECT programme. They have been involved in distributing information about the programme to their members, mobilizing them to apply.

They continue to play an important role during the knowledge exchange, because they can disseminate the knowledge, that is shared with the receiving municipality, to all their member municipalities. In this way we will be able to significantly increase the impact of the knowledge exchange.

This is why we want to invite the Local Government Association to attend the knowledge exchange programme as observers. The CONNECT team will put the receiving municipality in touch with the local government association. It is then up to the receiving municipality to invite them to attend the programme and follow up on all practicalities. We advise you to also schedule a meeting with them at the end of the exchange (perhaps at the exchange location, or in the capital city where they are usually located), to share the results and discuss how these can be disseminated to other municipalities and used for lobby at the national level.

Be aware that both the meeting with the EU Delegation and the national association of local governments will most likely have to take place in the capital, so you will have to leave some time for this in the programme.

## Assignment 2.A: Knowledge Exchange Programme

**You now know what elements should be included in the programme. It is time to get to work!**

This module's exercise is to jointly reach an agreement on the knowledge exchange programme, according to the guidelines as set out in this module. Important is that both the receiving and visiting municipality agree on the programme, its objectives and the stakeholders involved. This module's exercise consists of the following 2 tasks:

- Together with the partner municipality, fill out the 'knowledge exchange programme template' ([here](#)). As part of this template you will be asked to identify the mission objectives, plan all programme elements and conduct a stakeholder analysis. We recommend discussing the programme and stakeholder analysis through Skype with your partner municipality.
- Once finished and agreed on by both municipalities, you will be asked to share the template for feedback with the CONNECT team ([connect@ccre-cemr.org](mailto:connect@ccre-cemr.org)). Please do so within the timeframe set by yourself in your **planning** made under assignment 1.A.