1. DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF PROJECT RESULTS: WHAT, WHY, WHO, WHEN, WHERE AND HOW.

WHAT DO DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION MEAN?

Dissemination means to spread widely. In terms of the Erasmus+ Programme this involves spreading the word about the project successes and outcomes as far as possible. Making others aware of the project will impact on other organisations in the future and will contribute to raising the profile of the organisation carrying out the project. To effectively disseminate results, an appropriate process at the beginning of the project needs to be designed. This should cover why, what, how, when, to whom and where disseminating results will take place, both during and after the funding period.

Exploitation means to use and benefit from something. For Erasmus+ this means maximising the potential of the funded activities, so that the results are used beyond the lifetime of the project. It should be noted that the project is being carried out as part of an international programme working towards lifelong learning and supporting European policies in the field of education, training, youth and sport. Results should be developed in such a way that they can be tailored to the needs of others; transferred to new areas; sustained after the funding period has finished; or used to influence future policy and practice.

WHAT IS INTENDED BY "RESULTS OF THE ACTIVITY"?

Results are the outputs of the European activity or project funded. The type of result will vary depending on the type of project. Results can be accessible products like curricula, studies, reports, materials, events, or websites; results can also mean the knowledge and experience gained by participants, partners or other stakeholders involved in the project.

WHAT DO IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY MEAN?

Impact is the effect that the activity carried out and its results have on people, practices, organisations and systems. Dissemination and exploitation of results plans can help to maximize the effect of the activities being developed so that they will impact on the immediate participants and partners for years to come. Benefits to other stakeholders should also be considered in order to make a bigger difference and get the most from the project.

Sustainability is the capacity of the project to continue and use its results beyond the end of the funding period. The project results can then be used and exploited in the longer-term, perhaps via commercialisation, accreditation or mainstreaming. Not all parts of the project or results may be sustainable and it is important to view dissemination and exploitation as a progression that extends beyond the duration of the project, and into the future.

WHAT ARE THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION?

The first goal of dissemination and exploitation is to spread and embed the project’s results. The second goal is to contribute to the implementation and shaping of national and European policies and systems. Beneficiaries should develop their own way of achieving this aim. To develop ideas for dissemination and exploitation is important for every project funded by the Erasmus+ Programme. However, the type and intensity of dissemination and exploitation activities should be proportional and tailored to particular needs and type of project developed. This includes whether the project is process-oriented or aimed to produce tangible deliverables; if it is stand alone or part of a larger initiative; whether is developed by large or small-scale participating organisations, etc. Participating organisations should discuss the aims and objectives of the activities/plan and decide the best activities and approaches as well as share the tasks among partners taking into account the particular specifics of the project.

For structured cooperation projects such as Strategic Partnerships, Knowledge Alliances, Sector Skills Alliances, Sport, Collaborative Partnerships and Capacity Building projects, a good quality dissemination and exploitation plan should include measurable and realistic objectives, adhere to a timetable and provide a resource planning for the activities to be undertaken. Involving target groups in activities will also help to maximise the use of the project’s results. It is important to get the strategy right as this is the main way that will help communicating with the target audiences. Such a requirement is not foreseen for mobility projects. However, project organisers are invited to communicate the learning outcomes reached by participants in such activities. They should also encourage participants to share with others what they have gained from taking part in the mobility activity.
Communication is a broader concept. It includes information and promotion activities to raise awareness and enhance the visibility of the project’s activities in addition to the dissemination and exploitation of the project results. However, very often it is difficult to make a clear distinction between these areas. For this reason it can be more efficient to plan an overall strategy framework covering both fields so as to make the most of the available resources. Dissemination and exploitation of results should form a crucial part of any communication activities taking place during the project’s lifetime.

**WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO SHARE PROJECT RESULTS? WHAT ARE THE WIDER BENEFITS?**

Taking the time to develop a comprehensive dissemination and exploitation plan will be advantageous for both the beneficiary and its partners. As well as raising the profile of the organisation, dissemination and exploitation activities can often create new opportunities to extend the project and its results or develop new partnerships for the future. Successful dissemination and exploitation may also lead to external recognition of the work carried out adding further credit to it. Sharing the results will enable others to benefit from the activities and experiences of the Erasmus+ Programme. Project results can serve as examples and inspire others by showing what is possible to achieve under the Programme.

Dissemination and exploitation of project results can help to inform future policy and practice. Dissemination and exploitation of results activities carried out by beneficiaries will support the wider aim of improving the European Union’s systems. The impact of the Erasmus+ Programme is measured not only by the quality of project results but also by the extent to which these results are known and used outside the project partnership. By reaching out to as many potential users as possible through effective dissemination, this will help to achieve a return on investment.

The dissemination and exploitation of project results also increases awareness of the opportunities offered by the Programme and highlights the European added value of activities supported by Erasmus+. This can contribute to a positive public perception and encourage wider participation in this new EU Programme. It is fundamental to consider the aims and objectives of the dissemination and exploitation plan. These should link to the project aims to ensure that the methods and approaches used are appropriate for the Erasmus+ project and its results, as well as for the identified target audiences. Dissemination and exploitation goals may be to:

- raise awareness;
- extend the impact;
- engage stakeholders and target groups;
- share a solution and a know how;
- influence policy and practice;
- develop new partnerships.

**WHAT CAN BE DISSEMINATED AND EXPLOITED?**

The next step is to identify what to disseminate and exploit. The results of the project may be of diverse nature and consist of both concrete (tangible) results as well as of skills and personal experiences that both project organisers and participants to the activities have acquired (intangible results).

**Tangible results** may include for example:

- an approach or a model to solve a problem;
- a practical tool or product, such as handbooks, curricula, e-learning tools;
- research reports or studies;
- good practice guides or case studies;
- evaluation reports;
- newsletters or information leaflets.

In order to disseminate more widely experiences, strategies, processes, etc, it is recommended to document them.

**Intangible results** may include for example:

- knowledge and experience gained by participants, learners or staff
- increased skills or achievements;
- improved cultural awareness;
- better language skills.

Intangible results are often more difficult to measure. The use of interviews, questionnaires, tests, observations or self-assessment mechanisms may help to record this type of result.
WHO ARE THE TARGET AUDIENCES?

Identifying target groups, both at different geographical levels (local, regional, national, European) and in the own field of the beneficiary (colleagues, peers, local authorities, other organisations leading the same type of activity, networks, etc.) is essential. Activities and messages have to be tailored appropriately taking into account audiences and target groups, for example:

- end-users of your activities and deliverables;
- stakeholders, experts or practitioners in the field and other interested parties;
- decision-makers at local, regional, national and European level;
- press and media;
- general public.

Your plans should be flexible enough to allow target groups and other stakeholders to become involved during the different stages of the project. This will help to ensure that the project remains on track in terms of their needs. Their participation will also highlight the potential value of your project as well as help to spread the news to other interested parties throughout Europe.

HOW TO DISSEMINATE AND EXPLOIT RESULTS?

In order to reach as many people as possible, it is advisable to translate as many communication materials and project outputs in as many languages as possible. It is recommended to cover all languages of the partnership and English; the cost of these translations could be included in the grant request if necessary.

There are many different ways to disseminate and exploit results. Being creative and thinking of fresh ideas so that the Erasmus+ project and results really stand out will be appreciated. Beneficiaries could use:

- the EU Dissemination Platform (see below);
- project or organisational websites;
- meetings and visits to key stakeholders;
- dedicated discussion opportunities such as information sessions, workshops, seminars, training courses, exhibitions, demonstrations, or peer reviews;
- targeted written material such as reports, articles in specialised press, newsletters, press releases, leaflets or brochures;
- audiovisual media and products such as radio, TV, YouTube, Flickr, video clips, podcasts or apps;
- social media;
- public events;
- project branding and logos;
- existing contacts and networks.

In terms of exploitation it is important to think about how results can make a difference to the project, end-users, peers or to policy makers. Exploitation mechanisms include:

- positive reputational effects for the participating organisations;
- increased awareness on a theme, target or area of work;
- increased financial support by other supporters or donors;
- increased influencing on policy and practice.

WHEN SHOULD DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION ACTIVITIES BE CARRIED OUT?

Dissemination and exploitation of results are an integral part of the Erasmus+ project throughout its lifetime: from the beneficiary’s initial idea, during the project and even after European funding has ended. Setting up a timetable of activities together with the partners involved and allocating appropriate budget and resources will be necessary. The plan will also have to:

- agree realistic targets and deadlines with partners to monitor progress;
- align dissemination and exploitation activities with key stages of the project;
- offer sufficient flexibility to respond to the needs of the target group as well as wider developments in policy and practice.

Examples of activities at different stages of the project cycle are:

- **BEFORE** the project starts
  - drafting the dissemination and exploitation plan;
o definition of the expected impact and deliverables;
o consideration of how and to whom dissemination and exploitation outcomes will be disseminated.

**DURING** the project
- updating the dissemination platform with recent information on the project and results;
- contacting relevant media e.g. at local or regional level;
- conducting regular activities such as information sessions, training, demonstrations, peer reviews;
- assessing the impact on target groups;
- involving other stakeholders in view of transferring results to end users/new areas/policies.

**AFTER** the project
- continuing further dissemination (as described above);
- developing ideas for future cooperation;
- evaluating achievements and impact;
- contacting relevant media;
- contacting policy-makers if relevant.

**How to assess success?**

The impact assessment is an essential part of the process. It evaluates achievements and generates recommendations for future improvements. Indicators could be used to measure progress towards goals. These are signs that help to measure performance. Indicators can be both quantitative relating to numbers and percentages as well as qualitative relating to the quality of the participation and experience. Questionnaires, interviews, observations and assessments could also be used to measure the impact. Defining indicators relating to the different project activities should be foreseen at the start of the project and part of the overall dissemination plan.

Some examples:

- Facts and figures related to the website of project organisers (updates, visits, consultation, cross referencing);
- Numbers of meetings with key stakeholders;
- Numbers of participants involved in discussions and information sessions (workshops, seminars, peer reviews); follow-up measures;
- Production and circulation of products;
- Media coverage (articles in specialised press newsletters, press releases, interviews, etc.);
- Visibility in the social media;
- Participation in public events;
- Links with existing networks and transnational partners; transfer of information and know-how;
- Impact on regional, national, EU policy measures;
- Feedback from end-users, other stakeholders, peers, policy-makers