

Management of the implementation of TCA and NET in the network of Erasmus+ Youth and the European Solidarity Corps

April 2023

1. **Recognition of TCA/NET**

TCA/NET is a crucial instrument for the quality of the Programmes implementation and for international cooperation. TCA/NET is a crucial instrument for the quality of the Programmes implementation and international cooperation. It is a field highly organised in terms of project management, support, and financing (detailed in the GfNA's, the Almanac, through the TCA and NET officers' meetings online and offline, planned through the work plans and documented in the annual reports, the development of the TCA/NET Cooperation Platform). However, the need for more knowledge about and understanding of the purpose of TCA/NET remains to reach its full potential.

TCA/NET, as an integral part of the Programmes, are interlinked and should be planned and implemented as such, meaning underlining the basis and, at the same time, connection with Key Actions implementation and the youth work and youth policy-related strategies of NAs.

2. Stating that **TCA/NET is the crucial instrument to support the quality Programmes implementation, the development of youth work, and youth policy implementation**, means in practice and for example (list not exhaustive):

- a) Outreaching (new) target groups,
- b) Supporting the quality of the projects,
- c) Developing innovative formats and approaches to tackle the different Key Actions and format of the Programmes, youth work and youth policy developments,
- d) Using recurring training modules systematically and strategically in developing project quality and increasing the number of applicants,
- e) Implementing strategic approaches to support quality youth work and implementation of youth policy (SNACs and LTAs), and

- f) Offering international cooperation experiences for NA staff but, even more important, for (potential) beneficiaries.
- 3. Developing, steering, monitoring, and implementing TCA/NET requires enough **staff capacity**:
 - a) To implement TCA and NET qualitatively, especially considering the budget increase, means having appropriate equipment and staff working on it. About 500 projects are developed yearly, ranging from single 'small' activities to multi-annual large-scale ones (SNACs/LTAs).
 - b) This concerns the capacity of the staff that steers TCA/NET, as well as the Programmes-related staff cooperating with and in TCA/NET projects.
 - c) This is also about balancing the amount of work related to SNACs and having time for the other important TCA/NET-related tasks.
- 4. Support to the **management of TCA/NET with a specific focus on monitoring and project management**: the TCA/NET Cooperation Platform being currently developed will provide the basis for cooperation in the network. Based on this, the cooperation culture in the TCA/NET network needs to be further developed, especially after the pandemic and the high staff turnover.

Special attention is required regarding:

- a) Concrete management tools (e.g., financial management),
- b) Project management/project life cycle at national and international cooperation levels,
- c) Putting emphasis on the importance of proper international cooperation in the frame of SNACs/LTAs and other TCA/NET activities,
- d) Explore where the needs of different NAs intersect and create activities together to address those needs,
- e) Monitoring the outcomes of TCA/NET projects, and
- f) Continue with the ongoing coordination and support by SALTO T&C to the network of TCA/NET officers and specifically to the TCA/NET Working Group.
- g) Staff training needs evolve when it comes to using the future TCA/NET Cooperation Platform as a tool for the entire project life cycle of TCA/NET activities and the working culture in NAs and the entire network.

5. The current societal and geopolitical crisis and policy challenges require **space for attention, discussion and the development** of new formats and concepts for the Programmes implementation, as well as youth work and youth policy developments. In addition, NET has not yet completely unfolded its potential. Time and space are needed in the NAs and within the network of TCA/NET officers to deal with this.
6. TCA/NET officers need to balance the **financial administrative guidelines** from the European Commission (GfNAs) and the national administrative legislation. This is not an easy task to handle. Therefore, it is important to avoid that national procedures/requirements affect the international network. TCA/NET officers and their support structure should be able to explain certain requirements to their international colleagues, especially about e-invoicing or NA agreements.
7. The **network dimension of TCA/NET** has weakened recently. With many new officers being hired during the COVID-19 years and more activities organised within SNACs, we need to (re)discover how we want to and need to cooperate (and re-establish an understanding that we need hosts if we want to send). This means, as reinforced during the TCA/NET meeting in Berlin on 13-16 March 2023, that:
 - a) There is a need to explore (rediscover) the purpose of TCA/NET and the role of TCA/NET officers today, and the cooperation mechanisms. This means addressing the need to meet, talk and exchange.
 - b) Beyond exploring and exchanging, there is also a need to be able to do/act. As requested to our beneficiaries, we need to strengthen our cooperation (as NAs) in developing and implementing quality TCA and NET activities.
 - c) There is a real need for the second residential meeting in Prague in September 2023.
 - d) Co-funding is a means to strengthen cooperation.
8. The **TCA/NET Working Group needs time and space to reflect on and support ongoing challenges** according to the management of TCA and NET. Specific attention needs to be put on finding the balance between having enough training and onboarding for newcomers and working on the roles and competences related to a changing landscape (specifically about strategic thinking and development).

9. Reiterating the fact that SNACs are TCA/NET projects, challenges concerning the **TCA/NET implementation are:**

- a) An access/overview is needed about what is happening in the network to avoid overlapping, acknowledge the offers (and promote/make strategic use of them) and learn from each other.
- b) There is a need to cluster activities, including SNACs, to reinforce cooperation, define synergies, and identify gaps in the offers.
- c) Synergies and overlaps between projects require specific attention.
- d) Co-financing, especially of SNACs/LTAs: NAs have a diverse range of funding approaches, which include transferring funds from one NA to another. This can create confusion and more complex management by the SNACs coordinators and, therefore, by the TCA/NET officers. Larger and longer-term activities would benefit from more coherence.

All the above calls for a second residential meeting in 2023. In addition, such developments also call for more interaction and cooperation between the TCA/NET WG and the Co-Group, to take in the analysis and propose an action plan for each challenge/problem listed above.

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