



# 3xC

tandem learning program of  
transnational cooperation for SMEs

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*Coordination / Cooperation /  
Cultural context*

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## The Challenge

SMEs and institutions, especially from the new EU countries, do not sufficiently participate in transnational projects. The result is in a very low level of internationalization among these companies and institutions.

This situation is clearly visible in recent EU statistics presenting participation, for example, in the Sixth Framework Programme programme:

- Poland represents a country that is significantly under-performing in that context,
- Greece is close to the average and
- Germany is significantly above the average.

Transnational cooperation requires special skills and experience. At the same time, it requires building long-term relations based on trust. In this context, good communication and understanding of cultural considerations of foreign partners crucial. In a later stage, good management and the coordination of transnational partnership are important factors of such projects.

Recent studies show that three factors:

*communication, coordination and cultural context*

are the key success factors in the case of transnational projects. Lack of coordination and communications problems were mentioned as the most important barriers in the context of transnational cooperation.

A factor called “different expectations” – which can be associated with inadequate communication as well as not understanding the needs of the foreign partners - was listed in the third place.

Additionally, one of the most important barriers indicated was lack of experience among SMEs in pan-European collaboration.

## The Solution

The 3xC project will design a learning environment applying the tandem learning concept in the context of a programme aimed at the development of skills and competencies of employees in the field of transnational cooperation.

In this context, the concept focuses on project-based cooperation rather than contractual cooperation. That means that the learning concept will focus on the problem of more comprehensive cooperation (which is rather not associated with simple trade relations) in order to meet the more “sophisticated” and ambitious goals of international cooperation like common research and innovative projects, joint ventures, or common export activities on other markets.

The goal is to promote learning based on the interactive approach and the stimulation of international cooperation. Within the framework of the learning programme, parallel workshop sessions will be organized. The participants will be grouped into international “virtual” teams. These groups, using internet communication tools, will have to face and solve real-life transnational cooperation problems. That approach will help participants to learn to use communication technologies in practice and develop communication and coordination skills in a foreign language.

The learning methodology will be enriched by supporting IT solutions – messengers, VOIP, or discussion forums.

## The Project

3xC is a Leonardo Transfer of Innovation project with a running time of altogether 18 months (November 2008 – April 2010) and is promoted with means of the European Commission.

All of the project partners share their interests with regard to new information and communication technologies (ICTs) and its use in designing and delivering innovative education programs for SMEs. The partners were appointed to participate in the project on the basis of their expertise in the field of ICT-enabled learning, experience in dealing with SMEs and their international projects portfolio.

The idea of the project is to offer a learning programme in the area of project-oriented international cooperation, especially for innovative SMEs and institutions. The project shall not address the legal or language aspects of international cooperation, since they have been extensively discussed and worked out in several other projects and initiatives.

Partners will use existing cooperation networks in which they are involved to disseminate and transfer knowledge from the project to other EU countries. An innovative approach resulting in the application and development of the tandem learning concept in the context of development of skills and competencies in the area of transnational cooperation will be the most important impact of the project.

Target groups of the project are

- representatives of innovative and dynamic SMEs and institutions looking for partners for international cooperation to carry out common transnational projects
- representatives of social partners who would like to work in international cooperation
- trainers and tutors in post graduate studies
- students of such faculties as international relations, foreign trade or project management



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