

EXTERNAL EVALUATION- REPORT 1

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AIMS AND CONTENT OF THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION

As stated in the project application the aim of the external evaluation is to provide support to the project partnership in relation to project management performance and to contribute to the evaluation of the Intellectual Outputs.

In particular, the focus of the external evaluation activities will be on:

- the definition of criteria related to project to project management performance;
- the design and administration of questionnaires and grids to evaluate the project -plenary meetings and the overall project planning and coordination;
- the collection of data and analysis;
- the co-operation with the internal Q&E team and integration of results;
- the elaboration of external evaluation reports

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

Phase 1

Assessments of the management tools produced by the partnership. The evaluation activity will focus on the main tools produced by the partnership so far: Quality and Evaluation Plan, Dissemination Plan, Valorisation Plan. The suggested evaluation criteria are:

- Structure and clarity of the document
- Relevance to the objectives of the project
- Relevance of the planned activities in relation to the target groups of the project
- Sustainability and effectiveness of the plan during the project life cycle

Phase 2

Assessment of the Intellectual Outputs, as they become available.

The identified evaluation criteria are:

- Structure and overall coherence of the produced Intellectual Output (All IO)
- IO1 - Exhaustiveness
- IO2 - Replicability, applicability
- IO3 - Effectiveness
- IO4 - Usability
- IO5 - Replicability, applicability
- IO6 - Exhaustiveness

Phase 3

Development of a questionnaire assessing project management including the meetings

The questionnaire will be administered in late spring/early summer of 2017 (results included in the second external report in the end of 2017) and in the summer of 2018 (results included in the third external report in September 2018) .

1. PARTNER'S DETAILS

2. MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

- How the partnership is managing and implementing the project: structure and meetings, relations and cooperation between partners, communication, timing, etc.

3. OUTCOMES

- Usefulness and quality of the outcomes (Intellectual, practices, methods) with regards to: 1. The project partnership as a whole; 2. The partners; 3. The target groups.

4. VALORISATION

- The capacity of the project of involving target groups and external stakeholder, i.e to attract other to use the outputs beyond the partnership.

5. SUSTAINABILITY

- The capacity of the project to produce results beyond the project cycle the chances of mainstreaming and exploitation of project results.

QUALITY AND EVALUATION PLAN

The quality and Evaluation plan provides guidelines for quality control of the project management and, as it stated in the introduction of the document, “for reporting problems, and for ensuring a standard quality level in the project management process”.

Structure and clarity of the document

The Quality and Evaluation plan includes an overview, a description of the roles in the framework of the Quality and Evaluation process, the aims of the evaluation (following the elements already outlined in the application form), the expected outputs of the Quality and Evaluation activities and as well as the procedures that the partnership will put in place in order to assess the project implementation process, the outputs and the meetings both at transnational and at local level (multiplier events).

The document is coherent and well-structured and it includes most of the elements and indications required in order to implement effectively the Quality and Evaluation activities. The document is clearly written and it is “to the point” i.e. providing project partners with clear indications about the various steps of the process.

To note that the assessment of transnational project meeting, due to their nature which essentially management related, could have been also placed under the section dedicated to the evaluation of the implementation process (5.1). This is mainly due to the fact that the assessment of the multiplier events is more connected to the valorisation and dissemination while the transnational meetings pertain more closely to management.

Relevance to the objectives of the project

The document is in line with the project objectives. It builds upon the main elements of the process and the expected outputs. It is clearly built with the view of verifying the achievement of project. *However, the plan could address more clearly and directly the evaluation activities aimed at assessing the achievement of the expected impact.* The indicators and the information present in the application form could be used to strengthen this aspect of the report.

Relevance of the planned activities in relation to the target groups of the project

The evaluation of project activities are clearly explained and well planned.

The two questionnaires developed for the partners (M1 and M2) address both organizational issues and management aspects allowing therefore an analysis of the results of the meetings in terms of satisfaction of the participants. This evaluation tool can be considered relevant and effective for the target group it addresses (project partners).

The questionnaires for the participants in local/multipliers events and the training activities will be assessed when they will be available at a later stage in the project.

The project proposal points out correctly a number of indicators of achievement in relation to each target group. *It could be useful to define more punctually how the information pertaining such indicators, in particular the qualitative ones, will be collected.*

The qualitative indicators pointed out in application are:

- Good practice cases (IO6 - e-Guidelines) developed during the project will demonstrate ECEC teachers in Europe how DST can be integrated in schools activities
- ECEC teachers and stakeholders will receive a broader overview on DST and will be made aware on the educational opportunities DST is offering them
- Online open platform and OER course to make the developed and quality assessed products available to a wider audience for free in English, German, Italian, Finnish and Turkish
- Recommendations will raise policy-makers' awareness of new policies for quality in ECEC

What will be the sources from which data for these qualitative indicators will be collected? Which tools will be used to collect such information? Provided that the achievement of the stated project impact will indicate if the project has achieved its objectives, the partners could reflect on a possible adaptation of the indicators in order to make them more easily measurable.

Sustainability and effectiveness of the plan during the project life cycle

The Quality and Evaluation plan, as it was developed in early 2016, is sustainable in terms of planned activities and tools foreseen. The inclusion of additional evaluation elements, such as those pointed out above, will most likely lead to an increased amount of work to be dedicated by each partner and, in particular, by the partner responsible to Quality and Evaluation. *It could therefore worthwhile identifying synergies between the various evaluation tools which will be implemented (checklist, questionnaires, project*

sheets produced by the teachers etc.) and the data to be collected for the quantitative and qualitative indicators.

DISSEMINATION PLAN

Structure and clarity of the document

The dissemination plan set up by the partnership is divided in three sections: background, detailed outline of dissemination activities, a summary of the local dissemination activities.

The document illustrates clearly the main tools to be used for dissemination and which activities each partner will carry out at local level. Local dissemination strategies are expected to be set up by the partners. However it is not clear if the national strategies consists in the tables listed further below in the document or instead an additional document outlining more in details the plan has been or is supposed to be produced by each partner.

Relevance to the objectives of the project

The document aims disseminating the project results. While, as pointed out below, the valorisation strategy recalls and identify project objectives, the dissemination plan does not make a direct reference to them.

Relevance of the planned activities in relation to the target groups

The proposed activities are well suited to address the stakeholders which are to a great extent external to the partnership through the tools developed by the partnership (website, social media, printed materials, events). In the application form it is stated that the main target groups of the project are pre-school teachers and children. While teachers are addressed through a wide variety of activities, children (and families) are not considered as target of dissemination. *The definition of some activities targeting this specific group could add further value and coherence between the dissemination activities and the target groups of the project.*

Sustainability and effectiveness of the plan during the project life cycle

The plan foresees a substantial number of activities at local level, and that is a positive element which strengthens the potential of the project in terms of reaching out a wide variety of audiences. The plan should however provide some indications pertaining the collection of information about the activities carried out. In other words, *each partner should define in its local strategy how the activities will be backed up by information collected about each dissemination activities. Such information should be collected at regular interval by the partner in charge of dissemination or by the project coordinator.*

EXPLOITATION PLAN

Structure and clarity of the document

The exploitation plan of the project is well-designed and it is founded on a clearly defined structure. It is divided in 5 main parts: the introduction, the definition of the target audiences, the engagement of users and stakeholders, the consortium wide exploitation activities and the individual exploitation plans. The text is reader-friendly and provides a full picture of the valorisation activities.

Relevance to the objectives of the project

In general the Exploitation plan is effectively linked to the expected impact of the project. It should be noted that the document defines the project objective as “*enhancing awareness in creative use of digital media*”. This does not seem to coincide either with the logical framework matrix of the project or with the application form where the enhancement of the awareness in creative use of digital media is one of the elements pertaining the expected impact (not the objectives).

Relevance of the planned activities in relation to the stakeholders

The document provides an excellent analyses of the stakeholders (who they are) and how they will be reached. The appendix I,II and III provide a valuable overview of the activities and a useful tool monitor the exploitation activities.

As mentioned also below, an element which could be strengthened is the strategy adopted locally to ensure the use of the products after the end of project. Which concrete steps will the partnership develop in order to make sure that the products of the project are adopted?

Sustainability and effectiveness of the plan during the project life cycle

The dissemination and valorisation activities seem to be overlapping in many occasions when looking at the national exploitation plan. Indeed it should be recognized that, once the Intellectual Outputs have been finalised, there is often a dissemination component in the actual exploitation process. However, it would be more appropriate, when possible, to differentiate clearly between dissemination and valorisation actions choosing the main purpose of the activity carried out.

It is important to draw the attention to the fact that, despite the good structure of the planned activities, the use of “pull and push content” does not guarantee that the products of the project will be utilized by the stakeholders. While the impact on those stakeholders participating in the project activities is likely to be more substantial possibly leading to an actual mainstreaming of the Intellectual Outputs in the regular activities, other actors which have been less close to/involved in the project activities might require a more proactive/ad hoc approach beyond the dissemination and exploitation actions already planned by the partnership.

INTELLECTUAL OUTPUTS

INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 1 - MANUAL

The output is divided into two main parts. In its first part the manual provides a theoretical framework, illustrates international scholarly work and provides a definition of digital story telling. In the second part there is a well-articulated analysis of 19 practices collected by the partners.

The external evaluation will not address the content of the academic work carried out but it will point more general elements of reflection for a possible further improvement. Particular attention is given to exhaustiveness of the document and its exploitability.

Strengths

- It provides a definition of digital storytelling, this shows a common standing of the partnership reinforcing the value of the Intellectual Output;
- it provides an extensive and exhaustive overview of the literature on the theme;
- It underlines the common elements emerging from the practices collected. The common elements can constitute an important aspect of reflection for the development of the other intellectual outputs

Weaknesses

- By looking at the project proposals as well as the other management documents outlined above it is not clear to whom the manual is primarily addressed (teachers, researchers, university students?).
- The practices should be associated more directly to the text of the second part (reference to the number of the practices listed in the appendix makes it hard for the reader to follow) – more short examples in the text taken from the practices would make part two smoother to go through.
- If practitioners are the primary target, the authors could consider extending the part of the analysis of the practices showcasing a few of the collected practices extensively directly in the text.