



CEDEFOP

European Centre
for the Development
of Vocational Training



Education and Culture DG
Lifelong Learning Programme

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Annex-1)

STUDY VISITS FOR EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING SPECIALISTS AND DECISION-MAKERS

PROGRAMME ANNOUNCEMENT FOR THE LAST STUDY VISITS CALL ACADEMIC YEAR 2013/14

Applicants should also refer to the Lifelong Learning Programme guide at
http://ec.europa.eu/education/llp/doc848_en.htm

GENERAL FRAMEWORK

1. On 5 November 2006, the European Parliament and the Council adopted their Decision 1720/2006/EC, establishing the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP). Study visits for education and vocational training specialists and decision-makers are one of the key actions of the transversal programme, the objective of which is to support policy development and cooperation at European level in lifelong learning. It is addressed to those who are responsible for the development of education and vocational training policies at local, regional or national levels and representatives of the social partners (employers' organisations and trade unions).
2. The priorities of the study visits programme follow the priorities of education and training policy, including those identified at European level and by the participating countries. The programme is closely linked to the priorities of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ET 2020 as well as the Bologna and Copenhagen processes and their successors (see Annex II).
3. As a transversal programme, study visits offer an excellent opportunity for creating links with the sectoral programmes: Comenius, Erasmus, Grundtvig and Leonardo da Vinci. This can be done in different ways: by including visits to local or regional projects of sectoral programmes in the study visits programme; by making outcomes of study visits available to managers of sectoral programmes and other experts in general education, vocational training and lifelong learning; by finding partners for new projects during study visits; finally, by enabling partners from sectoral programmes to take part in study visits.
4. The programme provides a forum for discussion, exchanges and mutual learning on themes of common interest at EU level and it has the following objectives:

- to enable those with significant responsibilities at local, regional or national levels to better understand specific aspects of education and vocational training policies and themes of common interest in other countries;
 - to continue exchanges of advice, ideas and information between all programme participants including visitors and hosts;
 - to enrich the flow of information between the participating countries and at the European level, including among policy-makers.
5. The programme is open to nationals or those working or living in any of the 27 EU Member States, EEA/EFTA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) and candidate countries (Croatia, FYROM and Turkey).
 6. By the end of the Lifelong Learning Programme, in 2014, more than 60 000 education and vocational training specialists will have taken part in and benefitted from the study visits programme. In 2012/13, the programme awarded 2 590 individual mobility grants.
 7. This last call applies to the study visits that will take place between September 2013 and June 2014.

STUDY VISITS CATALOGUE SEPTEMBER 2013 – JUNE 2014

8. The catalogue will be available at the end of January and will comprise the study visits that will take place between September 2013 and June 2014.
9. The priorities of study visits correspond to the general priorities of the Lifelong learning programme for 2011-13.
10. Based on the above, the thematic categories and topics are as follows:
 1. Encouraging cooperation between the worlds of education, training and work
 - transition from education and training to the world of work
 - workplace learning
 - integration of disadvantaged groups into the labour market
 - increasing attractiveness of VET
 - social partners' contribution to lifelong learning
 - cooperation between education and training institutions, enterprises and local communities
 - new skills for new jobs
 - fostering entrepreneurship and employability
 2. Supporting initial and continuous training of teachers, trainers and education and training institution' managers
 - quality assurance mechanisms in schools and training institutions
 - teachers' and trainers' initial training, recruitment and evaluation
 - teachers' and trainers' continuing professional development and career opportunities
 - leadership and management in schools and training providers

3. Promoting acquisition of key competences throughout the education and training system

- increasing literacy and numeracy levels
- language teaching and learning
- use of ICT in learning
- education for entrepreneurship
- education for active citizenship and sustainable development
- developing creativity in learning and teaching
- learning mathematics and science

4. Promoting social inclusion and gender equality in education and training, including integration of migrants

- early learning opportunities
- personalised learning approaches
- measures to prevent early school leaving
- equal opportunities for disadvantaged groups

5. Developing strategies for lifelong learning and mobility

- national and sectoral qualifications frameworks linked to EQF
- tools to promote transparency of qualifications and mobility of citizens
- validation of non-formal and informal learning
- reforms in national education and training systems
- developing links between VET and higher education
- implementation of flexible learning pathways
- increasing adult participation in education and training
- lifelong guidance for learning and working
- learning mobility in education and training

11. Cedefop, in close cooperation with the European Commission, has produced short descriptions of each of the main categories of theme. Each description sets the European context, including reference to the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET2020') and identifies the areas of interest of the study visits concerned (for the full text descriptions see Annex II, also available at <http://studyvisits.cedefop.europa.eu>).

12. Study visits will examine themes from:

- a general education perspective (in the catalogue - the general education type),
- a vocational education and training perspective (the VET type),
- a comprehensive lifelong learning perspective (the mixed type).

STUDY VISITS FOR HIGH-LEVEL DECISION- AND POLICY-MAKERS

13. The focus of the programme is to promote a peer-learning culture, i.e. observation, exchanges and mutual learning on experiences of common interest at EU level. Four visits in 2013/14 will specifically address high-level decision-makers. The organisers of these visits will be supported by the European Commission and Cedefop in terms of preparation, content and follow-up. The visits are as follows:

Measures to prevent early school leaving

Visit 231 “Prevention, monitoring and reducing school drop-out in Luxembourg”, Luxembourg, March 2014

Leadership and management in schools and training providers_Visit 171 “*Pursuing excellence for all pupils: improving school performance*”, United Kingdom, March 2014;

National and sectoral qualifications frameworks linked to EQF

Visit 107 “*Role of social partners in developing national qualifications frameworks*”, Germany, October 2013;

Visit 252 “*Qualifications frameworks as instruments of public policy for lifelong learning*”, Poland, May 2014.

14. The participants that the NAs will select for these visits should be well-informed and/or work on a regular basis in areas corresponding to the themes of the above visits, and be in a position to take decisions in this area and initiate change in education and vocational training in their countries (at national, regional and local level).
15. The NAs should send the information about these visits to the organisations, institutions and individuals described in Point 14 in their countries.

PARTICIPANTS

16. At national level the programme is coordinated by national agencies located in the participating countries. It is their responsibility to provide information and promote the programme at national level, to select beneficiaries and award grants, to ensure the organisation and monitoring of study visits and to disseminate results at national level.
17. Participants should represent all parts of the education and training system and should be able to act as ‘multipliers’ of the knowledge gained. They should exercise responsibility at local, regional or national levels and have expertise that can be used to increase the awareness of others about policy and practice in other participating countries and contribute to policy innovation and exchange.
18. The profile of participants should correspond to one of the following: representatives of local, regional and national authorities; directors of education and vocational training establishments, guidance centres or validation or accreditation centres; heads of departments; head teachers and teacher trainers; educational and vocational training inspectors; representatives of education and training networks and associations; pedagogical or guidance advisers; representatives of educational

services, labour offices or guidance centres; human resource managers; company training managers; representatives of chambers of commerce/industry/crafts; representatives of employers' organisations and representatives of trade unions; owners or managers of small and medium-sized enterprises; researchers.

19. The National Agency should make sure that proposed candidates have a good command of the working language of the study visit so that they can actively participate in discussions.
20. Participants should also represent different geographical regions and parts of countries.

APPLYING FOR STUDY VISITS

21. The National Agencies should explicitly state all relevant requirements in the national announcements and on their web sites. This specifically refers to:
 - eligibility criteria;
 - deadlines for submitting online application;
 - deadlines for submitting signed originals of the applications;
 - the need to submit applications also in the language of the country and relevant procedure;
 - additional documents needed for the national selection, etc.

22. There will be two application rounds in this call, as follows:

First application round - study visits from September 2013 to February 2014:

Start of application round:	8 February 2013
End of application round:	28 March 2013

Second application round - study visits from March 2014 to June 2014:

Start of application round:	22 July 2013
End of application round:	15 October 2013

23. Applicants wishing to participate in a study visit should complete the application form available on Cedefop's Web site: <http://studyvisits.cedefop.europa.eu>. Applicants should apply only for study visits in one application round. Instructions for filling out the application form will be provided with the form online. ***The online application form will be available until 12 noon (Central European Time) on the day of the application deadline.***
24. After submitting their online application, applicants should print the completed application form, **sign it and send the original** to their respective National Agency by the deadline set by the National Agency.
25. After submitting their application, applicants will receive by e-mail a username and password that they need to keep in order to modify data in the application form before the deadline and, in case they are selected, to access the group details.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS AND COMPOSITION OF GROUPS

26. The selection procedure is defined by each participating country, taking into account the agreed procedures and criteria for selecting participants for the Lifelong learning programme. The National Agencies should make the eligibility and award criteria explicit in the national announcements and on their Web sites. The general guidelines for selection are provided in the LLP Guide 2013: Part II - Explanations by Action (available at: http://ec.europa.eu/education/llp/official-documents-on-the-llp_en.htm).
27. The National Agencies should complete their selection, input the selection results into the management information system and send to Cedefop the list of approved applicants and the waiting list. The National Agencies should also send the list of approved applicants and the waiting list, signed, to the European Commission and to Cedefop by regular mail.
28. Based on the results of the national selection, Cedefop will compose groups (matching procedure). Cedefop will invite some representatives of the National Agencies to participate in the matching meeting. The following parameters (by order of priority) will be taken into account when composing the groups:
 - the theme of the study visit,
 - the profile and professional background of the participant,
 - participants' linguistic abilities,
 - the country to be visited.
29. Cedefop will ensure that groups are balanced in terms of professional backgrounds, different roles in education and vocational training, geographical diversity and gender.
30. When the composition of the groups has been finalised, Cedefop will inform the National Agencies of the results. The National Agencies will then inform the approved applicants of the group to which they have been allocated. By the deadline set by Cedefop, the National Agencies should confirm the availability of the applicants for the assigned visits or inform Cedefop of requests for an alternative allocation.
31. The matching results will then be considered final and the National Agencies will inform all applicants of the results of the selection process and sign grant agreements with the approved participants.

PREPARING FOR STUDY VISITS

32. The NAs of the participating countries should organise information meetings for their participants and organisers.
33. Organisers should send participants details of the programme and precise information on the places to be visited in good time but no later than six weeks before the visit. Cedefop will provide organisers with a handbook on how to organise a successful study visit. The 'Handbook for organisers' is also available at <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/17955.aspx>.
34. Cedefop makes available background information on the theme of the study visits on its Web site. Participants should use it to prepare for their visit.
35. Participants are asked to bring a selection of documents illustrating how their country deals with the theme of the visit for the other members of their group and the host

organisations. The 'Participants' companion' is provided to participants by the national agency and is also available at <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/17953.aspx>. It contains useful information to help participants preparing for their study visit.

36. When participants arrive in the host country, the host organisation will explain the programme in detail and provide general information on the education or vocational training system of the host country.

REPORTS

37. During the visit, the participants of each group should prepare a group report covering all the main aspects of the study visit and organisational aspects, which will be used for continuous monitoring of study visits. This report should be written in the working language of the study visit.
38. All participants are expected to contribute to preparing the report (by taking notes, drafting summaries, etc.). However, a *rapporteur* should be appointed at the start of each study visit. The hosting service in charge of the study visit will call for candidates on the first day and the rapporteur will be appointed on the same day. Based on exchanges of views and the group's assessment at the end of the study visit, the rapporteur will be asked to draw up a report. Rapporteurs will be eligible to participate in seminars, which Cedefop will organise on various themes.

IMPACT OF STUDY VISITS

39. Cedefop records and evaluates the outputs, outcomes and impact of study visits. All participants will be invited to participate in an online survey within one year after their study visit, in order to assess the impact the visit has had on them and their institutions. Organisers of study visits will also be invited to participate in a survey within one year after their visit, providing feedback on their experiences and the possible impact of the study visit on their institution.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

40. Grants will be distributed among Member States and participating countries in accordance with a decision of the Lifelong learning programme Committee. A list of participating countries and the distribution of grants is attached (see Annex I).
41. Grants will be paid in accordance with the arrangements notified by the National Agencies. The average grant is EUR 1 355 for a five-day study visit. This amount may vary, depending on travel expenditure, the duration of the study visit and the cost of living in the country visited, subject to the EU ceilings set in the 2013 LLP Guide (available at http://ec.europa.eu/education/llp/doc/call13/part1_en.pdf).
42. The National Agencies will sign grant agreements with the approved applicants after their allocation to a study visit is confirmed by Cedefop.

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

43. Cedefop Web site - <http://studyvisits.cedefop.europa.eu> - will provide all relevant and updated information regarding study visits.
44. Cedefop provides an interactive management information system to support several management activities, such as online applications for participants, selection and reporting tools for the National Agencies and others. It also ensures the system is compatible with LLP tools.
45. Participants, organisers and contact persons in the National Agencies will have access to the system in order to find or enter information regarding their study visits.
46. Data protection regulations will be respected (Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000).

MISCELLANEOUS

47. Neither the Commission nor Cedefop provide any form of insurance for study visits. The National Agencies are therefore urged to advise participants to make their own arrangements. Participants are responsible for their own accident/health insurance during their study visit abroad. Organisers may refuse participants who do not declare that they have insurance cover or who, at the time of the visit, cannot furnish proof of such cover.
48. Where a grant is awarded to a named individual, it may not be shared between the participant and other individuals. Grant-holders are requested not to take members of their families with them as no special administrative arrangements can be made on their behalf and contact with participants from other countries might be impeded.

COORDINATION OF STUDY VISITS – CONTACTS

49. Cedefop coordinates at EU level the study visits programme for education and vocational training specialists, on behalf of the Commission. Some of its key activities concern the preparation of the study visits catalogue, the coordination of the calls for candidates, the setting up of the groups, the assessment and dissemination of study visits results.

50. Contact information:
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51. The list of contact persons responsible for the study visits programme in the National Agencies is available online at: <http://studyvisits.cedefop.europa.eu>.

<p>More information regarding the related issues will be available at Cedefop Web site in due time. Please regularly consult http://studyvisits.cedefop.europa.eu/</p>
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