

## ANNEX II – DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS

### A practical guide for beneficiaries

#### INTRODUCTION

Activities serving the dissemination and exploitation of results are a way to showcase the work that has been done as part of the Erasmus+ project. Sharing results, lessons learned and outcomes and findings beyond the participating organisations will enable a wider community to benefit from a work that has received EU funding, as well as to promote the organisation's efforts towards the objectives of Erasmus+, which attaches fundamental importance to the link between Programme and policies. Therefore each of the projects supported by the Programme is a step towards achieving the general objectives defined by the Programme to improve and modernise education, training and youth systems.

Dissemination activities will vary between projects, and it is important to consider what kinds of dissemination activities are fitted to each participating organisations. Partners in smaller projects should undertake dissemination and exploitation appropriate to the level of their activity. Dissemination activities for a mobility project will trigger different requirements than those for a partnership project. The extent of dissemination and exploitation activities will increase with the size and strategic importance of the project. When applying, applicants will be asked to explain their intentions/plans for dissemination and exploitation activities, and if successful, required to carry them out.

**Section 1** defines some key terms and explains what can be achieved with dissemination and exploitation of results and how these activities will contribute to the overall objectives of the project.

**Section 2** outlines the requirements for Erasmus+ beneficiaries in terms of dissemination and exploitation of results.

# 1. Dissemination and exploitation of project results: what, why, who, when, where and how

## WHAT DO DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION MEAN?

**Dissemination** is a planned process of providing information on the results of programmes and initiatives to key actors. It occurs as and when the result of programmes and initiatives become available. 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** is (a) a planned process of transferring the successful results of the programmes and initiatives to appropriate decision-makers in regulated local, regional, national or European systems, on the one hand, and (b) a planned process of convincing individual end-users to adopt and/or apply the results of programmes and initiatives, on the other hand. 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.

Dissemination and exploitation are therefore distinct but closely related to one another.

## WHAT IS INTENDED BY "RESULTS OF THE ACTIVITY"?

Results are achievements of the European activity or project that received EU funding. The type of result will vary depending on the type of project. Results can be classified as either (a) outputs or (b) outcomes:

a) Output: a tangible product which is produced by a given project and which may be quantified; outputs can be accessible products like curricula, studies, reports, materials, events, or websites;

b) Outcome: an intangible added value achieved through the achievement of the project objectives and targets. Ordinarily, such added value defies quantification, whether it covers concrete events and actions such as training, training platforms, content or methodology, or more abstract consequences such as increased awareness, increased skills or improved abilities. 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 projects' 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 goal. Developing 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 at producing tangible deliverables; if it is stand alone or part of a larger initiative; whether it is developed by large or small-scale participating organisations, etc. Participating organisations should discuss the aims and objectives of the activities/plan and decide on 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, Sport, Collaborative Partnerships and Capacity-building projects, a good quality dissemination and exploitation plan should include measurable and realistic objectives, a detailed 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 set the strategy right from the beginning as this is the main way that will foster communication 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. Finally, the dissemination part of the Programme is also supposed to raise the quality of the Programme by stimulating innovative projects and sharing good practices.

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, planning an overall strategy framework covering both fields can be a more efficient way 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 solutions and 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;
- recognition certificates;
- 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 the project 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.

The project 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 [Erasmus+ Project Results Platform](#) (see below);
- project or organisational websites;
- meetings and visits to key stakeholders;
- dedicated discussion opportunities such as information sessions, workshops, (online) 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 is necessary. The plan shall:

- 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;
- definition of the expected impact and deliverables;
- consideration of how and to whom dissemination and exploitation outcomes will be disseminated.

### **DURING** the project

- 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.
- adding a banner with a link to project card within the Erasmus+ Project Platform on the project website

### **AT FINAL REPORT STAGE**

- uploading the final project results and an update of the project description on the [Erasmus+ Project Results Platform](#).

### **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
- cooperate with the European Commission by providing useful inputs to its dissemination and exploitation efforts.

## 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 and attractiveness of website;
- 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

## 2. REQUIREMENTS IN TERMS OF DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION

### GENERAL QUALITATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Depending on the action, applicants for funding under Erasmus+ are required to consider dissemination and exploitation activities at the application stage, during their activity and after the activity has finished. This section gives an overview of the basic requirements laid down in the official documentation of the Erasmus+ Programme.

Dissemination and exploitation is one of the award criteria on which the application will be assessed. Depending on the project type, it will be given a different weight in the assessment of the application.

- For mobility projects, listing planned dissemination activities and identifying potential target groups will be requested in the application form.
- For cooperation projects, a detailed and comprehensive plan, describing targets, tools and outcomes will be requested and further assessed. Although generally one partner will take the responsibility for dissemination and exploitation coordination for the whole project, the responsibility for implementation should be shared among all partners. Each partner will be involved in these activities according to the needs and roles in the project.

For all project types, reporting on the activities carried out to share the results inside and outside participating organisations will be requested at final stage.

### VISIBILITY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND OF THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME

Beneficiaries shall always use the European emblem (the 'EU flag') and the name of the European Union spelled out in full in all communication and promotional material. The preferred option to communicate about EU funding through the Erasmus+ Programme is to write 'Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union' next to the EU emblem.

Examples of acknowledgement of EU funding and translations of the text are available at [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/about-eacea/visual-identity\\_en](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/about-eacea/visual-identity_en)

The brand name of 'Erasmus+' shall not be translated.

Guidelines for beneficiaries on the use of the EU emblem in the context of EU programmes are available at [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/services/visual\\_identity/pdf/use-emblem\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/services/visual_identity/pdf/use-emblem_en.pdf)

### USE OF THE ERASMUS+ PROJECT RESULTS PLATFORM

An Erasmus+ Project Results Platform was established to offer a comprehensive overview of projects funded under the Programme and to highlight good practice examples and success stories. The platform also makes available products/deliverables/intellectual outputs which are the result of the projects funded.

Good practice examples are the object of an annual selection by each National Agency and by the Executive Agency. Success stories are selected from among the good practice examples at central level by DG EAC.

The [Erasmus+ Project Results Platform](#) serves different purposes:

- Transparency, as it provides a comprehensive overview of all projects funded under the programme (including project summaries, funding figures, URL links, etc.);
- Accountability, as it gives access to end-users and practitioners to project results;
- Inspiration, as it showcases good practices and success stories among Erasmus+ beneficiaries selected every year at national and European level.

For most Erasmus+ projects, beneficiaries are required to provide a summary describing their project in English at application stage.

The project summary is of particular importance as it provides a description for the general public. It should therefore be drafted in plain language and clear style so that the actual content of the project can be quickly understood, also by outsiders.

The following elements should be part of the summary: context/background of the project; objectives of the project; number and profile of participants; description of activities; methodology to be used in carrying out the project; a short description of the results and impact envisaged; the potential longer-term benefits.

The Erasmus+ Project Results Platform can be consulted at: <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/>