# DISCUSS

European Platform for Communities of Practice in Lifelong Learning

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project overview

# What are we aiming for?

- to develop a state-of-the-art **platform for communities of practice in lifelong learning**, helping to foster dialogue and exchange between beneficiaries and users of the Lifelong Learning Program of the European Union

- bringing together project actors, experts, stakeholders, decision makers and end users in a **collaborative environment**

# What are our specific aims?

- to build the organisational capacities, software tools and technical infrastructure for the communities of practice

- to create excitement, relevance and value necessary to attract and engage members

- to scaffold collaboration and mutual learning across communities of practice

Lifelong
Learning
Programme

**DISCUSS**
European Platform for Communities
of Practice in Lifelong Learning

# Theoretical foundation

- DISCUSS builds on a **participatory approach**, which shall ensure active involvement of the major target groups, and a complementary learning approach, based on the concept of **expansive learning**, which will allow for scaffolding collaboration and learning across different CoPs. The project to this purpose will build on the concept of boundary objects and third spaces (Engström et al.)

- As for the design, the **seven principles for „cultivating" communities of practice** will be adopted (Wenger et al, 2002): 1. Design for evolution, 2. Open dialogue between inside and outside perspectives, 3. Inviting different levels of participation, 4. Development of both public and private community spaces, 5. Focus on value, 6. Combination of familiarity and excitement, 7. Creating a rhythm for the community.

# Key elements & processes

- **Platform:** resting on three pillars information section, collaborative workspaces, social network

- **Workflow:** describes the key processes through which the objectives, tasks and means needed in order to cultivate the communities of practice are being developed

- **Thematic areas:** based on strategic priorities of the European Lifelong Learning Program; each priority or topic is linked up with a cluster of past and ongoing projects
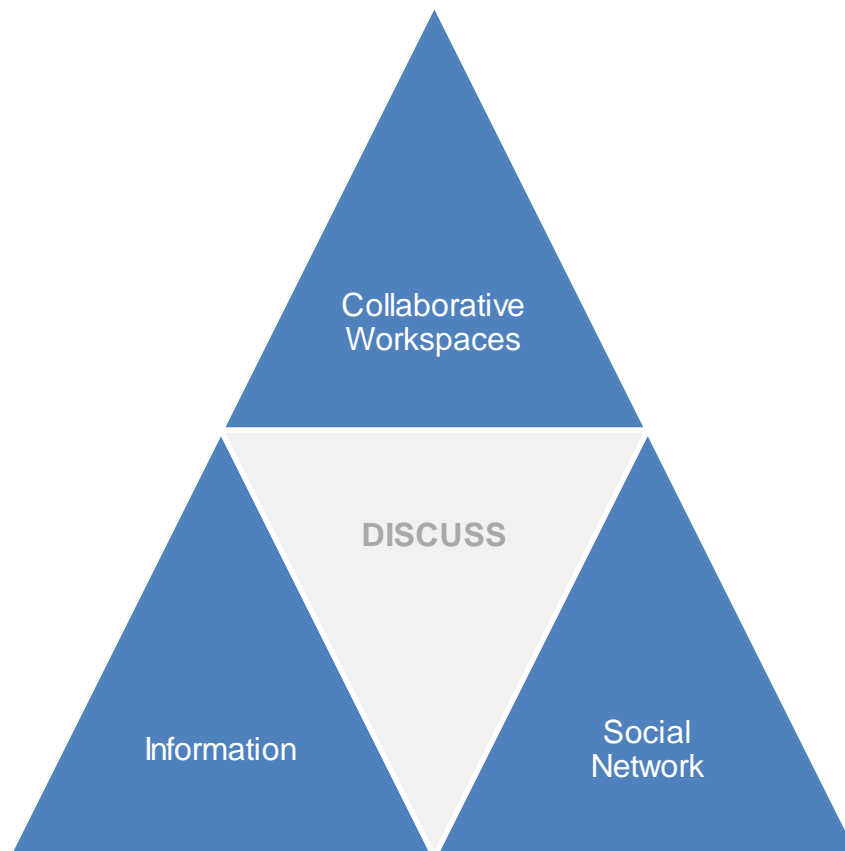
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# Platform architecture

**The information section** holds information and news compiled from relevant project websites, and tools allowing for extensive knowledge sharing.

**Collaborative workspaces** offer a variety of rich tools for asynchronous and synchronous communication, which can be used to identify, explore, discuss or develop concrete activities with regard to an issue or problem of common interest.

**The social network** supports the building of personal relationships (and trust) between the members, with a view to the animation of social life and further evolution of the community.
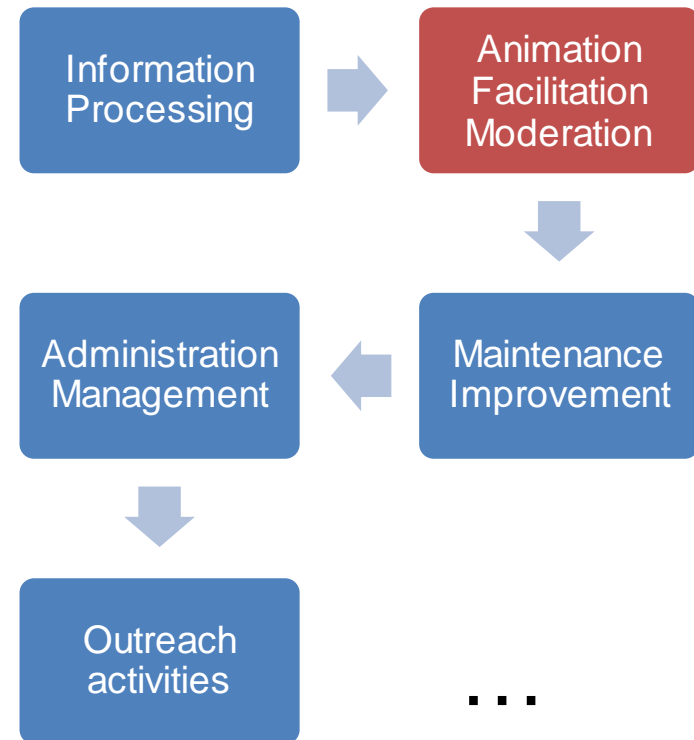
Collaborative
Workspaces

DISCUSS

Information

Social
Network

# Workflow design

describes the key processes through which the objectives, tasks and means needed in order to cultivate the communities of practice are being developed.

| Information Processing | → | Animation Facilitation Moderation |
|---|---|---|

↓

| Administration Management | ← | Maintenance Improvement |
|---|---|---|

↓

| Outreach activities | . . . |

# Thematic areas

The initial communities of practice will be built around a number of thematic areas, each of which reflects a strategic priority or topic of the European Lifelong Learning Program.

The topics and number of active communities will be extended during the lifetime of the project.

| | |
|---|---|
| Validation of informal learning | Improving the quality of adult education \| Promoting social and economic cohesion through improved adult learning opportunities |
| Creativity and innovation, including intergenerational learning, learning for senior citizens and family learning | Improving quality assurance systems in VET |
| development of basic skills and "transversal key competences" \| Reinforcing key competences, such as digital competence, bridging the worlds of education and work | … |

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