

eCoP GROUPS

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'eCoP GROUPS'?

Background

- Regarding the 3rd axis of the strategic plan 2015-2017, the Steering Committee suggested the creation of "Communities of Practice" (CoP) in specific topics defined by the members.
- The feedback during the sessions in the Mainz Conference in June 2017 was generally positive.

An eCoP group is:

- a group of [eucen](#) members
- who share an interest for a special theme of university lifelong learning (ULLL)
- and want to learn how to do it better through regular interaction

eCoP members

- practitioners or researchers of ULLL
- competence of, interest in and commitment to the domain of ULLL
- engagement in activities and discussions, helping each other and sharing information

Key direction of impact: supporting lifelong learners

- Developing the content, methods and practices of education and training
- Emphasising ULLL research themes and cooperation between practitioners and researchers
- Enhancing methodological development
- Intensifying the stakeholder cooperation of the ULLL National Networks and institutions
- Requirements of university lifelong learning

The benefits of eCoP's

For members	For eucen
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchange of practices and know-how • Learning together • Possible solutions and alternative ways to real-life problems and challenges • Updating, widening, enriching and specializing expertise • More opportunities to benefit from eucen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge on members' expertise, practices and interest • Experts and expertise in relevant themes • Know-how and tools as common good • Growing into a learning network • New course of action, new visibility • Contribution to the policy debate

What we value

Continuity
Critical friendship
Honesty, trust and equality
Openness for the new possibilities
Utilizing both research and practical knowledge
Learning and making use of learning throughout life

eCoPs – HOW TO PROCEED

How to start an eCoP

The members of [eucen](#) are naturally free to agree on founding a community of practice focusing on a shared topic. So as to be named an eCoP group and to get eligibility to receive support from [eucen](#), a simple procedure is in force: Please send an *initiative* (max A4) of an eCoP Group to the [eucen](#) Steering Committee (an e-mail to the President and Secretariat). At least two experts from two [eucen](#) member universities are advised to commit to the coordination and facilitation of the so as to support continuity.

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The [eucen](#) SC identifies diverse opportunities for launching eCoP's. It is useful to estimate the possibility of communities of practice after projects where [eucen](#) or [eucen](#) members are involved. The cooperation of the partnership forms a natural starting point for a community of practice. In this consideration, also the possibility to join an existing eCoPs, is an option. Also the [eucen](#) autumn seminars and conferences and other current events and processes are worth considering.

Information about a new eCoP in the initiative

- The name, the idea and scope of the eCoP: a description of the special theme of ULLL
- The current prospects of this theme, its relevance and challenges
- A preliminary idea of the key content and emphasis of the eCoP
- A preliminary idea of the activities and practices
- Compact information of two [eucen](#) members willing to take the responsibility of coordination

Who can join

All eCoP's are open for all [eucen](#) members. The invitation to take part in the activities of the eCoP will be published on the [eucen](#) website and [eucen](#) events. The eCoP's are open:

- Both for practitioners and researchers
- Both for junior and senior members
- Both for experts in the theme and those with an interest to learn

The eCoP's are encouraged to cooperate with relevant stakeholders.

Decisions

- Commitment to support a new eCoP by the [eucen](#) Steering Committee based on the initiative.

How to cooperate – search, learn, share!

The eCoP's could be forums to deliver good practices and exchange new ideas both via social media and face-to-face. We could discuss issues we all have to deal with, help each other facing challenges and solving problems as well as simply help finding pieces of information and appropriate experts for various situations. Fundamentally, it is up to the eCoP's to decide what kind of activities they want to take. Here you can find some examples that might be appropriate:

- Web-based discussions, webinars, workshops
- Sharing links, presentation materials, reports etc. on the web
- Bringing content for the [eucen](#) website and newsletter
- Face-to-face workshops, seminars etc. linked or as parts of [eucen](#) and other events
- Keynotes, presentations and other contributions in [eucen](#) and other events
- Peer reviews and visits to give consultation and benchmark
- Making ground for new projects
- Participation in the processes to formulate [eucen](#) strategies and statements

How to organize the co-operation

Each eCoP has two Coordinators. Their task is to support the group to continue its activities in an effective way. The Coordinators can agree on the practices of the eCoP, e.g. producing a work plan, documentation etc. Where possible, a junior colleague could support the practices also so as to benefit from an international learning environment.

What else we need to be successful

- Committed members to keep the cooperation vivid.
- Perseverance and resilience – finding the benefits may take time.
- Flexibility and reactivity – situations change and possibilities may fade away.
- Practical support from eucen Secretariat as well as know-how of keeping the eCoP's active

eucen commitments

- to stimulate the creation of eCoP's by suggesting topics
- to provide a systematic meeting space during eucen conferences
- to provide a specific room for discussion on eucen website or platform
- to coach the new eCoP's based on the experience of the previous ones
- to disseminate information from eCoP's on their request through eucen newsletters
- to participate in the development of relevant project proposals
- to develop and participate as a coordinator or as a partner in relevant projects

How to ensure fruitful cooperation within eucen

- The eCoP coordinators are a link to the eucen Steering Committee and the Secretariat
- The Steering Committee names a liaison for each eCoP
- The National ULLL Networks are relevant actors in making initiatives, sharing information and supporting the eCoP's for their part
- All eCoP's are requested to give a compact annual report of the activities (max A4)
- The reports are public for eucen members so as to support cooperation of various eCoP's and transparency in general

A reminder

It is important to link the eCoP activities with other eucen activities – it will serve the both!

What about money

Each member will take care of the costs of participation in a eCoP. eucen will make separate decisions of using its resources for the activities in line with the preconditions of the funding source

How long

- As long as the coordinators and members find it useful (eucen Steering Committee to decide about the continuation of eucen support)
- After a fixed period, an evaluation with the SC liaison is made so as to make a decision of the future focus