

InterLoc is a project based on municipal partnerships within the EU. The aim of the project has been to gather knowledge and making it accessible in order to facilitate cross border cooperation between local authorities.

"We use international cooperation as an everyday tool for developing our municipalities"

THEME: Online seminars - a valuable tool for your international cooperation

Probably you already know about online meetings where two or more individuals participate from their own computers. However, online seminars connect two or more groups of people.

Using online seminars saves travel time and travel costs; a two-hour meeting only takes two hours. Online seminars are particularly useful for groups of people that already know each other, for discussing specific issues of common interest.

Online seminars are not used instead of traditional seminars and study tours, but is a supplement that allows additional cooperation with close and regular contact.

Doing online seminars requires:

(1) Technical equipment. A meeting room equipped with:

- a computer connected to the internet,
- loudspeakers that all participants in the meeting room can hear,

- a microphone placed so that all participants may talk into it,
- a camera placed so that most participants will look into it during the meeting,
- a projector that will display the other meeting partners on a (wall-) screen.

(2) A high quality internet connection with high band width is needed for all partners. A dedicated software programme for doing online seminars should be selected as a joint-decision among the cooperation partners.

(3) Pedagogical issues. Online seminars need to have clear leadership, and follow a detailed agenda in order to develop the common feeling of a joint meeting, and to keep the focus for all participating groups. It requires training to do successful online seminars.

Online meetings are when two or more individuals participate from their own computers.

Online seminars are when two or more groups of people participate from a room dedicated to this purpose equipped with camera, microphones, loudspeakers and a wall screens.

been conducted involving all partners, or a group of partners. The online meetings resemble very much an ordinary skype-meeting, except for the software programme that is used, which provides more communication options, for example document sharing. The online meetings are easy and flexible to organise and conduct. Still, be aware to update your software when new hardware or operation software has been changed.

In March 2012 the first InterLoc online seminar was conducted with participation of all 7 partners with the focus on the municipal structure and organization in each of the 3 partner countries. There was the following agenda:

10.00 - 10.30	Offline meeting among individual partners for presentation of InterLoc and preparation for going online.
10.30 - 11.30	Online seminar presenting the municipal organization in the three partner countries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweden (Sölvesborg) • Denmark (Slagelse) • Poland (Tczew)
11.30 - 12.00	Off-line meeting at individual partners with follow-up discussions.

Online meetings

The InterLoc project has utilised online meetings as a regular tool for project management and planning of joint project activities. Every month – or every second month – an online meeting have

Online seminars

The project has acquired a number of experiences from doing 6 online seminars. For the first two seminars all 7 project partners participated. For the next 4 seminars only two partners participated.



Olofström Elder Care Group make online presentation about work planning.

The online seminar included 3 presentations, backed-up by graphic materials, but without much dialogue between partners. Generalist staff and staff from international cooperation units participated in the seminar.

In September 2012, the second online seminar was conducted involving staff from Social and Handicap Departments from each of the 7 project partners. The structure with an offline meeting before and after the online seminar was kept.

Two cases were presented:

- Sölvesborg: Transition from school environment to adult life for retarded and autistic young people.
- Kwidzyn: Integrated care offers for a vulnerable family.

Cases and discussion guide were distributed beforehand. After the two presentations questions and discussions were guided by the project manager.

Each of the two online seminars included around 10 staffs from each of the 7 partners, i.e. in total around 70 persons from 3 countries. So, they can be considered as to two large international conferences.

International online seminars should be seen in this perspective, and requires a thorough concept and careful planning regarding the topic, participants and expected outcome.

Bilateral online seminars with Olofström and Guldborgsund Municipalities

Elder Care Departments of Olofström and Guldborgsund Municipalities have conducted four bilateral online seminars. The purpose was both to exchange technical knowledge on elder care and to further develop methods and skills for online seminars. A study tour was conducted before the 4 online seminars, and a return visit rounded of the seminars.

Date	Content
Oct. 2012	Study tour: Olofström Elder Care visits Guldborgsund
Feb. 2013	Online seminar: Work planning; part time and full time staff
Mar. 2013	Online seminar: Diagnosing of outward reacting demented
Apr. 2013	Online seminar: Analysing rehabilitation needs
May 2013	Online seminar: Welfare Technology in Elder Care
June 2013	Study tour: Guldborgsund Elder Care visits Olofström

5 to 10 elder care staff and leaders from each partner participated in the 4 seminars. An elder care specialist was chairing the seminars and discussions.

When only two partners – two groups – meet it is easier to manage the technical equipment and running the seminar.

In order to gain full benefits from the online seminars the offline sessions before and after the online seminar was kept. The session before is important for testing the technical equipment and updating points for the following online discussions. The session after the online seminar is important for lessons learned and next steps.

The four online seminars were successful and provided important information exchange on a detailed level. It facilitated the discussions that the two professional groups knew each other from the first study visit.

Lessons learned

Online seminars are useful, can allow regular contact and provide professional exchange on a detailed level.

It is helpful if the participating groups already are familiar with each other, e.g. from a study tour.

Online seminars are not used instead of traditional seminars and study tours, but allow additional cooperation with close and regular contact.

Online meetings may be easy and improvised, but online seminars are different and resemble an international conference, and preparations should be seen in this perspective.



It requires training to do successful online seminars.

IT technical staff should be involved in preparing the online seminars.

The InterLoc project has chosen Lync (a MS-software). Many other software programmes exist.

The meeting presentations, main questions, etc. should be distributed among all

participants before the online seminar.

Using a translator during the online seminar may weaken the focus of the seminar.



Guldborgsund Elder Care Group participates in online seminar with Olofström.