

LYMEC Guidelines for Member Organisation Cooperation

From shared experiences, the cooperation between member organisations is highly valuable to LYMEC and for that reason LYMEC is happy to provide support based on previous experiences from cooperation. In the light of previous experiences of member organisations cooperating, there is a need to set guidelines as to how member organisations are advised to manage the arrangements when cooperating on an event, campaign or activity.

Any form of cooperation involves sharing of responsibilities and sharing of funds, therefore an agreement on shared standards and responsibilities should be made **in writing**. Also, in order to avoid any intercultural miscommunication, such agreement should be made in **one concise document** and the document should be **signed by persons of trust**. No one wants to assume the worst ahead of a cooperation project, but in order for relations to have a future and for failures to not have a negative impact on the larger circle of member organisations, agreements are necessary.

An agreement needs to contain the following, at a minimum:

- Which one of the organizations holds the primary legal and financial responsibility for the event, campaign or activity. This organization applies for financing, sets up budgets, answers for reports and in the case of a mishap, has an insurance that covers for incidents relating to the activity. This organization also is responsible for communicating with the financing organisations and thus, takes responsibility for the compliance of the activities.
- What are the obligations of the other organisations involved in the cooperation in regards to applications, reports, handling of proof of payments, contracts, payments and refunds. This aspect of the agreement also needs to contain timelines for delivery to the organization with the primary responsibility.
- What happens if something goes wrong. The organisations involved need to agree on what authority in what country or organization should act as a middleman if a conflict arises between the cooperating organisations. The organisations might also agree on under what circumstances the cooperation is cancelled. The organisations also should agree who pays what accumulated costs if the cooperation is cancelled midway.
- What aspects of the activity do we do together and what aspects independently. The agreement also needs to settle the roles of the cooperation activity and under what circumstances the representatives of the organisations should act together or independently when realizing the activity.
- Who takes part in the activity as organisers and participants. The organisations involved need to agree on how big the team from each organization will be and how participants are selected and when. This is to avoid one organization from dominating an activity or one organization from making assumptions about there being a bias.
- How is the communication managed by the cooperating organisations. Please see text below for more details on the subject.

In addition to a clear, detailed agreement on the cooperation, the organisations involved need to agree on a **shared code of conduct**. This document should at least involve the following aspects:

- Who overlooks any misbehaviors or negativity during the shared activity. The activity should have named persons of trust to whom participants can turn in the case of misconduct or conflicts.
- How should participating persons conduct themselves. The organisations should choose to define what good behavior is and thus make it more clear why persons might be expelled from the activity.
- How should persons be expelled from the activity or be considered for punishment. The organisations need to agree on ultimate red lines for behavior during the activity and how to act at such an incident.
- Are there any cultural circumstances that ought to be reserved specific consideration in the activity.

Communication on shared activities is crucial in order for the full value of the cooperation to be realized. Also, even more importantly in the case of a crisis, the organisations need to agree on **how and who communicates, when and under which procedures**.

- Who manages what communication from which accounts and when. In order for all organisations to be given visibility for the activity, the organisations ought to discuss how the communication is to be managed together.
- Who manages the crisis communication. In the event of a mishap or accident, the failure of an activity, the organisations involved need to manage swift and professional communication on the matter. The organization need to agree on who prepares and then agrees on such statements and what the timeline of action should be.

Generally, the organisations involved in a cooperation activity should discuss these documents, if not in person, at least virtually. All persons involved in organizing the activity need to read the documents and recognize the roles given to them in the cooperation.

In addition, for the general value of the cooperation, organisations need to communicate on the relative, local impact of the activity and what the motivation of the cooperation is for the single organisations.

All activities, especially cooperation activities, are served well being carefully evaluated afterwards. LYMEC would be more than happy to communicate the learnings of cooperation activities forward to the larger membership of LYMEC.