

Version 2, approved 28 Sept 2016

Minutes for first partner meeting in Copenhagen, 12 – 13 Sept 2016

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Aims and key activities of the first meeting

The overall aim of this kick-off meeting is to engage the essentials of the project idea and clarify management issues and plan the next work packages.

The key activities are:

1. P1, MOF and P2, IF plan the meeting: agenda and practical issues
2. Partners prepare presentations of own associations and their plans for the survey (WP 03)
3. All partners participate in the meetings
 - Presentation of organisations and personal/professional expectations
 - Present and discuss project idea and initial plans for the survey and pilot courses
 - Discuss and adopt documents for legal and financial matters
 - Discuss and adopt internal communication, dissemination and evaluation strategies
 - Detail planning of next steps, including time and place for 2nd meeting in Iceland
 - Evaluation of preceding work and current meeting
4. Follow-up: P1, IF provide Minutes and Task plans for next step
5. All partners answer evaluation questionnaire of WP 02

MINUTES

Item 1: Formalities

a) Welcome and practical information

Bente welcomed the participants, presented the Vartov institution and informed about practical matters.

b) Appoint a moderator and a reporter

For this first meeting, Bente was appointed as moderator and Hans as reporter.

c) Approval of the agenda

The proposed agenda, version 2 was approved.

d) Sign Attendance List

The Attendance List was signed by all participants.

Item 2: Presentations

a) Presentation of organisations and experiences with international projects

The partners presented their associations using prepared power-points, which are uploaded to the Google archive and later will be uploaded to the project website. All partners have a wide experience with international projects.

b) Present possible experiences with Culture activities in sparsely populated areas

All partners have in varied degree been engaged in educational and cultural activities in sparsely populated areas.

Oskar mentioned that FSU's main activities are in the Swedish rural areas of Finland, maintained by the regional and local associations.

Oli mentioned that the North-East region of Iceland, where HAK is situated, is very thinly populated. The region represent 19 pct of the land, but it only include 1.5% of Iceland's population with just 5,000 people.

Karin mentioned that the territory of Estonia covers 45 227 km² (a little more than Denmark) with a population of 1.3 miljon. More than 30 pct live in the capital Tallin and other 30 pct live in bigger cities, while 40 pct live at the country side and here many places are really sparsley populated areas. Ena mentioned that even though TFHS is situated in the second largest city in Estonia, it also cooperates with stakeholders situated in the country side.

Bente mentioned that the sparsely populated areas in Denmark primarily are placed in the western and Southern parts of the country; the areas which quite unjustified have been labelled as "the rotten banana". Even though MOFs activities are placed in bigger cities, the national association freely can cooperate with local stakeholders from sparsely populated areas.

Hans mentioned that Interfolk has been/is coordinator for two other Nordic projects and one EU project with focus on culture activities in sparsely populated areas, and the experiences and know-how from these projects can to some degree also be transferred to this project.

c) Present expectations to the project, personal and organisational benefits

All participants saw the SPARK project as an opportunity to enhance the professional capacity to support cultural activities in sparsely populated areas and to offer new curricula and courses for culture volunteers from these areas.

Item 3: The project idea and main tasks

a) Dialogue on project concept – need, aims and core activities. Introduction by Bente

Bente outlined the essentials of the project concept as presented in the "Project Bible", page 5-8. Overall, the meeting confirmed the presented needs, aims and core activities as appropriate.

Oli did see a clear need for the project idea of developing courses to stimulate culture activities in rural areas. Hereby the project could strengthen the first step to use culture to develop rural areas.

Bente outlined some good Danish practise/ examples where art and culture have helped to develop local communities in sparsely populated areas.

Karin saw a clear need and emphasised the importance of initiating cooperation with local cultural workers, especially to elaborate cross-municipality cooperation and support. Ena mentioned that a possible problem is the course fee and here pilot courses can initiate a free first step, so it will be easier later to overcome the financial challenges.

Oskar also mentioned that a big challenge is the economy and the cross-cooperation. It is important to clarify the common or basic needs, so potential participants will be motivated to find the financial means for further education.

b) Dialogue about the local mapping of competence profiles (WP 03) and Report (WP 04)

This item was moved to item 10 of the agenda, see below 10b and 10c.

c) Dialogue about essential curricula (WP 05) and local pilot courses (WP 07)

This item was moved to item 10 of the agenda, see below 10d and 10e.

d) Dialogue about dissemination strategy (WP 12)

This item was moved to item 8 of the agenda, see below 8a.

Item 4: The work programme and budget

a) The main planning tool is “The “Project Bible”

Hans presented the main sections of the Project Bible, v2. It includes in a re-ordered form the text from the application and some new more detailed text for the work packages, which include main text from the key activities of the budget as well as more detailed descriptions of the main deliverables of each work package.

The partners assessed it as a useful tool for the planning and execution of the project work.

b) Adjust the work programme, v2

The overall work programme and time schedule for the 2-year project year was approved.

Furthermore the meeting decided to skip the initial planned attempt to get extra funding to complete a concluding Nordic-Baltic conference, May 2018 in Helsinki.

c) Adjust the budget, v2

The proposed budget, v2 was approved without changes. The meeting confirmed:

- The extra host costs for partner meetings regarding rent of venue, meals and other costs must be shared by the partners and subtracted the unit support for partner meetings. The cost for rent of venue and ICT are shared equally between the number of associations, while the costs for meals etc are shared according to number of participants
- The extra work days used for preparing the website (4 days) and the evaluation (3 days) must be refunded by shared use of the management unit support.
- The extra work days for project coordination and financial management done by the coordinator association MOF with help from Interfolk can be covered by the extra 1000 euro in management unit support (like 4 days work), which the coordinator association receive.

Item 5: Legal conditions

a) Contract with Nordplus and the Nordplus financial rules

Hans informed about the Nordplus contract and the Nordplus financial guidelines. The contract is simple and clear; and the financial support, reporting and management refer to the new unit cost methods, which is simple and clear to manage for the administrator as well as the partners.

The meeting took note of the information.

b) The Partner Agreement

Hans presented the main issues of the proposed Partner Agreement. The proposal was adopted by the meeting.

Decided Time Schedule:

- Hans send ASAP, the final Partner Agreement to the partners, so their legal representative can sign and return it in 2 weeks time, **latest 30 Sept.**

b) Rules of procedure

Hans presented main points of the Rules of Procedure. The proposal was adopted by the meeting.

Item 6: Financial management

a) Financial Guidelines

Hans presented main points of the proposed internal Financial Guidelines, which follows the Nord-plus guidelines for the financial management of the new unit cost method. The proposal was adopted by the meeting.

b) Procedures for cost refunding

Hans presented the templates for cost refunding. Overall it is very simple for the partners to report the costs and for the coordinator to check and refund the costs – due to the new unit support method Nordplus now uses. It makes life easier for all of us.

The meeting agreed and the templates were adopted to be used.

Decided Time Schedule:

- Bente will ASAP collect all the common costs bills and Hans will make a meeting account
- Hans will ASAP fill-in the templates for net meeting unit support as well as the templates for first instalment of the management unit support, so the two amounts can be transferred as one total amount to the partners (to reduce the SEPA transaction costs).
- All partners get the templates signed and returned, so Bente / Hans can transfer the money.

Item 7: Internal Communication, use of ICT and document archive

a-b) Common use of ICT, Google archive, Dropbox, web meetings, Netiquette

Hans mentioned that opposed to in-house projects, the communication and reporting will mostly be done virtually by the use of appropriate ICT. Our use of ICT for the internal communication seems to include:

- 1) Office as common work programme including Microsoft outlook (version 2007+)
- 2) A virtual document archive (Google sites)
- 3) A possible common Dropbox for larger files, especially for photos (because the Google Sites has a limit of 100 MB).
- 4) Web conferencing by using Skype (and not Google Hangout)
- 5) An agreed netiquette clarifying the code of good virtual behaviour.

The meeting decided that

- we don't need to have a virtual work space for sharing and co-editing documents and other project files.
- we regarding the netiquette as far as possible answer mails from other partners latest 1 day after receiving it, either by full answer or just to confirm we have received it and will answer in a certain time.

Decided Time Schedule:

- HJV prepare and invite to a common project Dropbox in 2 weeks' time, **latest 28 Sept.**
- Oli asked, if the deadlines could be filled-in to the Google calendar and shared with the partners. Hans would try either to do this or find another smart way of sharing a common project time schedule. Hans will propose a solution in 2 weeks' time, **latest 28 Sept.**

Item 8: Dissemination plans

a) The overall dissemination strategy and the local strategies

Bente outlined main points of the dissemination plan with reference to the description in the Project Bible, v2, section 5, page 16 – 19.

The meeting confirmed the importance of implementing on-going dissemination activities to the main target groups, and decided the following time schedule:

Decided Time Schedule:

- All partners make short paragraphs, 5-10 lines in English and national languages, about why they see this project as important, **latest in 2 weeks' time, 28 Sept.**
- All partners have during the start-up as planned or ASAP make comprehensive and prioritised mailing lists of target groups at the start of the project, **latest in 2 weeks' time, 28 Sept** (and update the lists during the project).
- Bente sends an e-mail list of trans-Nordic target groups as well as target groups from Nordic-Baltic countries that don't participate in this project, **latest in 3 weeks' time, 5 Oct.**
- All partners comment and/or fill-in extra targets of the trans-Nordic list, **latest 1 week after, 12 Oct**
- Bente make common English leaflet as an inspiration for all to use in translated form as their own leaflets in national languages. Bente send it **latest in 3 weeks' time, 5 Oct.**
- Ena makes a common check list for dissemination activities, **latest 1 Nov**

b) The project website

MOF is lead partner for the dissemination, including the project website, but Bente has transferred the main task of designing and launching the website to IF.

Hans mentioned that he has reserved the domain name www.nordplus-spark.one and establish the web hotel at ONE.COM. He expect to design the menu structure and layout with inspiration from the project website of the current LEVER project – see www.culture-lever.net

Decided Time Schedule:

- Hans presents a draft design and menu of the new website, **latest in 4 weeks' time, 12 Oct.**
- The partners give feedback with comments for improvements, **latest 21 Oct.**
- The first public version of the project website is launched, **latest 31 Oct**
- Thereafter all partners can link to the website in their PR-materials and at their own websites, face books, etc.

c) The visual design of the project materials

The meeting agreed that it would be best to have a project logo as well as a common visual identity of the project materials and project website.

Decided Time Schedule:

- Hans makes jpg/photo of letterhead which can be used to insert picture of letterhead in some PR- material, **latest 1 week from now, 20 Sept.**
- Ena is responsible that a designer from TFHS make a Project logo proposal, **latest 5 Oct.**
- Thereafter the new logo hopefully can be adopted during a partner dialogue, **latest 1 week after, 12 Oct.**

Item 9: Guidelines of monitoring, evaluation and QA

a-c) The evaluation methodology, progress and impact evaluation

The outlined evaluation methodology from the approved application is presented in the “Project Bible”, v2, section 6, page 18 - 19.

TFHS is lead partner for the evaluation, and Karin presented the new adjusted evaluation plan. The main approach is to use Google forms for online questionnaires, and there should be a questionnaire for each chronological work package, like 3 for meetings, 5 for development work, 2 for multiplier events as well as questionnaires for the transverse dissemination, evaluation and management.

The meeting discussed the plan and decided to have:

- An online questionnaire after the conclusion of each chronological work package, especially to get feeds for ongoing process evaluation.
- Three (and not four) overall assessments with the first after WP 03: The local surveys; and the second after WP 05: Curricula guidelines (just before second partner meeting); and the third after WP 08: Publish curricula report (just before the third and last partner meeting).
- Two impact evaluations with the first after WP 07: Test of pilot courses; and the second at the end of the project after WP 10: National conferences.
- All partners can make supplementing evaluations (using other more qualitative methods as interviews, etc) to gain extra feeds for their local evaluations.
- The coordinator, IF is responsible for filling-in the online interim and final report to Nordplus, and here may the overall assessment reports and impact reports be attached as appendices.

Decided Time Schedule:

- Karin elaborates an online Google evaluation questionnaire for the first meeting and sends the link to the partners, **latest 23 Sept.**
- The partners then have 1 week to answer, **latest 30 Sept.**
- Karin sends links to the elaborated questionnaires for the coming work packages in good time before each package is concluded.

It is unclear for the reporter, how and when Karin latest will present a summary of the meeting questionnaire?

Item 10: Detail planning of the next steps

a) Follow-up on the first partner meeting (WP 02)

The adopted Rules of procedure indicate the main schedule for the follow-up activities.

Decided time schedule:

- Hans sends minutes, **latest 27 Sept** (2 weeks after the meeting)
- The partners comment/make adjustments to the minutes, **latest 11 Oct** (2 weeks after receiving the draft minutes).
- The final (adjusted) minutes is distributed to the partners as the approved ones ASAP after this deadline.

b) Local surveys of competence profiles – what to do, how and when (WP 03)

Hans outlined the task with reference to the description in the project bible for WP 03, page 28 – 29.

The meeting discussed how to manage the survey/mapping key competences of the successful culture volunteers in sparsely populated areas. The preliminary outline from each partner was:

Oli (IS): The population is small and we and our network have and can provide high knowledge of volunteers representing best practise as well as the key stakeholders. HAK will properly:

1. First pick a group of best practise volunteers and relevant stakeholders in the area of the North-West region and offer them a questionnaire to fill-in.
2. Thereafter we will analyse the answers and make follow-up interviews either as single or group interviews to qualify the answers and conclusions.
3. Finally we can extract the essential competence profiles, we wish to present (and later in the project to develop/elaborate/and test for other potential volunteers by providing our pilot courses).

Bente (DK): We have an elaborated knowledge of sparsely populated areas with successful culture activities and we expect:

1. to select 2-3 communities, and
2. here make qualitative interviews with a small representative group, either as single or group interviews depending on the situation, and from
3. these feeds we will extract the typical key competences that characterises the successful culture volunteering.

Ena (EE): Our mean of finding the successful stories is to use of personal contacts/network with the advisers from the local NGO centres in the region, and therefore we expect:

1. to use the NGO centres to find and contact representative groups of culture volunteers and important stakeholders;
2. to make questionnaires and interviews with minor representative groups, especially the local culture workers (that may be out of job after the governmental reforms reducing the support) to clarify the key competences for successful culture work in sparsely populated communities;
3. to outline the official curricula descriptions of the competence profiles of local culture workers in sparsely populated areas, and
4. to compare the competence descriptions (the official and the ones we find in our small mapping survey), and from there
5. to outline the essential competence profiles, we wish to support and elaborate by our pilot courses later in the project.

Oskar (FI): The member associations of FSU represent four main districts, and we expect

1. to find one success story of culture volunteering from each district, and then
2. to make qualitative interviews with the representative volunteers as well as other important stakeholders involved in the good practise, and
3. to use these feeds to extract the essential key competences, which these volunteers should have to initiate and implement local culture activities with an added value for civic participation, community bonding and local identity.

Oli mentioned the gender difference, where it mostly are women that are in active culture work as well as in other local community work in Iceland, and the other partners could confirm this trend.

Important to have a focus on this gender difference in the course planning, so also the men can be motivated and recruited to be course participants and later important local culture volunteers.

Decided time schedule:

- All partners deliver the local mapping reports, **latest Friday 25 Nov 2016**

c) Prepare and publish multilateral competence report (WP 04)

Hans outlined the task with reference to the description in the Project Bible for WP 4, page 30 – 31.

The meeting discussed the presented task plan and concluded it could be a useful guideline for the work.

For background information and inspiration, Hans will **just after the meeting/14 Sept** send the following related reports, which may give extra perspectives on the task, namely

1. The Compendium - Arts and Culture on the Nordic Edge
 - It includes elaborated articles from the seminar in Greenland during the AMARE project. Here you can find many good examples on how voluntary culture can make a difference in sparsely populated areas.
2. Reflections on culture development in Orkney
 - A splendid example of what makes culture sustainable in remotely populated areas has been documented in the report by François Matarasso "Stories and Fables - Reflections on culture development in Orkney" (commissioned by Highlands and Islands Enterprise), where a strong ethos of volunteering and working together combined with the natural archaeological and historical assets of the islands have helped to develop a cohesive cultural identity.
3. LEVER, multilateral need survey, v1
 - The aim of the surveys has been to clarify the needs and current state of art and to present the results with recommendations for the subsequent series of 1-2 pilot works in each partner country. The layout and form may be re-used in modified form for our mapping of key competences.

Decided time schedule:

- All partners deliver as mentioned above the mapping reports, **latest 25 Nov 2016**.
- The lead partner (IF) edit, proof-read and layout the draft competence report and send it to the partners, **latest 16 Jan 2017**.
- All partners send feedback up to 1 week after, **latest 23 Jan 2017**.
- The lead partner (IF) publish the electronic report, **latest 31 Jan 2017** (no paper report, too expensive).
- The lead partner (IF) get report registered at the Danish Library system, **latest 14 Feb 2017**
- Other partners get the report registered at their national library systems, **latest 28 Feb 2017**

d) Outline curricula guidelines and course plans (WP 05)

Hans outlined the task with reference to the description in the Project Bible for WP 5, page 32 – 33.

The meeting discussed the tasks:

Oli was optimistic about the possibilities to develop common cross-border curricula, because we are facing the same challenges.

Ena mentioned that the Estonian State authorities have made predefined public curricula for all type of education, including education of culture workers, and this public curriculum could be useful / transferable to the curriculum, we wish to develop.

Hans mentioned it could be important to have a flexible approach, so each partner could develop curricula and courses that suited their specific situation. Hereby we can have a variety of ready-to-use course packages, allowing their broad outreach and replication by other associations from the cross-cultural sector of amateur arts, voluntary culture and heritage in the Nordic-Baltic region.

Decided time schedule:

- Ena will check if the public curriculum for culture workers exists in an English edition and send it ASAP to the partners. If there is no English edition, TFHS will translate at least the essentials of the curriculum and send it to the partners, **latest 14 Oct 2016 (?)**
- The lead partner (TFHS) sends the draft curricula guidelines to the partners, **latest 1 March 2017.**
- The partners give feedback on the draft, **latest 15 March 2017.**
- The lead partner (TFHS) publishes the Curricula Guidelines, **latest 28 March 2017.**
- Register the electronic report in the national library systems, **latest 28 April 2017**
- All partners prepare drafts of their pilot course programmes and send English editions to the partners, **latest 28 April 2017.**

e) The second partner meeting in Iceland – what, where and when (WP 06)

We discussed if the meeting could be moved from Husavik/ Akureyri to Reykjavik to reduce the costs, but it would properly not be cheaper, because then we should pay the two Icelandic partners for the transport to Reykjavik and get higher costs for hotels and meals as well as extra costs for rent of venue.

Furthermore, the local travel costs from Keflavik Airport to Husavik can be reduced, if we rent a car at the airport, and then we have an extra car for excursions during the meeting. The car ride is approx. 5-6 hours from Keflavik to Husavik using the main North-West road around the inhabited cost line.

For the time being we don't know, how many will participate: If there will come two or one from TFHS, and who will represent TFHS and FSU. If we are 4 or 5 guests, one rented car is enough; if we are 6 guests we properly must rent a mini-bus or 2 cars.

Decided time schedule:

- The second meeting takes place Monday – Wednesday, **8 – 10 May 2017** in North-West Iceland (Husavik/ Akureyri).
- Oli will send information about travel options, **latest Monday 26 Sept.**
- Oli/Hans will send practical travel info to the partners, **latest 10 Oct 2016**
- Hans will clarify the meeting agenda with Oli and Jona, **latest 3 April 2017**
- Hans send the meeting agenda, v1 to the partners 4 weeks before, **latest 10 April 2017**

f) Two Skype meetings

The meeting saw a need to have two Skype meetings in the long period between the first and second meeting, Mid Sept 2016 – Mid May 2017 (8 months).

Decided time schedule:

- First Skype meeting: **Tuesday, 8 Nov 2016, 14:00 DK** (11:00 IS and 15:00 EE).
- Second Skype meeting: **Wednesday, 5 April 2017, 14:00 DK** (11:00 IS and 15:00 EE)

Item 11: Evaluation of the previous work

a) Oral evaluation round on WP 01: Start-up planning

We didn't have a specific evaluation round of WP 01: Start-up, but during the meeting the partners did express that the initial work package gave more time and quality to the initial planning and helped to get a well prepared kick-off meeting.

b) Oral evaluation round of WP 02: The first partner meeting

Key comments during the evaluation round:

Ena: The meeting has been very good with a good and thorough planning. As said in German: Sehr Gründlich. It has been an impressive preparation and very useful for a good start-up and a smooth running first meeting.

Karin: Impressed by the well-prepared start-up. Good planning, good meeting and a good place for the meeting. Very glad for this kick-off meeting.

Oskar: Agreed that the project is very well planned and the meeting has been effectively completed in a very positive social atmosphere. Overall a great set-up during the kick-off meeting!

Oli: It has been a joyful meeting with a professional setup and plan. Nice to be here with a fine meeting room in this inspiring Vartov complex and a really good canal tour in this nice city.

Bente: It has been a very good meeting. Very well prepared by the coordinator, and very positive and well-prepared partners with a serious and engaged attitude.

Hans: It has been a very positive meeting where all have had a committed and professional approach. Overall an exceptional good atmosphere in the group that promises well for our future work and collaboration.

Item 12: A.O.B. (any other business)

The moderator Bente thanked all for a positive contribution to the meeting. Hans thanked the moderator for the needed moderation, and all thanked Bente for her job as host.

Annexes to the agenda

NB: All the mentioned annexes below can be downloaded at the virtual project archive at the Google site - <https://sites.google.com/site/nordplusspark/>

Item 1: Formalities

- c) SPARK - WP 02, first meeting, agenda, v2
- d) SPARK - WP 02, meeting attendance List, v1

Item 2: Presentations

- a-c) Power Point presentations by all partners

Item 3: The project concept and initial local project plans

- a) The Project Bible, section 3: page 9 – 11
- b) The Project Bible, section 7: page 26 – 29
- c) The Project Bible, section 7: page 30 – 31, 34 – 35
- d) The project Bible, section 5: page 14 – 17

Item 4: The work programme and budget

- a) SPARK - Project Bible, v2
- b) SPARK - Project Bible, section 7: Page 21 and overview of WP descriptions, page 22 - 50
- c) SPARK, Nordplus project, internal budget, v2 / SPARK, Nordplus project, official budget, v2

Item 5: Legal Conditions

- a) Project Contract Nordplus – MOF
Nordplus Adult financial guide for 2016 projects
- b) Partner Agreement, v1 (will be emailed latest 15 Aug)
- c) Rules of Procedure, v1 (will be emailed latest 15 Aug)

Item 6: Financial management

- a) The partnership's own Financial Guidelines, v1 (will be emailed latest 15 Aug)

Item 7: Internal Communication, use of ICT and document archive

- a) SPARK - Project Bible, section 4: Page 12

Item 8: Dissemination plans and procedures

- a) A link to the draft website will follow latest: 7 Sept 2016

Item 9: Guidelines of monitoring, evaluation and QA

- a) SPARK - Project Bible, section 6: Page 18-19
WP 14 - P5, TFHS - Evaluation plan, v1

Item 10: Detail planning of the next steps

- a) Re WP 03: Local Surveys – see Project Bible, section 7: Page 26 – 27
- b) Re WP 04: Competence report – see Project Bible, section 7: Page 28 – 29
- c) Re WP 05: Outline Curricula guidelines – see Project Bible, section 7: Page 30-31
- d) Re WP 06: Second meeting – see Project Bible, section 7: Page 32-33

Item 11: Evaluation of the previous work

- a-b) Possible evaluation questionnaires for WP 01 and WP 02, may be emailed later.

Item 3 – 8: The start-up questionnaires

- Filled-in by all partners, except by P4: Jóna Ingimarsdóttir , EYT (IS)