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Working with colleagues or partners who were brought up in a cultural setting different from your own's usually represents a challenge. Intercultural competence means the ability to deal constructively with people from different backgrounds and to cooperate with them successfully and independently.

Even when cooperating with persons from countries located geographically close to your own, you will inevitably realize significant cultural differences. Our Dutch neighbors, for instance, are used to stay flexible, and to adjust initial plans, even if project planning and implementation has reached an advanced stage, in order to reap the benefits of better, second thoughts – an idea that is in practice hard to digest for many Germans. It is precisely these divergent expectations harbored by actors from different cultural backgrounds that regularly lead to irritations in settings that require cooperation in cross-cultural, international settings.

Expectations and the way people act are the result of underlying values, commonly known as cultural dimensions. We will explore the most prominent of these dimensions and their specific consequences for the way we work: direct versus indirect communication, competitiveness versus cooperation, personal communication versus communication on substance. Our objective is to raise awareness and comprehension of cultural differences and to facilitate practical cross-cultural cooperation – be that in an international setting, or, indeed, within your own team.