EUROPEAN UNION | Erasmus+

Phase 4
Report Impact

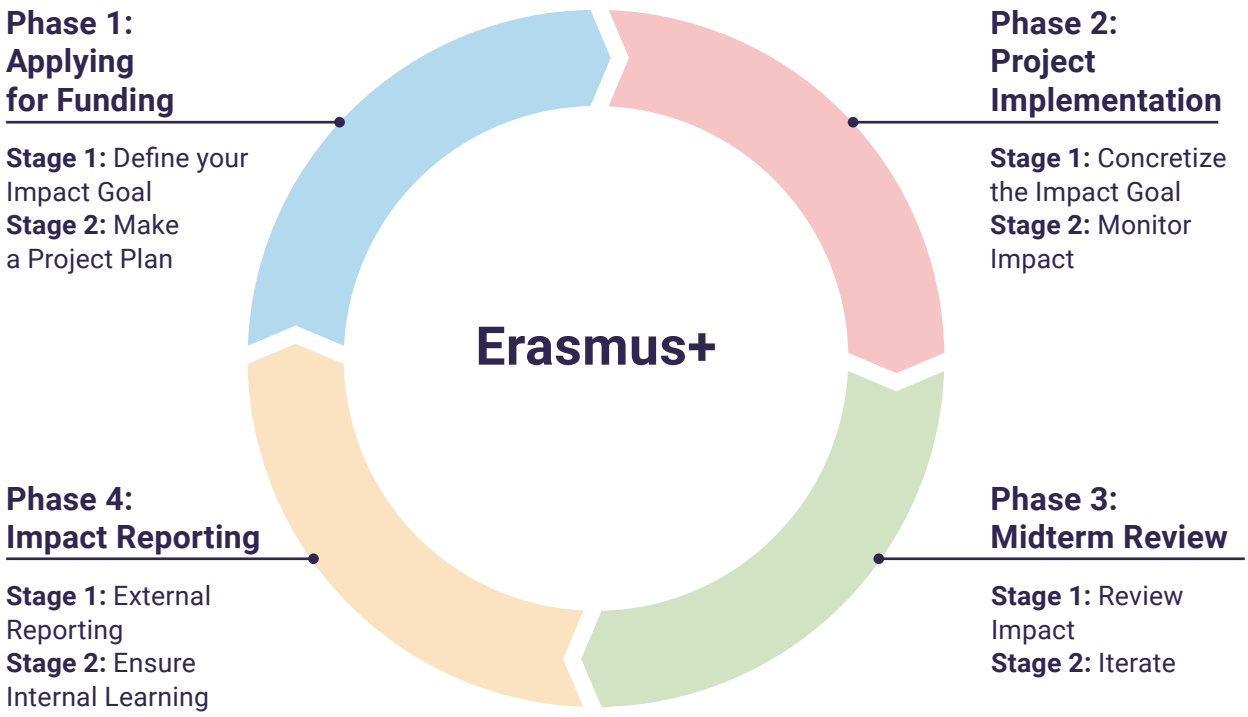
Impact Toolkit for Erasmus+ Beneficiaries

2025 | Original content and templates

Toolkit Structure

This toolkit is structured around a project cycle consisting of four phases, each essential for the success of any Erasmus+ project. This cycle provides an overview for project coordinators, even those new to the process. However, it is important to keep in mind that the cycle is a bit of a simplification: in real-world projects, the phases will sometimes overlap, and some steps may come before others. Below each step, you can find concrete impact tools that you can use during your project.

This toolkit contains nine impact tools. Each tool is described in detail to outline the purpose of the tool, and simple step-by-step instructions for using the tool in practice. The toolkit contains examples of what the final output of a tool may look like. At the end of the document you find all the templates for the tools that can be printed out and filled by hand. However, do not let the design of the tools limit your creativity – the tools are designed to give flexibility to beneficiaries. You can take the core idea of the tool but make your own digital version of it, or take a tool from one phase but apply it in another. The toolkit is a compass and not a map – what matters is that it helps you think about impact in your daily work.



Let's break down each phase and its associated stages:

By following this structured approach, even those new to project coordination can effectively manage their Erasmus+ projects, ensuring they not only meet administrative requirements but also create meaningful, lasting impact. The toolkit provides concrete methods and approaches for each step of the project.

Phase 1: Applying for Funding
This initial phase sets the foundation for your project.

Stage 1: Define your Impact Goal
Here, you will articulate what change you want to see as a result of your project. This could be, for example, improving language skills, enhancing cultural understanding, or developing professional competencies.

Stage 2: Make a Project Plan
Outline how you will advance your impact goal. This includes detailing activities, timelines, and resources needed.

Phase 2: Project Implementation
This phase is where your plans come to life.

Stage 1: Concretize the Impact Goal
Transform your broad impact goal into specific, measurable or observable, objectives. For example, "improve language skills" might become "70% of participants will advance one CEFR level in their target language."

Stage 2: Monitor Impact
Regularly check if you are on track to meet your objectives. This might involve surveys or detailed note-taking during your project.

Phase 3: Midterm Review
Halfway through, it is crucial to assess your progress and make necessary adjustments.

Stage 1: Review Impact
Evaluate how well you're on the road towards the impact goals. For example, are participants showing the expected improvements?

Stage 2: Iterate
Based on your review, make any needed changes to better align the project with its goals. This could mean adjusting activities or reallocating resources.

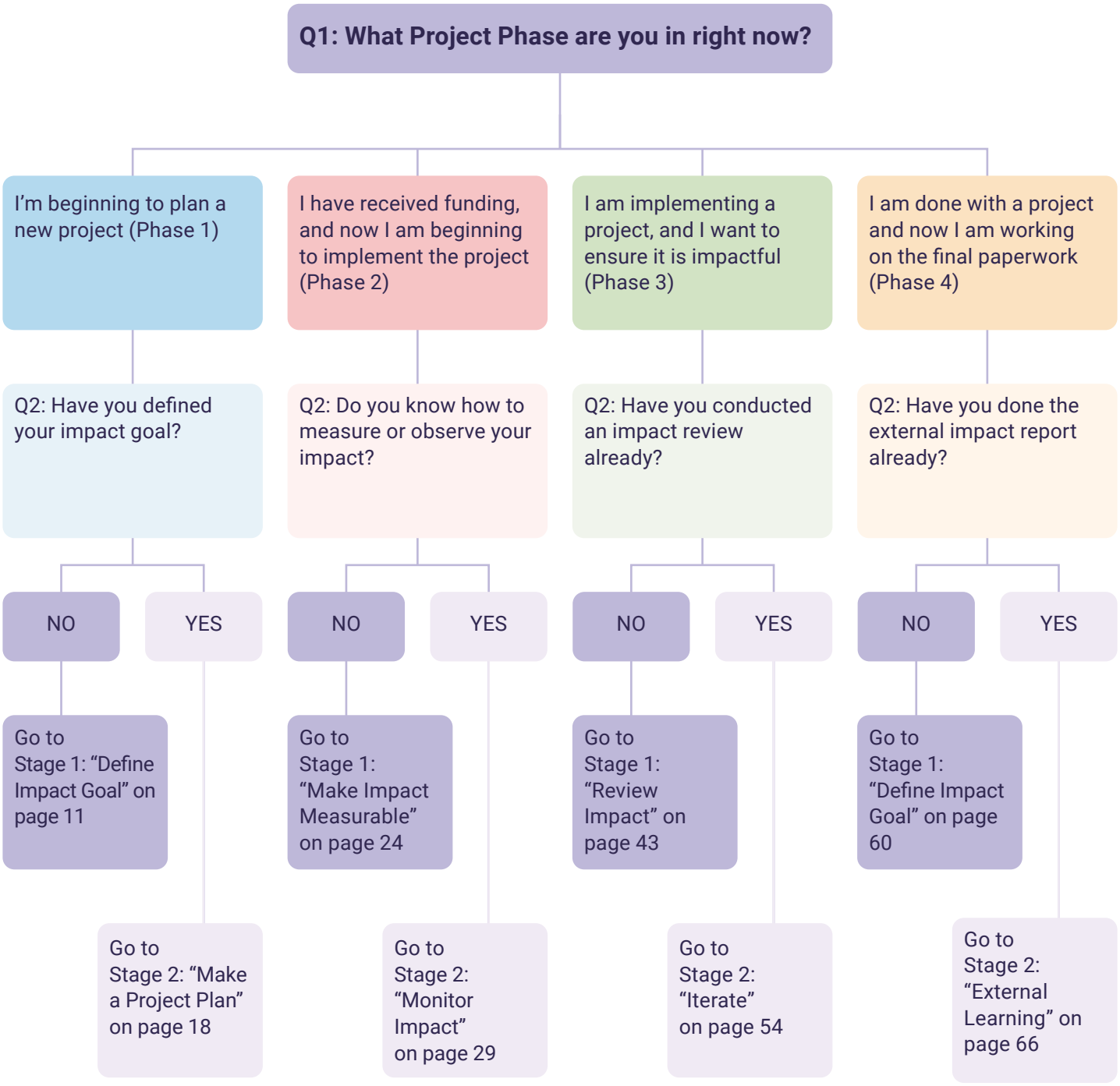
Phase 4: Impact Reporting
As your project concludes, it is time to report your results and learn from the experience.

Stage 1: External Reporting
Prepare a comprehensive report for your funders, detailing your achievements, challenges, and signs of impact.

Stage 2: Ensure Internal Learning
Reflect on the project within your team. What worked well? What could be improved? Use these insights to enhance future projects.

User Instructions

Are you unsure of which tool that you are in need of right now? Use the decision-tree below to get a sense of which part of the toolkit that could be of most use to you!



PHASE 4

Report Impact

STAGE 1

External Reporting

Tool: Focus Group Interviews

What is it? A focus group interview is a facilitated discussion with a small group of participants, typically 3–8 people. It is guided by a set of structured questions to explore specific topics, such as the project's achievements, challenges, and impact.

When to use it? Focus group interviews are ideal for gathering qualitative insights and diverse perspectives on Erasmus+ project outcomes. Use them during the reporting phase to provide a nuanced and comprehensive view of the project's impact.

Why use it? This method encourages in-depth discussions that reveal diverse experiences and outcomes. It allows for rich, detailed data that complements quantitative metrics, making your final report more compelling and aligned with funder expectations.

Step-by-Step Guide

Step 1 **Define objectives:** Identify the key outcomes or aspects of the project you want to explore. Align these with your formal project plan and Erasmus+ reporting requirements to focus the discussion.

Step 2 **Plan and schedule the session:** Select a diverse group of participants who represent different perspectives. Schedule a 1–2 hour session in a comfortable setting. Make sure to schedule the session in advance, preferably while the project is still ongoing to ensure participation.

- Think carefully about the timing of the interview. For example, you might want to do it at the last stages of the project to ensure participation, right after the project when memories are fresh, or some time after a project once participants have been able to reflect on their learnings. Note, however, that the longer you wait, the harder it might be to get people to participate.

Step 3 **Develop guiding questions:** Prepare open-ended questions that encourage detailed responses. Example: “What do you think was the most significant impact of this project?”

- You can use the template in the next pages, or develop questions that work for you. Remember to also ask into potential negative experiences and aspects that participants think could be developed.

Step 4 **Facilitate the discussion:** Start with an introduction, explaining the purpose of the session. Use guiding questions to steer the conversation, ensuring all voices are heard.

Step 5 **Record and document:** Take detailed notes or record the session with consent. Focus on capturing direct quotes and key points for later analysis.

- Note that it is good to document the notes into a separate document so that all data is gathered in one place.

Step 6 **Analyze and Report:** Review the notes or transcripts to identify themes and key outcomes. Use this qualitative data to enrich your Erasmus+ report, providing concrete examples and participant testimonials. To analyze your data, you can use, for example, the Most Significant Change (MSC) tool presented earlier.

Focus Group Interview

Time: 30–90 min

Roles:

1–2 interviewers (1 note-taker), 4–10 interviewees

What you need:

- A space or online platform for the interview
  - **Zoom**
  - **Teams**
  - **Google Meet**
- Pre-planned interview structure
- Recorder (optional, but handy)
- Note-taking equipment

When to use? When you want to have a deep discussion of the participants' experiences and thoughts.

When not? When you want to have data from tens or dozens of people or you need statistical information.

Tips for Facilitating

Show that you are interested to listen: Nod and maintain eye-contact.

Stay neutral: Keep your responses encouraging, don't assert your own opinions.

Encourage balanced participation: Make sure everyone gets a chance to speak, you can use phrases like "Let's hear from someone who hasn't shared yet" or "Lena, what do you think?".

Ask open questions and use follow-up prompts: Avoid "yes/no"-questions, prefer "what/how/why?". If participants provide brief answers, try follow-up questions like "Can you tell me more about that?", "Why do you think that is?" or "How did that make you feel?".

Watch the time: Gently guide the discussion to stay on track and ensure all topics are covered.

Focus Group Interview

Process Phases

Decide objectives for the interview
- What do you want to learn?

Reserve space for the interview(s)

Choose representatives of the focus group and invite interviewees
- Number interviewees per group can vary between 4–10.
- The more sensitive the subject and the deeper the discussion, the smaller the group.
- 3–4 groups may already be enough to have “saturation”, meaning that new interviews won’t bring new insights to the interview data.

Create a specific interview structure
- List the questions you wish to ask and arrange them in an order that seems most natural to you for creating a conversational flow. See example interview structure on the next page.
- You can revise the interview structure for later interviews if needed. Try the keep the bulk of the interview still similar to maintain commensurability between different interviews.

Hold the interview(s)
- Make notes and/or record the interview.
- Revise the interview structure between interviews if needed.

Analyze the interview data
- What are the recurring experiences and themes in the data? How do they respond to your expectations? What is surprising in the data? Are there some important or worrying singular instances? Great quotes?

Draw conclusions – What did you learn?
- E.g. What has the project changed in the focus group’s lives?

Focus Group Interview Structure [Example]

Objective

To gather qualitative insights from Erasmus students about their experiences during the one-week exchange program, focusing on both learnings and personal development.

Opening (5–10 minutes)

Welcome and introduction: Briefly introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the focus group: “Today, we want to hear about your experiences during the exchange to help improve future Erasmus programs.”

Set expectations: Explain the session will last about 60–90 minutes and will include open discussion. Emphasize confidentiality to create a safe space for sharing.

Consent and recording: Ask for consent to record the session if applicable and clarify that their feedback will be kept anonymous.

Icebreaker (5 minutes)

To ease participants into the discussion, start with a light, introductory question:
“Could each of you share one word or phrase that describes your experience during the exchange?”

Main Discussion Topics (45–60 minutes)

Topic 1: Orientation and initial impressions
“How was your first day in the host country? Was there anything unexpected or challenging?”
“Did you feel supported by the Erasmus staff and host institution? What was most helpful?”

Topic 2: Academic and cultural experience
“What were some highlights of the academic experience? Did you learn anything new or surprising?”
“How did interacting with students or faculty from the host country impact you?”
“Did you encounter any cultural differences? How did you handle them?”

Topic 3: Personal growth and impact
“How has this experience influenced you personally or academically?”
“Would you say the exchange affected your confidence in any way, perhaps in communicating across cultures or adapting to new environments?”
“What skills or insights have you gained that you think will be useful in the future?”

Topic 4: Challenges and areas for improvement
“Did you face any challenges during the exchange? How did you handle them?”
“What aspects of the exchange program could be improved for future participants?”
“If you could change one thing about your experience, what would it be?”

Closing (5–10 minutes)

Final thoughts: “Is there anything else you’d like to share about your experience that we haven’t covered?”
Gratitude and next steps: Thank participants for their time and valuable feedback. Share how their input will help shape future Erasmus programs.

External Reporting Additional Tools

Mixed-Methods Approach: Combines qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of project impact. This approach helps capture both statistical data and contextual insights.

Most Significant Change (MSC): This tool, outlined in detail earlier in the toolkit, is a methodology for collecting, analyzing, and evaluating stories that provides deep insights into project impact. It focuses on identifying the most significant changes from participants' perspectives.

See step 5 in this toolkit

Descriptive Survey Analysis: A method that summarizes and describes the main characteristics of collected survey data through frequencies, percentages, averages, and other measures. It helps identify patterns, trends, and relationships within the data, providing valuable insights into survey findings.

STAGE 2

Internal Learning

Tool: Living Learnings Document

What is it? A Living Learnings Document is a dynamic, shared cloud-based file where project teams document their reflections, challenges, and best practices. It acts as a “living” resource that can be updated over time and referenced by future teams.

When to use it? Use a Living Learnings Document at the end of an Erasmus+ project to compile key insights and lessons learned. This shared resource is essential for transferring knowledge to future teams or projects, ensuring continuity and growth.

Why use it? The Living Learnings Document captures the collective experience of the team, preserving valuable knowledge for future use. It prevents the loss of institutional memory, supports iterative improvement, and provides a strong foundation for new projects.

Step-by-Step Guide

Step 1 **Create the document:** Set up a shared, easily accessible cloud-based file (e.g., Google Docs or Microsoft OneNote). Structure it with clear sections, such as Challenges Faced, What Worked Well, and Recommendations for Future Teams.

- If there are a lot of learnings under the main sections, you can organize these learnings further under thematic subcategories of your choosing. These subcategories may include titles such as “Team Work”, “Communications”, “Participants” or other themes that help you best structure your learnings.

Step 2 **Encourage collaborative input:** Invite all team members to contribute. Prompt them with questions like: “What key learning should the next team know?” or “What would you do differently next time?”

Step 3 **Document lessons in real-time:** While designed for end-of-project use, encourage team members to add reflections throughout the project to ensure no insights are forgotten.

Step 4 **Highlight actionable insights:** Emphasize lessons that are specific and practical, such as strategies, tools, or methods that proved effective – or pitfalls to avoid.

Step 5 **Make it accessible:** Share the document with relevant stakeholders and future project teams – cloud based files are best for this, but any editable file that is accessible to all can work. Ensure its structure is easy to navigate, and include a summary of the most critical learnings.

Step 6 **Update and revisit:** Treat the document as a “living” resource. Allow future teams to add their own reflections, making it a growing repository of knowledge.

Living Learnings Document [Example]

CATEGORY	Problems during project
Subcategory	Communications
Problem	**Recommendation**
Some partners misunderstood deadlines due to unclear email instructions.	Use a shared project management tool like Trello or Asana to centralize communication and track progress in real time.
Subcategory	Team work
Problem	**Recommendation**
Some team members felt overwhelmed because responsibilities were unevenly distributed.	Clearly define roles and responsibilities at the beginning of the project, and regularly check in to adjust workload if needed.
CATEGORY	**Successes**
Subcategory	Team work
Success	**Recommendation**
The team organized a brainstorming session that resulted in a creative and engaging curriculum for students.	Schedule regular brainstorming sessions and foster an open environment to encourage innovative ideas.
Subcategory	Participants
Success	**Recommendation**
Students showed a high level of engagement during hands-on activities, especially when paired with peers of similar skill levels.	Continue pairing participants based on skill level for collaborative tasks to ensure balanced learning and confidence-building.

Living Learnings Document [Example]





Step 1: Create the document
Step 2: Encourage collaborative input
Step 3: Document lessons in real-time
Step 4: Highlight actionable insights
Step 5: Make it accessible
Step 6: Update and revisit

CATEGORY	
Subcategory	
Subcategory	
CATEGORY	
Subcategory	
Subcategory	

Internal Learning Additional Tools

Lessons Learned Sessions: Facilitated workshops where team members reflect on project experiences and identify key takeaways. These sessions help capture both positive and negative experiences to improve future project performance.

Communities of Practice: Groups of people who share a concern or passion for something they do and learn how to do it better through regular interaction. These communities foster knowledge sharing and collaborative problem-solving across organizational boundaries.

Job Shadowing: Allowing team members to observe and learn from more experienced colleagues in action. This method provides hands-on experience and tacit knowledge transfer that might be difficult to capture through other means.

Mentorship Programs: Pairing experienced team members with less experienced ones to facilitate knowledge transfer through one-on-one guidance. Mentorship programs help preserve institutional knowledge and accelerate the learning curve for newer team members.