INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION PROJECT

Applying for Erasmus+ grant

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Bachelor's thesis
May 2017
Degree Programme in Business Administration

ABSTRACT

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu
Tampere University of Applied Sciences
Degree Programme in Business Administration
Project management

GRIP KATJA
International Collaboration Project
Applying for Erasmus+ -grant

Bachelor's thesis 50 pages, appendices 11 pages
May 2017

The aim of this thesis was to research the process of applying for Erasmus+ grant for an international collaboration project. The topic arose from a true need, when Tampere University of Applied Sciences was planning to share virtual learning environment Kykylaakso with other European universities in a collaboration project. This thesis was written as a guide for such project.

This thesis gathers information required for both the application and the project itself. The topics are virtual learning environments, Kykylaakso and coaching. The application was gone through point by point from the project management's point of view and examined possible views on the answers.

Possible future EU-projects can benefit from this thesis. Filling the application is an extensive process that requires professionalism, international expertise, experience on projects and international cooperation skills.

Key words: international, project, collaboration, grant, application

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ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS

TUAS	Tampere University of Applied Sciences
Erasmus	European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students

1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to research the process of applying for Erasmus+ grant for international collaboration project. In this thesis, the project is internationalization of the Tampere University of Applies Sciences' BBA Department's virtual learning environment Kykylaakso. This thesis should serve as assistance for the project management and other persons involved in the petition process. The information is aimed for the project staff in TUAS.

1.1 Background

The background of this project lies in the pursuit of bringing an international aspect to teaching business in TUAS. The first year of practical business studies in TUAS take place in the virtual city of Kykylaakso, that provides virtual companies different services and an ERP-system. Virtual companies trade and function as if they were real, but no money of actual goods are involved.

The BBA department of TUAS was planning an international project of sharing Kykylaakso with other European universities in order to bring an international aspect to learning.

1.2 Objectives

The objective of this thesis was to create a guide to the petition process for the project management, thus making it easier to fill out the application. The application together with this thesis can serve as a backbone for the actual project plan, if the project should actually be carried out.

1.3 Methods

The petition process requires information and expertise from different areas of work. The application consists of basic information of the applicants and information about the project. Such information includes risk management plans, plans for distribution of good practices, reports of the project's aims and agendas and so forth. The application is processed point by point from the project management's point of view. This thesis explains and clarifies some of the questions and points the project management to the right direction.

The most important sources of information and theory considering the application are the Erasmus+ Programme Guide of 2017 and several sources in project management. The theoretical part of this thesis consists of Kykylaakso and virtual learning environments in total, Erasmus+ and coaching as a teaching method. Kykylaakso teachers and coaches were interviewed for this thesis to get a better insight on the subject. The interviews are attached in the appendices.

2 VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Virtual learning or web-based learning is a way of learning though web-based technologies or tools. Technology supports traditional teaching and learning. Learning can be fully web-based or blended, where web-based activities are mixed with face-to-face activities (Tampere University of Technology). The use of technology in Finnish schools has been volatile, and new, innovative ways of using technology in education are needed to provide students the 21st century generic skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, lifelong learning and ethics in data collection. (Niemi & Multisilta, 2014, 55-56.)

Bringing an international aspect into learning is quite easy with virtual tools. According to Friedman (2005), the world has become flat – borders and distances can be crossed quickly due to globalization and digitalization. (Niemi & Multisilta, 2014, 61)

2.1 Virtual learning environments in education

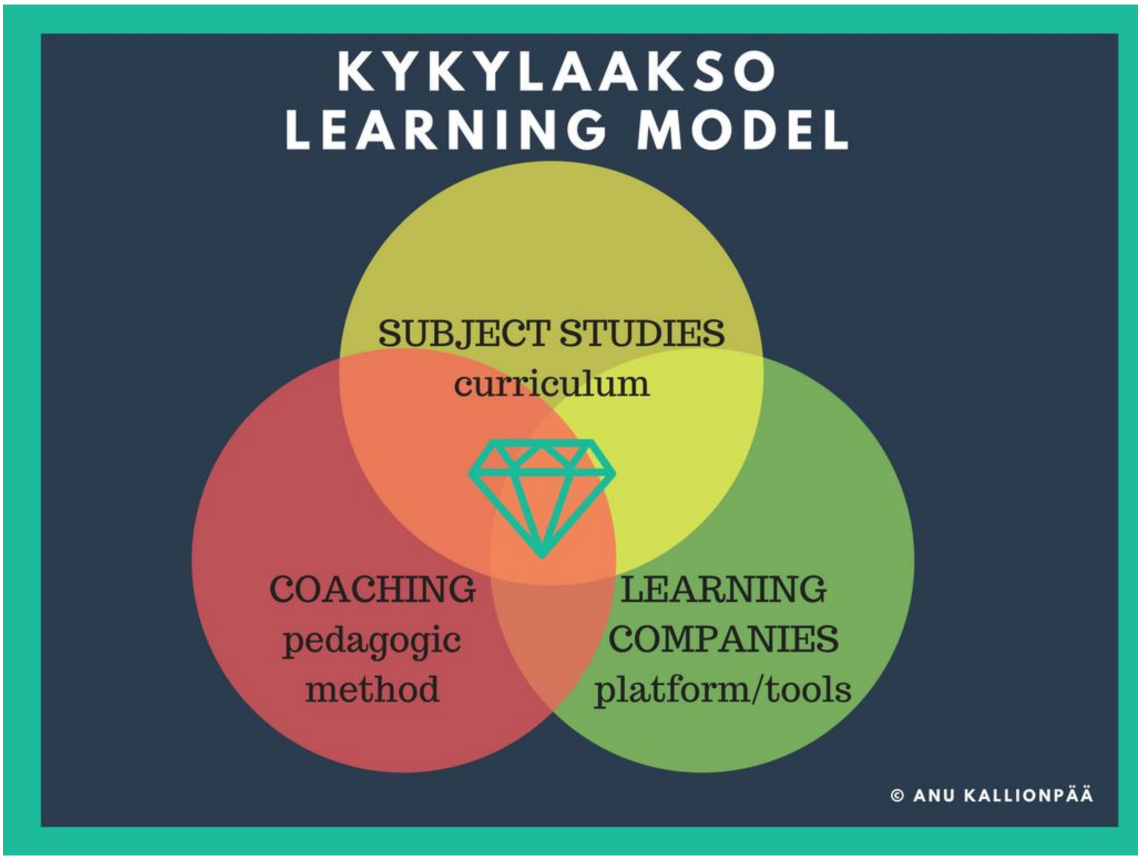
According to Tampere University of Technology, the advantages of virtual learning are that new methods make learning and teaching more effective. On the other hand, virtual learning lacks the traditional structures of a class, which may make students confused. While virtual learning enables students to go at their own pace, some may find it hard to stay on course. (Tampere University of Technology)

The problems of virtual learning in this extent are similar with the problems in using technology altogether. There might be doubts about stability and reliability, the language of technology, lack of support, and suspicion. When it comes to education, some fear that students wander off to inappropriate or irrelevant sites or there are glitches or small errors that occur during teaching without enough know-how to fix them (Posey & Burgess & Eason & Jones, 2010).

2.2 City of Kykylaakso

Kykylaakso is a web-based learning platform for business students. In TUAS, Kykylaakso period is situated in the first year of studies. Students form virtual companies and learn basic business processes in the virtual city of Kykylaakso with the help of their coaches. (TAMK, Kykylaakso) The companies function as if they were real – the only difference is that there is no money or actual goods involved, so there is no risk.

Kykylaakso consists of three building blocks: subject studies, coaching and learning companies, or virtual companies as referred in the text (PICTURE 1). The aim of Kykylaakso is to teach students working life skills and entrepreneurial skills through learning by doing, while enhancing both entrepreneurial and intra-entrepreneurial attributes. Teamwork improves students' interpersonal skills, while subject studies support the actions in the virtual companies. (TAMK, Curricula) With Kykylaakso, students take theory into practice immediately (Kallionpää, 2017).



PICTURE 1. Kykylaakso learning model. (Kallionpää, 2017)

In Kykylaakso, there are supporting companies that offer basic services in the city (Kallionpää, 2017). The administrators of Kykylaakso run these services. Companies negotiate a bank loan to get their business started, make contracts with rental companies, create their own advertising and marketing material, manage their taxes and bookkeeping and so on. Kykylaakso was made so that such processes feel real, as for example, the loan negotiations are held in an actual bank. At the end of the Kykylaakso year, each student has used an ERP-system, sent invoices, planned advertisements, held official meetings with the group and had contact to actual companies (Makkonen, 2017).

2.3 Coaching

The teaching method of Kykylaakso differs from traditional teaching with its self-imposed and self-guided approach. Entrepreneurship and working life skills are better taught and learned by doing and not by reading. (Makkonen, 2017) Each team is given a coach, whose task is not to teach but to observe and guide. Coaches motivate the team and help students help themselves. Their task is to recognize the strengths and existing skills of the students and help harness them in use (Salminen, 2013, 87).

2.3.1 Engaging and encouraging students

Engaged employees have a great impact on the performance of the organization, and even though the companies in Kykylaakso are virtual, the same rules apply. Engagement cannot be forced, but created. One way of doing this is through empathy. Engagement requires three kinds of learning: knowing-based, feeling-based and action-based. When coaching includes empathy, the engagement is more likely to follow. (Brockbank, 2013, 19).

Coaches encourage students to learn by doing and by making mistakes. There are no precise advice or rules in the actual business life either, and the CEO, entrepreneur or team leader must each find the procedures that work best in their line of work. The aim of Kykylaakso is for the students to work and study independently and use their own wits to cope with the situations that mimic those in real business life. (Makkonen, 2017)

The difference between common social interaction (social grease) and coaching communication can be seen through different situations, such as help and support, respect for others and honesty. The table below (TABLE 1) is an adaptation to the actual content. (Hargrove, 2008, 30)

	Social Grease	Coaching Communication
Help and Support	Give approval and praise to others, tell others what you believe will make them feel good. Reduce their feelings of hurt.	Increase other's capacity to confront their own ideas, face unsurfaced assumptions, biases and fears.
Respect for Others	Defer to others, do not confront their reasoning or actions	Attribute a high capacity for self-reflection and self-examination without becoming too upset. Test this attribution.
Honesty	Tell other people no lies or tell all you think and feel.	Encourage everyone to say what they know or fear to say. Minimize distortion and covering up of the distortion.

TABLE 1. Social Interaction and Coaching Communication (Hargrove, 2008, 30)

2.3.2 The roles of coaching

Coaching can be perceived through different roles. Harri Hirvihuhta has listed few of the most common roles: professional/advisor, negotiator, teacher/instructor, friend/colleague and supporter. In the Kykylaakso environment, students need the coaches to execute all these roles and maybe more. They need a professional when beginning their studies and Kykylaakso processes, because they are not yet familiar with the business world or its functions. Even though the coach's role differs from that of a teacher, especially during the first months coaching requires teacherlike handling. (Hirvihuhta, 2006, 55)

One matter to almost certainly rise to the attention of the coach is the chemistry among the team. When ten strangers are teamed up to face all new challenges with no pre-determined roles, it often leads to conflict. Coaches settle arguments and disagreements, and provide students tools for conflict management. (Hirvihuhta, 2006, 67). In this Kykylaakso case, coaches are closer to the students than subject teachers when it comes to social interaction and relationships between the students. When coach meets the students together and individually, collisions and disagreements come up. It is up to the coach to examine and decide if the situation requires outside intrusion. In these conflict situations, the position of the coach can be compared to that of a translator: their task is to interpret the problem and the wishes and concerns of each side. (Makkonen, M. 2017).

A coach must also have advanced interaction skills, be trustworthy and have a sense of prioritizing. However, a good coach can't always be measured in skills or traits – the contentment of the coachees depend on their expectations and previous experiences on coaching (Salminen, 2013, 160). The difference between a coach and a teacher is that a teacher gives correct answers, but a coach asks questions with insight. Coaching requires a certain kind of courage, because of its unpredictable nature. A coach cannot have precise schedules and guidelines, but the sessions go according to the questions and problems that arise. (Makkonen, 2017)

2.3.3 Coaching in Kykylaakso

Coaching is an adequate and suitable pedagogical method, because virtual companies do most of the work in groups. The groups do not require coach to be present at all times, and considering resources, it would not be sensible. The coach would have to sit with the group for hours straight, when the clear majority of these hours is spent studying the matter, getting acquainted with the tools, team mates and tasks and figuring out solutions within the team. Instead, the coach is available on demand, whether it is via email or face to face. The coach visits the teams on regular basis, and each team member also gets to meet up with the coach individually.

Coaches are mentors to students. Coaches are not professionals in all fields, but rather have expertise or knowledge in a particular area. Like the students, coaches also work in teams. (Kallionpää, 2017)

The coach encourages students to move forward and grow as students and as future employees. By looking into even the smallest successes and movement towards the right direction and bringing them to the attention of students, coaches motivate and encourage the students. Friendly touch to coaching ensures that students have the courage to bring up issues and questions they wouldn't in a formal relationship. (Hirvihuhta, 2006, 150)

By asking students for feedback after their Kykylaakso period, the BBA department can improve the whole Kykylaakso concept as well as coaching and the roles of coaches. Y-

Kampus arranges coach training sessions at Tampere University of Applied Sciences, where the coaches look into the different tools, theories and good practices of coaching and create their own coaching philosophy (Makkonen, 2017).

3 ERASMUS+ GRANT APPLICATION

3.1 Erasmus+

Erasmus+ grants for strategic partnerships are meant for educational purposes. The goal is to innovate new, develop existing methods, exchange good practices, advance transversality and enhance international liaisons altogether. According to the general objectives of Erasmus+ Programme, the Programme shall contribute, among other objectives, to the achievement of the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, the objectives of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training and the sustainable development of Partner Countries in the field of higher education (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2017, 7).

The important features of the Erasmus+ Programme are recognition and validation of skills and qualifications, dissemination and exploitation of project results, open access requirement, international dimension, multilingualism, equity and inclusion and protection and safety of participants. Erasmus+ supports EU transparency tools for skills and qualifications. These tools ensure that skills and qualifications can be more easily recognized and are better understood throughout Europe and in all systems of education and labor market. Dissemination and exploitation of results are vital areas of the project lifecycle, and give the participating parties the chance to share their outcomes and results to others. Sharing results will extend the impact of the project. (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2017, 7-10.)

Open access requirement concerns materials, documents and media that can be useful to learning and teaching and that are produced by projects under the funding of the Erasmus+ Programme. International dimension is included in the Erasmus+ Programmes, especially in the fields of higher education and youth, as is multilingualism. The EU has set the goal of each EU citizen having a chance to learn at least two foreign languages from a young age, and the promotion of language learning is one of the objectives of the Programme. "Equity and inclusion" struggles with the limits some participants might come across, such as disability, cultural differences of health problems. (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2017, 7-10.)

Protection and safety of participants are two very important principles of the Erasmus+ Programme, and at least the following areas must be covered:

- Travel insurance (when relevant)
- Third party liability
- Accident and serious illness
- Death (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2017, 10).

The duration of such project can be from 2 to 3 years, and the maximum amount of grant is 150 000 euros per year (Opetushallitus). Transnational Strategic Partnerships are aimed to develop initiatives, promote innovation and exchange of experience and know-how. The European Commission is ultimately responsible for the running of the Erasmus+ Programme. National Agencies serve as Indirect Management to bring Erasmus+ as close as possible to its beneficiaries (Erasmus + Programme Guide, 2017, 14).

Participants in Erasmus+ projects must be established in a Programme Country. The Programme Countries are Member States of the European Union (EU) and some Non EU Programme Countries, such as Norway and Iceland. (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2017, 20-21.).

Beneficiaries shall use the European emblem (the EU flag) and the name of the European Union spelled out in all communication and promotional material. The brand name of Erasmus shall not be translated. (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2017, 314)

3.2 Strategic Partnership

Key Action 2 (Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices) support five different actions, one of which is Strategic Partnerships. Strategic Partnerships support innovation and exchange of good practices. These actions are expected to bring positive and long lasting effects on participating organizations and policy systems. These Key Actions are expected to result in development and transfer of innovative practices at different levels. They are expected to produce the following outcomes:

- innovative approaches for addressing target groups
- a more modern, dynamic environment inside the organization
- increased capacity and professionalism to work at EU/international level

- positive impact on persons directly involved (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2017, 29-30.)

These positive impacts include increased sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, increased competence in foreign languages and digital environment, more active participation in society and so on. (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2017, 118)

3.3 Application

The application consists of different sections, such as basic information about participating parties, details about the project the grant is applied for and the agendas of the project. The meaning of each section is explained in the beginning of the application form. (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 1) Whoever is filling out the report should have a wide understanding of the project from top to bottom. The application is basically a project plan, something that every project should form before beginning the execution. Regardless of the nature of the project, project plan must answer to the following questions: who, what, when, how and how much (Pelin, 2011, 83).

Chapter B (Context) gathers the frame of the project: Programme, key action, action, the field most impacted, main objective of the project, call, round, deadline for submission and language used to fill in the form. This is the general information about the project proposal in question. (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 1)

Chapter B.1. is for Project Identification. This part identifies the basic information about the project in question. One needs to fill in project title, project title in English, possible project acronym, project start date, project total duration, project end date and the full legal name of applicant organization. Application also requires identification about the national agency of the applicant organization (B.2.). (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 1-2.)

In the hypothetical international collaboration project of sharing Kykylaakso with collaborating universities, project duration would be two to three years. This, with all the other information, must of course be negotiated closely with the participating organizations before filling the application and applying for the grant.

Chapter C sets out the priorities of the project. Applicants must select the most relevant horizontal or sectoral priority or priorities as per the objectives of the project. These choices should also be commented. Some examples of these priorities are social inclusion and achievement of relevant and high quality skills and competences for horizontal priorities. For higher education sector: enhancing the quality and relevance of students' knowledge and skills and promoting internationalism and promoting mobility. (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 3)

3.3.1 Strengths and challenges

Applications from Finland are generally very high in quality at European level (Kalevo, 2017). Finland's strengths are in its expertise and experience in both university collaborations and working life collaborations. Finnish universities have many European partner universities. (Heino, 2017) TUAS' strengths lie in its wide experience in coordinating projects and working as partner (Kalevo, 2017). Multidisciplinarity (Kärnä, 2017) and pedagogical solutions such as Kykylaakso and Proakatemia are also examples TUAS' assets (Kalevo, 2017).

Finding the right collaboration partners and working with a wide partner network are the most challenging parts of filling out the application. Working together with people from different cultures might cause communicational issues and the harmonization of timetables makes it difficult to find time for the application. Commitment is very important in projects like this. The application should always answer directly to the questions asked, and a poorly composed application could prevent receiving the grant. (Kärnä, 2017)

Other matter to cause difficulties is the lack of input from the partners. When coordinating the application, you must be able to show the necessity and roles for all the partners. You cannot fabricate answers, but you must get enough high-quality input from the partners to be able to produce the application. (Heino, 2017) One challenge is the opposite of scarce input: excessive amount of plans for just one project. Applicants try to fit too much tasks into one project, which makes it unrealistic both timewise and financially. (Kalevo, 2017)

With EU-/Erasmus-projects like these, Finland's passage percentage is below 10 %. One of the reasons behind the low percentage are that Finland produces a lot of applications in comparison to the grants available (Heino, 2017). Finland is also a small country, which makes the possible received grant smaller. With Strategic Partnerships, the choices are made nationally, so the competition is very tough. (Kalevo, 2017)

3.3.2 Schedule

The time allocated and used for the application can vary from 5-10 % (Kärnä, 2017 & Heino, 2017). This number can vary a lot depending on the project: for some projects, it can be hundreds of hours, but for some, just very few working hours can produce a high-quality application (Heino, 2017). Time management is always a major challenge in these types of projects. No matter how early you start planning, at the end you will always be in a hurry. (Kalevo, 2017)

3.4 Participating Organization(s)

Chapter D gathers information about participating organization(s), with the sub-chapter D1 Applicant Organization. Applicants must provide the following information: PIC, full legal name (both in national language and Latin characters), acronym, national ID and department if applicable, address, country, P.O. Box, post code or CEDEX, city, website, email, telephone and fax numbers. These are basic information, and do not require any additional discussion. (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 4)

In chapter D1.1 applicant specifies the type of applicant organization, and if it is a public body or non-profit. Background and experience are addressed in D1.2, where applicants must briefly present the organization in question. Some leading points are e.g. type, areas of activity and approximate number of staff and learners. If the applicant organization is for example a university, the type could be described as an institute of higher education, which also explains its scope of work. The number of staff and learners depend on the size of the institution and the number of learners accepted in the project. (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 4-5.)

D1.2. also asks to clarify the activities and experience in the areas relevant for the project. The skills and/or expertise of key persons involved must also be addressed. In the hypothetical Kykylaakso-case, such expertise and skills could be pedagogical skills, coaching, entrepreneurship or vast understanding of it, experience in virtual learning and so on. The final part of D1.2. inquires if the applicant organization has participated in a European Union granted project in the last 3 years. The remaining D1 categories require the basic information about the legal representative and contact person of applicant organization. (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 5)

3.5 Partner Organization

As the projects in question are collaboration projects, information about partner organizations must be filled out onto the application. The basic information does not differ from the information asked about the applying organization. Partner organization will also have to define the type of their organization and if they are a public body or a non-profit. The same basic background and experience information must also be filled out, as must the activities, skills and expertise with the basic information of their legal representative and contact person. (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 6-9.)

In chapter D.4. of the application one must explain the involvement of possible associated partners that are not formally participating in the project in question. Their contribution and support must be explained. (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 9). In this case, one possible group of associated non-formal partners could be local entrepreneurs. They might contribute with supporting the virtual companies, arranging events together with them, lecturing about entrepreneurship and so on.

3.6 Description of the Project

Chapter E covers the project in a more detailed matter (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 13). The following questions require a deeper knowledge on the project, and the answers must be discussed together with all the participating organizations.

3.6.1 Communication

Participating organizations should each have a project manager to handle the meetings and discussion: this way all the information is concerted and there is no risk of losing valuable information between persons. Project communication plan is an important part of project management, because communication is the key to a successful project. Project communication plan should involve full document history, general information about the project, communication media and a summary of internal and external communication as well as other communication. Communication plan should be updated when necessary and available to all included: this way everyone stays up to date. (Pelin, 2011, 290).

3.6.2 Objectives

First applicants must explain the context and the objectives of the project as well as the needs and target groups to be addressed. Applicants must also justify, why the project should be carried out transnationally. (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 11)

Kykylaakso can be shared with schools of the same nationality, but carrying out the project internationally gives it a transnational perspective and enhances the participants' intercultural traits. In this case, some points to bring up are innovating and developing the teaching of business with virtual tools and coaching and making international connections. (Valtonen, 2017)

The objectives within the participating organizations should be connected to enhancing the quality of teaching, innovating and creating new methods of teaching and bringing them to use (Kalevo, 2017).

3.6.3 Innovativeness

Next question addresses the project's innovativeness: In what way is the project innovative and/or complementary to other projects already carried out? (Strategic Partnerships Application Form 2017, 11) Innovativeness is one of the main themes of Key Action 2 (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2017, 11), so applicants must have a clear and truthful insight and understanding of their project and its agenda. Kykylaakso itself is innovative and differs from the conventional teaching of business traits. The base already exists, and the next step is to modify it to better fit international environment. Coaching brings new methods and views into traditional teaching and learning. (Valtonen, 2017) The aim of these Erasmus+ projects is to create new operating models that can be applied to different institutes of higher education, as well as to different fields. (Kalevo, 2017)

3.6.4 Partners and Responsibilities

Applicants must rationalize and explain the reasons behind choosing each partner applicant (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 11). Stating reasons for the choices of partner universities might sound effortless, but one must truly bring out the objectives and agendas of each partner. Each one should explain what they are bringing to the table, so there are no free rides (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 11). Giving examples for this thesis is challenging, for there are no actual partners chosen. Some of these reasons could be the will to reform and modernize, the will to share and improve good practices and form new international connections, distinct trades in virtual tools, exceptional international or corporate networks and so on. Many universities already have modern student-centered operating models and have pursued innovative solutions in their actions (Valtonen, 2017).

Applicants must reason how the tasks and responsibilities will be distributed among the participating parties. (Strategic Partnership Application Form, 2017, 11) With this question, the application strives to clarify if there truly are roles for all the participators. Each party should provide something to the project and have reasonable responsibilities. One great tool for planning is the Responsibility Assignment Matrix, also known as RACI matrix. There are variations of this matrix, but in RACI, the roles and responsibilities are divided into Responsible, Accountable, Consult and Inform, hence the acronym RACI. (Smith & Erwin, 5).

According to Smith and Erwin, “R” is The Doer who completes the task and is responsible for the implementation. Responsibility can be shared. “A” is the individual who is answerable for an activity or a decision. Only one “A” can be assigned to an action. “C” has the role of consult, and is typically an expert of the subject in question. “C” is to be consulted before the final decision. “I” is for the individual who needs to be informed after a decision is made. As was said, RACI is just one possible form of a responsibility matrix. (Smith & Erwin, 5)

3.6.5 Relevant Topics

Next question has a dropdown menu of the possible answers regarding to the most relevant topics addressed by the project. Some of these choices are Creativity and Culture, Energy and Resources, Entrepreneurial learning – entrepreneurship education and Home and wellbeing. (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 11) Kykylaakso might address more than one of these themes or choices, but entrepreneurship lies very close to its agenda and motive. The applicants can choose more than one option, and the options are added or subtracted with the plus and minus tags beneath the question.

3.6.6 Results

One of the most important questions on the application is the last of chapter E: What results are expected during the project and on its completion? (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 11) For this Kykylaakso-project, desired results may vary depending on the partners, but some examples from the students' perspective are improved and up to date business skills, advanced cultural traits and skills and the development of Kykylaakso virtual environment to even better fit their needs. Kykylaakso is just one example of the possible forms of virtual learning, so the feasibility of virtual learning environments in educational purposes altogether is the desired result (Valtonen, 2017).

Assessing the success of the project is an important part of the process. Participants should measure the progress regularly with both quantitative and qualitative indicators. Other examples of ways to indicate the success and the results are facts and figures, media coverage and feedback (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2017, 313).

3.7 Participants

Chapter E.1. covers the participants in a more detailed manner. Applicants are asked to describe how they will select and involve participants in the different activities of the project. (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 11) Some of the previous questions have inquired the reasons behind choosing the partners altogether, while this question examines the reason behind each given task and activity. For example, TUAS would be the provider of the Kykylaakso template because it is the creator and administrator. Other partners could oversee the administrative issues, possible media contacts and so on. The choices should reflect the strengths of each partner. (Valtonen, 2017)

Applicants are asked to inform if the project involves participants facing situations that make participation more difficult. The reasons behind these possible situations may vary, and applicants are not asked to specify reasons in question, but only choose Yes or No in a dropdown menu. (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 12)

Applicants are also asked to estimate the number of persons not receiving a specific grant that will however benefit from or be the target of the activities organized by the project. Applicants are asked to verbally express how and in which activities these persons will be involved. (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 12) In this case, these persons could be the other students. They are not included in the internationalization project per se, but might benefit or participate in the actions taken, such as the events or workshops arranged.

In a more wide range, the future students of the participating institutes of higher education are to be considered as unofficial beneficiaries. Even though they are not involved in the project, they still benefit from the good practices and new methods and pedagogical solutions founded during the project. (Kalevo, 2017)

3.8 Preparation

Chapter F is for preparation of the project. Applicants are asked to describe what will be done in preparation by their group/organization and by the partners before the actual project activities take place. Some supporting examples are given, such as administrative arrangements, communication, involvement of stakeholders. (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 13)

Preparation and planning is emphasized throughout the application. Some views for the actual answer could be regular meetings either face to face or via some electronic mean of communication, filling out the demanded reports for authorities, negotiations with possible and desired stakeholders and so on. Concerning this Kykylaakso project, one group of stakeholders could be local entrepreneurs willing to cooperate with the virtual companies formed in Kykylaakso.

Inability to stick to timetables, working overtime or in a constant hurry, executing incomplete actions and the lack or oversupply of resources reveal that the groundwork was not completed before the project started (Pelin, 2011, 79).

3.9 Project Management and Implementation

Applicants are first asked to provide detailed information about the project activities hoped to be carried out with the support of the grant under the item “Project Management and Implementation”. The project management of each participant should be able to divide future actions onto these categories. The next question covers the methodology intended to be applied in the project. (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 14)

3.9.1 Meetings

Applicants are asked to define how often participants plan to meet, who will participate in those meetings, where the meetings will take place and what will be the goal. (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 14) There is no way to answer these questions with 100 % accuracy, for the applicants are only applying for the grant. However, these plans should be thought out and written down, at least to have a clear basis.

3.9.2 Communication

Project plan should always cover the intended means of communication and cooperation. With the partners being from different countries, it is even more important to set the rules of communication right in the beginning. According to Project Management Institute’s conference paper communications process is an essential tool in the field of project managements, and it may take almost any form. Project management should be well aware of the basic rules of communication, as with expertise on this field comes a more open, straightforward, error-free message sending and receiving between partners. (Rajkumar, 2010). As this Kykylaakso-project is meant to be carried out internationally, diverse cultures and perspectives bring their own unique flavor to communication.

3.9.3 Budget and Time Management

As well as all the traits mentioned before, budget control and time management are essential building blocks of a successful and functional project – regardless of the content. Precise planning is the key element to this question, but a good, thorough answer opens this planning process and possibly even divides the responsibilities between participating organizations and members of participating staff. As this Kykylaakso-project is planned to be combined with students' school work and certain periods, setting a timetable well beforehand is crucial to the implementation. The lessons, workshops and so on must be at convenient and reasonable time, and there should not be any unpleasant surprises when it comes to execution.

There are some pitfalls to time management. Tasks might be divided too coarsely, so that in actuality no one knows how long a certain task will take and if it involved smaller, related tasks. Timelines might be too long, which gives the illusion of the procedures being "somewhere in the future". A shorter timeline linked in to a longer timeline specifies the importance of smaller tasks. Related to this, one major pitfall is the lack of "elbow room", which means that the schedule is too tight and leaves no room to improbable but possible changes. Persons involved need to constantly work overtime and right after finishing a task another is already late. These are a sign of unsuccessful time management. (Pelin, 2011, 107).

The applied grant covers most of the budget, but it still requires strict boundaries. It is not enough to just estimate the total expenses, but the consuming and monitoring of the monetary resources require a project budget bound to certain dates or tasks (Pelin, 2011, 171). During planning, every task or action should be priced and checked and corrected regularly. If these results exceed the total budget of the project, alternative and more affordable solutions must be found (Pelin, 2011, 163).

3.9.4 Monitoring

Part of any project is monitoring and evaluating of the processes. Without monitoring, the project would be exposed to recurring mistakes, exceeding the budget and schedule and possibly poor results. (PM Times, 2016) In the grant application, applicants are required to explain the monitoring plans of the processes with as precise timing and frequency as possible. In addition to the planned operations, the answer must include information about involved staff. (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 16)

Even the best of plans are exposed to mistakes and changes, and therefore should be frequently checked and updated. The reason for this is to recognize the actions or tasks that create problems. Good monitoring requires gathering firsthand and secondhand knowledge, written reports, meetings and the utilizing of networks. Some useful indicators are working hours, costs, units, the use of resources, goals reached and so on (Pelin, 2011, 135-138).

The indicators must be sensitive to changes, so that the project team is immediately alerted about possible undesirable switches in direction. The indicator must be reasonably reliable and the results comparable. The project team must get enough information to make informed decisions and changes if necessary. The indicator must also be reasonably easy to follow, because if it is too time-consuming, it is easily neglected. (Silfverberg, 40)

The monitoring phase of the project is parallel to the implementation phase, and is tightly bound to the planning phase. The reason for reports is to be able to point out aberrations from the original plans, schedules and budget. Monitoring should also be proactive, so that it points out aberrations beforehand and enables project team to try to fix them before they take place. (Artto, Martinsuo & Kujala, 2006, 49-50.)

Application requires information about monitoring the project, but also about the monitoring of results and objectives and the indicators used. At this point, the desired results should be clear to all participants, and so should the ways of measuring these results. If, for example, one desired result were the increased skills of transnational and transversal business communication, it could be measured through an oral/written test or a competence test. One goal could also be an increase to the use of Kykylaakso on international level, and this result could be measured through ratings. For projects, such as this Kykylaakso project in question, desired results may be difficult to measure or put in order.

3.9.5 Risk Management

Risk management plays a significant role in any project, but even more significant in a giant EU-funded project; the more people and participants, the more risks. Even the most precise planning could fail, so the project plan should involve plans for risk management. The application asks applicants to disclose their plans for handling risks during the project, such as delays, budget, conflicts etc. (Strategic Partnership Application Form, 2017, 17)

Risk management plan estimates the possible risks and how they would affect the project. Some risks are external, such as legislation and taxation, some risks are internal, such as personal chemistry and bad communication. Risks should be viewed by their probability and impact (Silfverberg, 34).

Possible risks can be divided into ten types, with the most relevant for this kind of project being risks with technology, schedule, finance, organization and communication. First the risk must be recognized and then solved or tamed beforehand. It is also good to write down the possible consequences of a risk actualizing. (Pelin, 2011, 218). Table 2 exhibits an example of Kykylaakso Probability and Impact Matric (TABLE 2).

Risk	Probability/impact	Solution
Exceeding the budget	2/5	Precise budget planning, frequent budget checks
Kykylaakso-platform mal-function	3/5	Testing, demos, backup files and systems

TABLE 2. An example of Kykylaakso Probability and Impact Matrix

All risks cannot be prevented. If such risk announces itself and it can't be erased or tamed, project team can decide to relocate it to other operators of the project, accept it without any proactive measures or change the project plan regarding to the problematic task. The project team must decide together for every risk, which measures are adequate. (Pelin, 2011, 224).

3.9.6 Online Platforms

If relevant to the project, applicants are asked if they plan to use Erasmus+ online platforms for any stage of the project (preparation, implementation, follow-up). (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 15) The Online Platforms are tools that for example allow applicants to view information on previously funded projects and find partners for the project. (Kalevo, 2017)

3.10 Intellectual Outputs

Intellectual outputs are under the laws of intellectual property. Intellectual property is usually understood as patents, registered trademarks and designs, but it also covers unregistered rights such as copyright and unregistered design rights and trade marks (JYU, Immateriaalioikeudet). Erasmus+ application asks if the applicants together plan to include intellectual outputs in the project. According to Easy Erasmus+, Intellectual Outputs are a very important part of the application, especially for Higher Education, and should be drafted very carefully (Easy Erasmus, Examples of an Intellectual Output, 2016).

Easy Erasmus+ sorts out what can be viewed as Intellectual Output, and gives a few explanations. “An Intellectual Output has to:

- include tangible deliverables and elaborated materials related to the project
- be substantial in quality and quantity to qualify for this kind of grant support
- contain the element of innovation
- contribute to the general objective of the project
- be compulsory within a Higher Education Project
- show potential within the organizations and if possible, with other sectors and levels (local, regional, national etc.) in order to exploit and to disseminate it to a wider public
- be free access for the public (if not: justification)
- proportional to the objectives of the project
- have an educational/policy/civil output” (Easy Erasmus, Examples of an Intellectual Output, 2016)

Kykylaakso qualifies as an Intellectual Output, so it should be written out and stated. The prohibition of free public access must be justified. (Easy Erasmus+, Examples of an Intellectual Output, 2016)

3.10.1 Learning, Teaching or Training Activities

With a simple dropdown menu, G.2. inquires if the project is planning to include transnational learning, teaching or training activities. No explanation is required. (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 16)

3.11 Follow-Up

The expected results were drafted earlier in the application. Impacts are more long-term and broader than results, and are often measured years after the end of a program to determine the lasting effect on the target groups (MLE, Outcome and Impact Evaluation). It can be said, that results build the impact. An easy example is weight loss – result is the amount of weight lost, impact is the overall well-being resulted by the weight loss. This well-being is very difficult to measure objectively.

3.11.1 Impact

The next question addresses the expected impact on given facet. Impact differs from results (that were addressed in chapter E) in that way, that results are short-term and intermediate changes but impacts are broader changes and effect the activities have on people, practices, organizations and systems (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2017, 310). In the application, the expected impacts are viewed in a narrow and a broad perspective: on participants, participating organizations, target groups and other relevant stakeholders, but also at local, regional, European and/or international level. Some impacts might be the same or similar, but applicants should be able to define impacts on social, educational, international levels and so on. (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 17)

One must also explain the premeditated means of measuring the previously mentioned impacts. Indicators can be quantitative or qualitative. As was said, impacts are often measured even years after the project has ended, so it might be challenging to define the measuring of impacts.

3.11.2 Dissemination and Use of Project's Results

Applicants are requested to make plans for the dissemination of the project results and explain the target groups of the dissemination activities inside and outside the partnership. Target audiences are asked to be defined at local, regional, national and EU level and motivate the choice behind them. (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 17)

Dissemination is the planned process of making the results and deliverables of a project available to the stakeholders and to the wider audience. It occurs when the result of Programme and initiatives become available, so the purpose is to spread the word as far as possible (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2017, 310). The key elements of dissemination are purpose, dissemination strategy, sustainability strategy and stakeholder analysis (CHAFEA, Managing Projects). An effective dissemination requires planning. The dissemination design should cover why, what, how, when, to whom and where (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2017, 310).

The two main goals of dissemination are for the applicants/beneficiaries to spread the project's results and contribute to the implementation and shaping of national and European policies and systems in their own way. Discovering own, unique ways of dissemination and exploitation of results is expected on the applicants, and the means should be proportional to the project (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2017, 310). Some examples of the possible ways are websites, meetings, public events and social media. A good dissemination plan includes more than just means of dissemination and exploitation. It should also include measurable objectives, a detailed timetable and provide resource planning, and this strategy should be set right from the beginning (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2017, 311).

The timetable should cover the four stages of a project: before, during, ending and after. Activities before the project include drafting the plan. During the project, participants should e.g. contact media, assess the impact and involve other stakeholders. At the end of the project participants must upload the final project results on the Erasmus+ Results Platform. After the project, participants should continue dissemination, develop ideas forward, evaluate achievements and impact, keep contacting the media and cooperate with the European Commission. (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2017, 313)

Using or exploiting the project's results is a planned process of transferring the results of the project forward and convincing end-users to adopt the results. The results of the funded projects should be used beyond the life span of the projects themselves. Dissemination and exploitation are close terms but not synonyms. (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2017, 310)

Applicants are asked to define the target audiences of the dissemination activities at local, regional, national and EU level with reasoning. The results are expected to be shared beyond the partnership. Application also requires information about the person or persons responsible for the dissemination process. Dissemination is without a doubt a very significant part of the project, so the persons responsible should have knowledge and expertise on this area of work. In addition of listing the persons responsible and their expertise justifying their choice, there should be plans about resources available for the dissemination plans. Such specific questions emphasize on the importance of the dissemination process and the fact that the projects receiving the grant are expected to produce long-lasting, notable results and impact.

Endorsing this long-lasting point of view of Erasmus+, the application requires information on the operations that ensure that the project’s results remain available and will be used by others. If the applicants feel there are any other significant matters on the dissemination process, they are asked to explain it. Some helpful examples are ensuring the involvement of partners, synergies and identifying the most relevant results to disseminate. Disseminated results can be tangible (concrete) or intangible (abstract). Tangible results are e.g. research reports, products and a model to solving a problem. Intangible results may be e.g. knowledge and experience, increased language skills and cultural awareness, and these results are harder to measure. (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2017, 312).

Sharing the project’s results is important for many reasons. Some of the reasons are that it raises the profile of the organization, creates new opportunities and develops new partnerships. It allows people and universities outside the Programme to benefit from the activities, and can serve as examples and inspire others. In a wider perspective, it will help improve the EU’s systems (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2017, 311).

3.12 Sustainability

The next chapter seconds the claim that the future and longevity are vital ingredients of Erasmus+ projects: “What are the activities and results that will be maintained after the end of the EU funding, and how will you ensure the resources needed to sustain them?”. The grants given are not for expendable, one-time projects, and the applicants should plan ahead to ensure that the good practices realized and found during the project are sustained and secured. Sustainability is the capacity of the project to continue and use its results beyond the official ending of the project. (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2017, 310)

For this question, the project team should look back on the expected results and impact, but also keep an eye on unexpected results during the project. A project should never lead itself into a situation where the results are dependent on funding or the project itself. Otherwise the project can’t be ended and there are no permanent results. (Silfverberg, 8) If mistakes are made during the planning of the project, these mistakes are often very difficult to fix after the project has started. Therefore, enough information should be gathered on the technical, financial, institutional, social and environmental matters. Different parts of the project plan, such as objectives, impact and resources, should be checked regularly during the planning phase to ensure the sustainability and operability (Silfverberg, 9).

Some supporting questions on the previously mentioned matters are listed in Pauli Silfverberg's Manual for Project Leaders. The following chart (TABLE 3) conforms the checklist on the original manual (Silfverberg, 10).

Institutional	Are the responsibilities clear to everyone? Is the commitment of stakeholders ensured in some way? Are the operations legal?
Financial	What are the long-term costs of the project without grants? Who or what provides the resources? Can the operation itself make money in some way?
Social and cultural	How will the stakeholders be committed and how do they participate? How will the flow of information and guidance be ensured? Are the languages used appropriate and practical for the participants?
Environmental	Are there harmful effects on the environment? How can they be reduced?
Technical	Is there a possibility to develop the systems used? Is it adequate to the skills and abilities of participants? Can the solutions be expanded or duplicated in the future?

TABLE 3. Checklist for sustainability (Silfverberg, 10).

3.13 Budget

The Programme Guide of Erasmus+ tells that the purposed funding model consists of a menu of cost items from which applicants choose according to the activities they wish to undertake and the results they want to achieve. The total project grant is a variable amount, 12 500 EUR per month, the maximum amount being 450 00 EUR (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2017, 131). The budget of the project must be drafted according to the funding rules, as there are eligible costs in certain tasks. For example, Project management and Implementation approves small scale learning and teaching materials, virtual cooperation, promotion and mentoring. There are maximum amounts and rules for allocating these funds. The budget matrix presented in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide is a good base for building the budget proposal of the project. (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2017, 162-169.)

As the EU grant is a major part of the budget, applicants should be familiar with the rules of the grant. For example, staff costs must be calculated on the basis of staff workload, number of days spent on the project, the work-plan, travel costs and so on. As for the staff costs, the beneficiaries will have to prove the existence of the employment relationship and the work completed and time spent on the project. (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2017,302). Travel costs are intended for the following activities depending on whether it concerns staff or students:

- teaching or training activities
- updating programmes and courses
- study periods in a Partner Country institution
- participation in short-term activities
- workshops and visits (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2017, 300-301.)

Concerning the travel costs, the beneficiaries should prove the journeys are directly connected to project-related activities and that the journeys actually took place (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2017, 303).

In addition to travel costs, equipment costs are stated in the Programme Guide. The EU grant may be used for the purchase of equipment, but only the equipment which is directly relevant to the project. Some examples of this equipment are e-books, computers, hardware and software and insurance (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2017, 301). Beneficiaries will need to prove the declared costs of the equipment and that it's properly registered in the inventory of the institution (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2017, 303). Subcontracting is intended for specific tasks which cannot be performed by the participating members. These activities include e.g. evaluation, language courses and web design (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2017, 301-302). As with the other expenses, beneficiaries will need to prove the existence of a formal contract (Erasmus+ Programme Guide, 2017, 303).

3.14 Project Summary

The last written part of the application is the project summary. Applicants are asked to write a short summary of the project they're applying the grant for. The summary should include context and background of the project, the objectives, number and profile of participants, description of activities, methodology used, description of results and impact and the possible long-term benefits. If the project is awarded the grant, the summary will be public, as will the summary of results at report stage. The summary is asked to be translated in English, so the original summary can be written in the language of the main applicant organization. (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 27)

The last chapters are for summarizing the participating organizations, the budget and total grant compactly. Before submitting the application to the National Agency, applicants should go through the Checklist provided. (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 4) This ends the written part of the application.

The application includes the Declaration of Honour, in which the person legally authorized certifies that the information the application consists is correct. The Declaration can be compared to terms of use. (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 26)

If there are any annexes, they are to be added in the ending of the application. Before submitting the form, it must be validated. (Strategic Partnership Application Form 2017, 28-29.)

4 CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to research the process of applying for Erasmus+ grant for an international collaboration project. The application was a lot broader than I originally thought and required lots of background research. As a student, it is very challenging to be able to include all necessary things in the thesis, mostly because of the lack of experience in such projects and especially EU-projects. However, I feel this thesis can be a supporting document for project management if such project ever gets executed. This thesis consists the core information on each question and field. It gives several examples of approaches to the application, and the information sources used are valid and reliable for others to look into as well. In addition to written information I used interviews as a source of information.

Internationalization is not an easy process. Resources and networks can be insufficient, the needed amount of working hours can come as a surprise, cultural differences and different expectations between partners can cause delays. Many of the challenges can be explained with lack of planning. One must analyze the company/product, analyze the target market and be able to manage multiculturalism within the organization. The Erasmus+ grant application is a good tool for analyzing and planning the situation. Internationalization, as any change, comes with risks that cannot be foreseen, such as political, financial and legal factors.

Researching the use of virtual learning was challenging, because there wasn’t very much information specifically on this kind of virtual learning. I feel that utilizing virtual tools in learning is the future, and combining institutions might bring up new, even more innovative solutions into virtual learning.

This thesis challenged my skills and knowledge and required a lot of information retrieval and source criticism. I specialized in Project Management in my BBA studies, which I feel helped me along this thesis. The basic theories and rules of Project Management were already familiar to me and I knew where to find good and reliable sources of information. I feel I put together a solid, reasonably extensive guide, that will benefit the persons involved in similar projects as this hypothetical Kykylaakso-project.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interview

Miina Makkonen, Senior Lecturer. miina.makkonen@tamk.fi

Interview via email 19.4.2017.

Interviewer: Katja Grip

1. Miksi sinun mielestäsi valmennus sopii Kykylaaksoon/firmaopintoihin?
   - Kykylaaksossa opiskelijoiden on tarkoitus toimia itsenäisesti ja käyttää omia hoksottimiaan todellisen yrityselämän toimintojen kaltaisissa tilanteissa. Valmentajuuden ajatuksien mukaan opiskelijoiden annetaan toimia itsenäisesti ja oppia virheiden kautta, samalla kuitenkin rohkaisten ja pikkuhiljaa taitoja kartuttaen. Ei oikeassa elämässäkään kukaan ole antamassa pilkuntarkkoja toimeksiantoja yrityksen toimintoihin liittyen. Toimitusjohtajan, talouspäällikön, yrittäjän tai tiiminvetäjän pitää itse päätellä paras toimintatapa, jota lähdetään testaamaan. Valmentajuus siis sopii mielestäni Kykylaaksoon juuri tekemällä oppimisen ja lempeän kannustamisen puolesta. Itse tekemällä, tiimin tuella, kehityskeskusteluiden ja vertaisarvioinnin nostaessa esiin hyviä ja kehitettäviä puolia ja valmentajan kannustaessa, oppi karttuu aivan toisella tavalla kuin vain kirjoja lukemalla. Vaikka Kykylaaksosta, sen toiminnallisuuksista ja tehtävistä sekä ”todenkaltaisuudesta” ollaan joka vuosi montaa mieltä, voin hyvillä mielin puolustaa toimintatapaa. Ensimmäisen vuoden jälkeen opiskelijat ovat kaikki nähneet yhdenlaisen toiminnanohjausjärjestelmän sisältä käsin, lähettäneet laskuja, suunnitelleet mainoksia, pitäneet kokouksia ja olleet kontaktissa myös oikean elämän yrityksiin. Se vain on niin paljon enemmän kuin pelkistä kirjoista lukeminen ja tenttiin päntääminen.
2. Miten valmentajuus eroaa perinteisestä opettajuudesta ja mitä (uutta) se vaatii valmentajalta itseltään?

- Valmentajuuden ja opettajuuden eroaminen on varsin laaja kysymys. Yksinkertaisimmillaan se voidaan kiteyttää niin, että opettaja antaa (oikeita) vastauksia, kun valmentaja puolestaan kysyy oivalluttavia kysymyksiä. Valmentajuus vaatii rohkeutta: perinteiseen luentoon voi valmistautua varsin tarkasti, jopa minuuttiaikataululla ja silloin roolina on enemmänkin ”tietoa kertova asiantuntija”.

Valmentajana puolestaan ei voi koskaan tarkasti tietää, että mihin tilanne johtaa tai millaisia kysymyksiä prosessin aikana nousee esiin. Tietysti suuntaviivoja ja alustavia suunnitelmia voi olla – ja yleensä onkin, mutta epävarmuutta pitää sietää. Valmentaja näkee valmennettavan aktiivisena osallistujana, joka osaltaan muokkaa prosessia. Valmentajan tehtävänä on sytyttää halu tietää lisää ja sen jälkeen auttaa opiskelijaa oppimistehtävän suorittamisessa, jonka luomisessa myös opiskelija on itse ollut mukana.

3. Miten tiimin henkilökemiat/erimielisyydet/riidat vaikuttavat valmentajan työhön? Miten eri tavalla niitä tulee lähestyä verrattuna perinteiseen opettajuuteen?

- Kykylaakson valmentajat näkevät todennäköisesti tavallista ”luento-opettajaa” enemmän opiskelijoiden välisiä suhteita, sekä hyvässä että pahassa. Kehityskeskusteluissa ja vertaisarvioinneissa nousee aina esiin kommunikaatiokatkoksia, erimielisyyksiä ja toimintatapojen ja persoonallisuustyyppien törmäyksiä. Valmentajan harkittavaksi jää, että kuinka tiiviisti hän haluaa olla mukana selvittämässä ryhmän henkilöiden välisiä asioita. Pitää osata nähdä, että milloin on tosi kyseessä ja milloin vain ”suuret persoonat törmäävät pienessä firmatilassa”.

  Myös valmentajan persoonallisuudesta on paljon kiinni se, että millä tavalla erimielisyyksiä lähdetään selvittämään. Kehityskeskusteluissa näitä usein käsitellään kahden kesken, mutta lisäksi asia voidaan nostaa valmentajan läsnä ollessa esille myös pienryhmässä tai koko firman kesken. Ristiriitatilanteissa valmentajan rooli on usein lähellä tulkkia: hän yrittää kertoa ulkopuolisena rauhallisesti ja yleiskielisesti, että mistä asiassa on kyse ja mitä kumpikin osapuoli tarkoittaa.

  Tiimin sisäisien erimielisyyksien ratkomiseen on myös paljon työkaluja tarjolla – aina tuntikirjanpidosta ja itsearvioinnista kysymyspatteristoihin ja tunnekortteihin. Perinteinen korkeakouluopettaja harvoin näkee yhtä läheltä pienryhmien haasteita. Usein varsinkin lyhyiden kurssien osalta ”kaikkien nimi kirjoitetaan ryhmätyöhön” eikä asia edes koskaan kulkeudu opettajalle asti.

4. Minkälaisia erilaisia valmentajuuden "rooleja" olet huomannut toimivaksi tai toimimattomaksi?

- Itselleni valmentajuudessa haastavinta on olla neuvomatta liikaa. Ideoita löytyy, mutta kehityskohtani on antaa valmennettavien keksiä ne itse. J Valmentajuuteen pitää myös perehtyä, pelkillä moduulioppaan ohjeilla ei siitä selviä. Onneksi TAMKissa järjestetään Y-kampuksen toimesta valmentajavalmennuksia, joiden aikana tutustutaan eri valmentajuuden työkaluihin, teorioihin ja toimintatapoihin sekä luodaan oma valmentajafilosofia. Jokainen kuitenkin tekee valmentajuutta omalla persoonallaan.

Mielestäni ei voi yksiselitteisesti sanoa, että millainen valmentajan rooli sopii kenellekin. Jokaisessa ryhmässä henkilöitä, joille oman valmentajan tyyli on juuri oikea – ja samoin niitä, joille se tuntuu ihan tyhmältä ja väärältä. Tiimi ja valmentaja myös hiovat toisiaan aina valmennusprosessin aikana ja kommunikointi helpottuu yleensä mitä pidemmälle edetään yhdessä. Valmentaja voi myös ottaa tarkoituksella erilaisen roolin tietyissä tilanteissa.

Appendix 2. Interview

Milja Valtonen, Head of Degree Programme. milja.valtonen@tamk.fi
Interview in person 24.11.2016, completed via email 12.1.2017.
Interviewer: Katja Grip

1. Projektin tarkka sisältö? Miksi projekti pitää/kannattaa/halutaan toteuttaa kansainvälisenä?

- Virtuaalisen liiketoiminnan oppimisympäristön kansainvälistäminen ja kehittäminen monikulttuurisessa ympäristössä Valmentajuusmallin laajentaminen kansainvälisesti.

2. Millä tavalla projekti on innovatiivinen? Millä tavalla se täydentää jo toteutettuja/olemassa olevia projekteja?

- Projekti yhdistää virtuaalisuuden ja valmentajuuden. Malli on jo luotu ja nyt sitä on tarkoitus kehittää kv-toimintaympäristöön sopivaksi. Valmentajuus tuo uutta näkökulmaa.

3. Miten kumppanit valittiin/valitaan ja mikä heidän osuutensa projektissa on?

- Kumppanit ovat jo ottaneet oppilaitoksissaan käyttöön moderneja opiskelijakeskeisiä toimintamalleja. TAMK tuottaa Kykylaakson, hakijaorganisaatio hoitaa hallinnolliset asiat, muut osaamisen ja vahvuuksien mukaan.

4. Mitkä ovat tärkeimmät aihepiirit? Mikä on ydinajatus?

- Virtuaaliset liiketoiminnan oppimisympäristöt, valmentajuus. Virtual multcultural learning via coaching.

5. Mitä tuloksia odotetaan projektin aikana ja sen jälkeen?

- Virtuaalisen ympäristön soveltuminen opetuskäyttöön kansainvälisesti, valmentajuusmallin laajentaminen.

6. Mitä metodiikkaa (menetelmäoppia) aiotaan käyttää projektissa?

- Valmentajuus, virtuaalinen oppiminen

Appendix 3. Interview

Maija Kärnä, Principal Lecturer. maija.karna@tamk.fi

Interview via email 12.5.2017.

Interviewer: Katja Grip

1. Eu/Erasmus-projektin hakemusta täyttäessä, mitkä ovat pahimmat sudenkuopat? Mitä pitää välttää, mistä on haittaa?

- Haasteellisinta hakemuksen tekemisessä on sopivien partnerien löytäminen ja laajan partneriverkoston kanssa toimiminen. Kommunikointia saattavat haitata kieliongelmat, eri aikavyöhykkeet, partnerien muut kiireet eli tarvitaan sinnikkyyttä, että jaksaa toistaa samoja tieto- ja tarkennuspyyntöjä uudelleen ja uudelleen. Välttää siis kannattaa mahdollisuuksien mukaan partnereita, jotka eivät halua alusta lähtien sitoutua yhteiseen työskentelyyn.

2. Mihin näissä hakemuksissa tulisi panostaa erityisesti? Mitä seikkoja kannattaisi tuoda vahvasti esille?

- Hankehakemuksen tulee vastata täsmällisesti niihin kysymyksiin, jotka hakemuksessa on esitetty. Hakemuksen tulee osua hankevalmistelulle asetettuihin teemoihin ja lisäksi sopia partnerimaiden omiin prioriteetteihin. Hankkeen tuomaa lisäarvoa juuri näihin asetettuihin tavoitteisiin nähden tulisi painottaa.

  Panostusta tarvitaan kirjoittamisprosessiin, jotta pystytään esittämään projektin tavoitteet ja toiminta siten, että lukijat sen ymmärtävät. Hyväkin hankeajatus voi kaatua huonosti kirjoitettuun hakemukseen.

3. Mitkä koet TAMKin vahvuuksiksi kansainvälisillä markkinoilla?

- Monialaisuus.

4. Kuinka paljon ajallista panostusta tällaisiin hakemuksiin yleensä käytetään? Kuinka paljon työtunteja resursoidaan hakemuksen täyttämiseen koko projektin kestosta (arvio)?

- Jos arvioin suurin piirtein käyttämämme tunnit vuodelta 2017 (uusintahakemus), käytimme noin 10 % TAMKille hankkeessa allokoiduista tunneista valmisteluun. Jos taas vertaamme hakemusprosessiin kokonaisuudessaan eli 2016 (ensimmäinen kerta) ja 2017 (uusinta), niin prosentti on noin 25 %.

Appendix 4. Interview

Camilla Kalevo, International Coordinator. camilla.kalevo@tamk.fi
Interview via email 11.4.2017, questions 1-5
Interview via email 14.5.2017, questions 6-9
Interviewer: Katja Grip

Questions were summarized and citations from the application were removed from the questions.

1. Innovatiivisuus on yksi Erasmus+:n pääteemoista. Kykylaakso eroaa perinteisestä liiketalouden opetuksesta/oppimisesta. Olemassa olevien perustusten päälle lähdetään luomaan ja innovoimaan uutta. Valmentajuus tuo myös uutta näkökulmaa opetukseen. Ajatuksia?

- Tähän voisi lisätä ajatuksen siitä, että tavoitteena on luoda uusia toimintamalleja, joita voidaan skaalata eri korkeakouluihin ja jopa eri aloille.

2. Mitkä voisivat olla TAMKin ja kumppaneiden tulostavoitteita?

- Koska kyseessä on koulutuksen kehittämiseen tähtäävä hanketyyppi, yksi tulos pitää olla partnerikouluissa tarjotun opetuksen laadun parantuminen, uusien opetusmenetelmien suunnittelu ja käyttöönotto.

3. Hakemuksessa pyydetään arvioimaan niiden henkilöiden lukumäärä, jotka eivät saa rahoitusta mutta pääsevät kuitenkin hyötymään projektista. Mitä esimerkkejä tällaisista henkilöistä voisi olla?

- Tässä tarkoitetaan sekä sidosryhmiä (yritykset ym), mutta myös laajemmin tulevaisuuden opiskelijat, jotka pääsevät sitten hyötymään tässä hankkeessa luoduista hyvistä käytänteistä ja uusista opetusmenetelmistä/pedagogisista ratkaisuista.

4. Ajatuksia budjetin laatimiseen ja sen tärkeyteen? Mitä mahdollisia sudenkuoppia on? Miten ”pelkän projektin” budjetin laatiminen eroaa Erasmus+ budjetin laatimisesta (rahoitus on ilmiselvä tekijä)?

- Budjetointi perustuu näissä ohjelmissa Komission antamiin ”kattosummiin”, eli näissä budjetoidaan eri henkilöstöryhmien työtunnit (tässä pitää muistaa olla realistinen, eli hakemukseen ei voi kirjoittaa sellaista, mitä hankkeen tarjoamien työtuntiresurssien puitteissa ei ole mahdollista toteuttaa). Lisäksi budjetoidaan

Komission antaman kaavan mukaisesti matkakulut (tapaamiset, seminaarit), sekä mahdolliset alihankintakulut (mm. tilintarkastukset, mahdolliset käännöstyöt).

5. Käytetäänkö Erasmus+ Online Platformeja? Mitä ne ovat, ja mitä niistä hyötyy?

- Nämä ovat niitä Komission tarjoamia työkaluja, joista pääsee esimerkiksi katsomaan jo rahoitettujen hankkeiden tietoja, sekä etsimään esimerkiksi hankekumppaneita. Eli siis käytetään.

6. Mitkä ovat tällaisen (EU/Erasmus) hakemuksen tekemisen karikot ja sudenkuopat?

- Pahin ongelma on aina aika, vaikka hanketta alettaisiin suunnitella hyvissä ajoin, tulee lopussa aina kiire. Toinen yleinen hankaluus on se, että hanketta kirjoittaessa fokus tavallaan häviää – tavoitteet ja tulokset menevät sekaisin ja hakemuksesta tulee epäselvä. Joskus myös sorrutaan siihen, että yritetään yhden hankkeen aikana tehdä ihan kaikki, jolloin hankkeesta tulee epärealistinen niin aikaresurssien kuin taloudellisten mahdollisuuksienkin puolesta. Yksi asia, josta arvioitsijoilta tulee myös palautetta, on toimijoiden selkeät roolit hankkeessa. Se jää usein loppukiireessä pohtimatta, että kuka ihan oikeasti tekee mitäkin.

7. Mihin tällaisissa hakemuksissa pitäisi erityisesti panostaa?

- Pitää pystyä sanallistamaan se, mikä ko. hankkeen ”pihvi” on. Eli saada näkyväksi se, miksi tämä hanke on tärkeä, mitä uutta se tuo ja miksi se voidaan ainoastaan toteuttaa kansainvälisessä yhteistyössä.

8. Mitkä ovat TAMKin osaamiset, parhaat kilpailuvaltit kansainvälisesti?

- Hanketoimintaa miettien, meillä on todella laaja kokemus erilaisten hankkeiden hallinnoimisesta, koordinoinnista sekä myöskin partnerina toimimisesta. Ylipäätänsä TAMKin kilpailuvaltit ovat monialaisuudessa, ammatillisessa opettajakorkeakoulutuksessa sekä juurikin näissä Proakatemia- ja Kykylaakso-tyyppisissä pedagogisissa ratkaisuissa.

9. Kuinka todennäköistä on saada Suomen hallinnoimalle hankkeelle rahoitusta? Mitkä ovat sen suurimmat esteet ja/tai mitkä ovat Suomen valttikortit?

- Todennäköisyys on valitettavasti pieni johtuen siitä, että suomalaiset ovat aktiivisia hakijoita ja toisaalta siitä, että pienenä maana Suomen saama rahoituspotti on hyvin pieni. Suomalaiset hakemukset ovat kautta linjain erittäin korkeatasoisia eurooppalaisella mittapuulla, joten suomalaisten hakemukset pärjäävät hyvin silloin, kun kilpaillaan muita eurooppalaisia hakemuksia vastaan. Tässä esimerkkitapauksessa (Erasmus+ Strateginen kumppanuus) päätökset tehdään kansallisesti, joten näissä kilpailu on todella kova.

Appendix 5. Interview.

Heino, Perttu. Director, R&D.

Interview by phone 15.5.2017, transcribed.

Interviewer: Katja Grip

1. Kuinka paljon ajallista panostusta tällaisiin hakemuksiin yleensä käytetään? Kuinka paljon työtunteja resursoidaan hakemuksen täyttämiseen koko projektin kestosta (arvio)?

- Hakemukseen käytetty aika vaihtelee suuresti. Joskus määrä on satoja tunteja, joskus hyvinkin pienellä panostuksella saadaan korkealaatuinen hakemus. Hakemukseen käytetty määrä riippuu niin monesta eri tekijästä, 10 % on hyvä arvio keskimääräisestä hakemukseen käytetystä ajasta, mutta voi olla hieman yläkanttiin. 5 % voi olla lähempänä todellisuutta.

2. Mitkä ovat EU/Erasmus-projektin hakemusta täyttäessä pahimmat sudenkuopat? Mitä tulisi välttää, mistä on haittaa?

- Jos itse koordinoi hakemusta, yleisin syy sen kariutumiseen tai ainakin suuriin vaikeuksiin on riittävän laadukkaiden inputien puute. Hakemuksessa täytyy pystyä näyttämään, että kaikilla mailla on tarve projektille ja kaikille löytyy järkevä rooli. Kaikkien kumppaneiden tulee olla sitoutuneita projektiin ja hakemuksen täyttämiseen. Hakemukseen ei voi alkaa itse keksimään mitään, vaan siihen pitää saada paljon inputia partnereilta

3. Mihin näissä hakemuksissa kannattaa erityisesti panostaa, ja mitä kannattaa mahdollisuuksien mukaan korostaa?

- Tärkeintä on, että kaikilla mailla on tarve hankkeen toteuttamiselle. Toinen tärkeä seikka on se, että hakemuksessa näkyy laajasti työelämäyhteistyö, ja hankkeessa on koko ajan aidosti mukana muitakin toimijoita kuin pelkät korkeakoulut.

4. Kuinka todennäköistä on, että Suomen hallinnoima hanke saa rahoitusta? Mitkä ovat haasteet Suomen kannalta, ja/tai mitä etuja Suomella on? Mitkä ovat TAMKin vahvuudet?

- Erasmus Strategic Partnership-hankkeissa Suomen läpimenoprosentti on todella matala, alle 10 %. Ruotsissa vastaava luku on n. 30 %. Suomesta tulee enemmän hakemuksia käytettävissä olevaan rahan määrään verrattaessa. Suomen etuina on osaaminen korkeakoulu- ja työelämäyhteistyössä, niihin liittyvät hyvät toimintatavat ja menetelmät. Suomi on hyvä tuomaan näitä eurooppalaisiin hankkeisiin.

Korkeakouluilla on valtava määrä eurooppalaisia partnerikouluja, joiden kanssa voi valmistella hankkeita yhdessä.

Appendix 6. Interview

Anu Kallionpää, Project Coordinator. Interview 16.5.2017
Interviewer: Katja Grip
Notes transcribed.

1. Opiskelijat saavat teorian käytäntöön heti = theory into practice
2. Kykylaakso sinänsä ei tarjoa palveluja, vaan Kykylaaksossa on ”supporting companies that offer basic services”
3. Valmentajat ovat ikään kuin mentoreita, ja toimivat myös keskenään valmentajatiiminä. Kukaan ei ole asiantuntija kaikilla aloilla, vaan jokaisella on joku oma substanssiosaamisensa.