



Dissemination Strategy

Q- PLM - Quality Assurance for VET Providers using Product Lifecycle Management

538379-LLP-1-2013-AT-LEONARDO_LMP

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1. Introduction

This document has been written for the Transfer of Innovation project “Q- PLM– Quality Assurance for VET Providers using Product Lifecycle Management” (538379-LLP-1-2013-AT-LEONARDO_LMP) funded with the financial support of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission.

It presents the dissemination strategy for the 2-years Q-PLM project including national valorisation plans for each project partner. All dissemination activities are included in the project proposal, offered by partners or suggested by E.N.T.E.R. as external expert to support the dissemination activities of the project. All activities were developed in close cooperation with the project promoter and the partner leading the work package dissemination.

The dissemination strategy gives some general information and suggestions to achieve best possible results and then concentrates specifically on the dissemination situation of the Q-PLM project. Thereby also individual activities of partners will be taken into account.

Certain issues and quality criteria should be considered by the implementation of dissemination actions. This paper also tries to give useful recommendations on this score. Furthermore, some instruments to evaluate the dissemination activities will be presented.

A project and its results can only be successful when they are of sustainable value. For this reason it is necessary to implement a dissemination and exploitation strategy. The actual use of project outcomes is dependent upon successful dissemination activities. Therefore it is important to understand that a good dissemination strategy is the basis for successful exploitation of results. Both issues are closely related and dependent upon each other. This document will mainly focus on the aspects of dissemination but also include general aspects of exploitation to provide a clear understanding of the holistic dissemination and exploitation approach.

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2. General information about dissemination and exploitation of EU project results

Whenever we speak of dissemination and exploitation of project results we refer to activities that are designed to ensure that these results are appropriately recognized, demonstrated and implemented on a wide scale. Within the field of dissemination and exploitation the term valorisation is also used to combine the two issues. E.N.T.E.R. prefers to use the expressions separately as they do not mean the same thing and should be seen as equally important even if they are closely related and dependent upon each other. However at the beginning of the project process there should be a focus on general promotion and awareness-raising.

This strategy deals with promotion and dissemination. A detailed exploitation plan will be delivered at a later stage of the project. Still, it is considered as useful to also provide some general aspects of exploitation hence it is of crucial importance for achieving best possible results that all persons involved have the same understanding of these terms.

Dissemination

Promotion and awareness-raising is an important part of the dissemination process.

These activities take place at the beginning of the project, or even before it starts, in order to inform about the existence of a project, the aims and objectives and its planned developments.

Dissemination in general is a planned process of providing information to the target group and key actors in regard to project process, activities and results by the use of different dissemination channels at the local, regional, national, EU and international levels.

Exploitation

Exploitation includes the two activities; mainstreaming and multiplication. Mainstreaming means the actual transfer of successful results to appropriate stakeholders and decision-makers. Multiplication concerns the process of convincing end-users to adopt or apply the results of the projects.

In summary dissemination and exploitation aim to achieve the following objectives:

- To promote and raise awareness with regard to the project contents and developments
- To provide information on the quality, relevance and effectiveness of the results
- To successfully transfer the results to appropriate decision-makers in order to achieve their sustainable promotion and support

- To convince individual end-users to adopt and/or apply the results, also after the project and support by the project partnership has ended

2.1 Dissemination

The dissemination concept provided by E.N.T.E.R. is built on two dimensions.

1) Horizontal dimension

The horizontal dimension contains all activities to strengthen the communication and dissemination between the participants. This includes all internal activities to provide information and instruments for further individual dissemination of each partner. All project partners are requested to actively take part in these processes.

2) Vertical dimension

The vertical dimension concentrates on all activities designed to actually reach the target groups and final users. This includes all activities that will be carried out individually by each partner such as the involvement of their own partners, networks and stakeholders and the implementation of the individual national dissemination plan. The WP leader is responsible for the vertical dimension in terms of providing concepts, encouraging and controlling the activities, although the actual success is very much dependent upon the support and cooperation of the project partners.

Both the horizontal as well as the vertical dimension will be carried out by using different approaches, methods and instruments of dissemination, always dependent upon the most adequate means and possibilities of each project partner.

Basically, they can be structured as follows:

- **Face-to-face activities**
Presentations, round tables, workshops, seminars, conference ...
- **Media-based activities**
 - Internet-based
groups, e-newsletters, websites, networks, e-documents ...
 - Paper-based
brochures, flyers, posters, articles, newsletters, activity reports ...
 - TV/radio-based
Interviews, presentations, news bulletins ...
- **Performance activities**
Activities closely related to project work packages or process such as the implementation of surveys, seminars, workshops or pilot courses, involvement in evaluation activities ...

The dissemination strategy runs parallel to the phases of the work programme and is specifically adjusted according to the main activities of each phase.

The most important questions that should be answered by each dissemination strategy are:

- 1) Why disseminate
- 2) What to disseminate
- 3) Who to disseminate to
- 4) Who will do it
- 5) When will it be done
- 6) How will it be done
- 7) How will it be evaluated

2.2 Exploitation

Even if exploitation takes place after the project's lifetime, when all project results exist as final products, it is necessary to plan exploitation activities from the start. The basis for successful exploitation is a well planned and implemented dissemination strategy at different levels. Furthermore, the identification of stakeholders has to be carried out as early as possible. This is mostly at a time when the first research phases are completed (e.g. needs analysis, questionnaires ...) therefore all further steps with regard to content and target group should be set for the remaining project process.

It is important to involve stakeholders or possible end-users in the project process. On the one hand they can be more easily convinced of the project outcomes when they have the chance to follow the development, but on the other hand also project consortia can benefit by including suggestions or recommendations from the stakeholder side in the development process.

Two key aspects to successful exploitation of project results:

- Producing relevant results of good quality to satisfy the demands of providers, policy-makers and ultimately society more generally
- Ensuring that results reach the right target audiences in a format and at a time, that provides greatest benefit.

3. General preconditions of successful dissemination of EU project results

The successful dissemination of project results in terms of sustainable use and the permanent further development of results and outputs, especially after the funding for the development and pilot implementation of the outputs has ended, is very dependent upon a number of crucial key factors and criteria, which should be presented at this stage as a basis for the development of the project outputs. From our experiences we consider the following key factors to be relevant:

- a) **Output quality:** To achieve a high degree of valorisation and use, the outputs produced need to be of a very high quality. It is important to pay considerable attention to the output quality during the entire project development, and therefore it is always advisable to introduce procedures and responsibilities for quality management in project processes in order to guarantee a high quality final output. Outputs must be up to date and appealing to the customers otherwise dissemination and further use cannot be expected.
- b) **Adaptability of outputs to country and organisation specific circumstances:** From our point of view it is an important precondition that the results and outputs of the project are adaptable to a high degree in relation to the circumstances of different countries and companies. This is particularly important as the developed materials and approaches should be relevant to different types of organisations and target groups.
- c) **Clear definition of advantages for users:** A high degree of use is, in our opinion, mainly dependent on the capacity of the project and the partnership to clearly show the advantages of using the instruments and outputs for the final target group. For this reason all partner institutions should always try to make the advantages of the project and its results transparent and evident, in relation to all events and possibilities. In particular the project website should make very clear what the added value of the output is and its use to the potential customer.
- d) **Early identification of stakeholders and potential users:** It is vital that relevant stakeholders and potential users (customers) of the project results are clearly identified and defined very early in the project's life. It is not advisable to change user groups during the project process. Identified stakeholders should be contacted and kept informed throughout the whole project process so as to ensure the sustainable use of results after the project ends.

4. Background, objectives and aims of the Q-PLM project

Using the framework of the quality indicators recommended by the EQARF framework as well as the CQAF (Common Quality Assurance Framework) the Q-PLM project aims at the development of an innovative instrument for product quality assurance for VET providers based on the methods of Product Lifecycle Management. This approach has been in use in other economic sectors for years and allows the analysis of impact of different variables on the lifecycle of a VET offer.

It seems that the quality management discussion on VET still remains very much on policy level and VET providers still do not follow the policy recommendations with implementing coherent and integrated quality management systems. Whereas large VET providers most of the time run an integrated quality management system (e.g. on basis of ISO 9001 etc.), smaller VET providers are lacking practical instruments to allow continuous monitoring and improvement of service quality. The ENQA-VET thematic working group comes to the conclusion that *“The development and implementation of a comprehensive, coherent and systematic quality assurance system cannot be taken for granted. It has to be nurtured, supported and regularly reviewed and effective quality assurance systems in VET are dependent on the strong involvement of internal and external partners and relevant stakeholders”* (European Network for Quality Assurance in VET ENQA-VET: “Supporting system-wide quality assurance in VET”, 2009).

Analysis shows clearly, that VET providers are in need of easy to use, flexible and reliable quality assurance methods. The Q-PLM project will analyse the background of Product Lifecycle Management from other sectors, identify the relevant variables impacting on the VET offer's lifecycle and based on this develop the beta version of an IT based instrument (software) for product lifecycle management for VET providers as well as a handbook for product lifecycle management.

4.1 The project objectives

The Q-PLM project focuses centrally on the development of easy and flexible to use quality assurance method for VET providers in the European lifelong learning arena. VET providers, social partners, labour market authorities and experts in the VET field will be co-operating within this project to develop a software and handbook for VET providers to apply product lifecycle management as basis of quality assurance of their VET offers and services.

The project will develop an IT based tool for integrated product lifecycle which is:

- a) **Flexible** to be adapted to national, regional and organisational backgrounds and situations (e.g. organisational quality cultures and systems, legal backgrounds etc.)

- b) **Comprehensive and scientifically valid** in the background (taking into account all relevant indicators and variables, analysis of their impact on VET offers together with a profound strategy for actions in product lifecycle phases)
- c) **Easy to use for VET providers** (easy and quick input of quality data, interfaces to existing data resources in the organisation, clear and feasible presentation of results together with clear actions for lifecycle management for the single VET offer / service)
- d) **Indicator based** (the lifecycle of a VET offer is influenced by a number of variables, the tool will reflect the most crucial ones and give room for adaptation to national, regional and additional local and organisational variables)
- e) **Weighted and balanced** (different variables have a different weight in their impact on the lifecycle of a VET offer. The tool developed must allow for a full reflection of these weights)
- f) **IT based** (VET providers in many cases already have quality information and data in electronic format, are processing data in electronic format. Out of this reason an IT based tool can create interfaces to existing quality data in the organisation and will allow for a quick and efficient product lifecycle management procedure on VET provider level)

4.2 Target Groups and beneficiaries

The main target group of the Q-PLM project and its results are: VET providers from the IVET and CVET sector who will receive an easy to use and flexible IT based instrument as well as a handbook to better manage their VET offers and so improve their quality on the market. Policy makers, social partners, labour market authorities and adult education providers all of which create a significant impact with their decisions and policies on the offers established by VET providers are also part of the target group. All target groups are directly represented in the project partnership, significant impact beyond the consortium.

4.3 Project Results

To find the best time for dissemination it is very important to know the project outcomes and the time when their development is completed. All partners are expected to disseminate these results through their individual dissemination channels.

The results of the Q-PLM project in chronological order are as follows:

Project Results	
Date	Result
10/14	Research and analysis phase report

01/14 - 02/14	Public call for tender for PLM software development
05/14	Report: Variables and indicators for product lifecycles in VET- final version
05/14	Technical and functional specification document - final version
12/14 - 04/15	Pilot phase
04/15	Pilot and testing phase report
09/15	Product lifecycle management for VET providers - Final version
08/15- 09/15	Product lifecycle management for VET providers handbook - Final version

5. Dissemination in the Q-PLM project

The dissemination strategy of the Q-PLM project follows the general guidelines of valorisation as explained above as well as the facts provided in the project proposal.

The definitive strategy will be developed with the support of all project partners. Templates to identify the dissemination channels of each partner were distributed and were used as the basis for the development of the Q-PLM dissemination strategy. The dissemination of Q-PLM consists of individual national dissemination plans that can be enlarged and adjusted by each partner at any time. The annex II shows these individual plans. The other part is the activities already predetermined in the work packages of the project. The results of Q-PLM are very well defined and embedded in a realistic timetable; hence it is easy for all partners to implement their dissemination activities.

1) Why disseminate?

- To tell end users about the project
- To contribute to policy development (local, regional, national or European)
- To inform and advocate to sponsors and funding bodies
- To support and enhance the image of the own organisation
- To increase the impact of the project by extending it to multipliers
- To tell commercial organisations that you have a product to sell

2) What to disseminate?

- The project mission or message
- The deliverables (see also 4.3)
- The project process
- The methodologies
- The European partnership
- The benefits for the target groups

3) Who to disseminate to? (see also 4.2)

- End-users
- Organisations that can help to reach others
- Organisations that can enhance the impact of the project in other ways

4) Who will do it?

All partners are responsible for their national dissemination plans including the involvement of stakeholders. The partner organisations have at their disposal good networks and contacts and have rich experiences in the field of European project management. The WP leaders are responsible for the overall dissemination and exploitation and will guide and coordinate the activities.

5) When will it be done? (see also annex I)

The project proposal presents an initial time schedule with regard to the completion of project results and dissemination instruments. E.N.T.E.R. gives additional suggestions to achieve best possible results. A timetable for all activities is provided in the annex I.

6) How will it be done? (see also 5.1.)

The project proposal already gives specific instruments to be used for dissemination activities such as newsletters, project website and Facebook page. Furthermore, the project includes specific activities targeted to raise awareness and to involve and engage the target group and stakeholders such as the feedback panels. Within these work packages additional instruments will be produced such as posters and leaflets. Each partner also presented individual instruments in the national dissemination plans that show great promise for the implementation of the dissemination and exploitation phases.

7) How will it be evaluated? (see also 6.)

A very useful way of evaluating the dissemination activities is the documentation of all activities by each partner. This documentation can be in form of lists of participants, presentations, agendas, meeting minutes, pictures, copies of documents such as emails, articles or newsletters. The documentation should be based on the use of quantitative and qualitative indicators. The WP leaders will guide the activities of each partner and will provide documents and suggestions to achieve best possible results.

5.1 Instruments of dissemination in the Q-PLM project

Some specific instruments are already defined in the project proposal. These instruments are available and all partners are expected to use them. Additionally the individual national dissemination plans for the partners include further instruments that will be used to disseminate the project outcomes (see Annex II).

The instruments of dissemination with their date of completion are as follows:

Dissemination Instruments	
Date	Instrument
12/13	Facebook page
12/13	Q-PLM Website
03/14	Q-PLM Flyers
03/14	Q-PLM Posters
05/14	Q-PLM Newsletter 1
11/14 - 09/15	Dissemination at relevant conferences and workshops
12/14	Q-PLM Newsletter 2
03/15	Q-PLM Newsletter 3
08/15	Q-PLM Newsletter 4

5.1.1 Additional instruments that will be provided and used to support the dissemination of Q-PLM

- The Q-PLM project will be registered with E.N.T.E.R. in order to use all network services to support dissemination at the European level
- The project will be registered with ADAM portal for Leonardo da Vinci projects
- Each partner will organise a national feedback panel
- Additional dissemination activities can be included in the category of performance activities because they are part of different work packages but represent dissemination activities at the same time such as pilots or tender procedure themselves.

5.1.2 Further issues to be considered by using the dissemination instruments

It is recommended to use a corporate design in all material produced within the project to support an effect of recognition. In addition it is of crucial importance to follow the rules of corporate identity given by the European Commission such as clear instructions on the use of logos and disclaimers.

The project logo should be used together with the logo of the Lifelong Learning Programme, the project number and the disclaimer declaring that the project is funded with European money and that the Commission cannot be held responsible for any contents. Depending on the dissemination instrument two different disclaimers can be chosen:

Visibility actions (notepads, folders, roll up etc):

„With the support of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union“

Publications (reports, papers, website, leaflet, brochure...):



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“This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information therein.”

The disclaimer for publications is officially translated in the EU languages and should be used in this form. Also the LLP logo is available in all EU languages and should not be changed individually.

Further information can be found on following websites:

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/about/eacea_logos_en.php

5.2 Summary of dissemination activities of each partner in the Q-PLM project (see also Annex II)

As mentioned above templates to identify the dissemination channels of each partner were distributed in the beginning of the project and were integrated in the Q-PLM dissemination strategy. These templates will be constantly updated during the project’s lifetime and will include all activities foreseen by the partners in the field of dissemination, as:

- Face to face activities
- Internet based activities

- Paper based activities
- Radio/TV

Overview of additionally planned partners' dissemination activities and instruments	
Face-to-face activities	
Internal activities	External activities
Meetings/ Round Tables (AT) (BE)(FI)(IE) (SI)(RO)	Meetings (AT)(DE)(BE)(ES)(FI) (IE)(SI)(RO)
Workshops (AT)(BE)(FI)	Lobbying/Networking (AT)(DE)(FI)(RO)
Presentations Conferences (AT)(FI)(IE)(RO)	Conferences (AT)(FI)(SI)(RO)
Pilots/Implementation (AT)(BE)(FI)(IE)	Pilots/Implementation (AT)(BE)(FI)
	Workshops/Round Tables (FI)
Internet-based activities	
Internal activities	External activities
Emails (AT)(BE)(ES)(FI)(IE)(SI)(RO)	Emails (AT)(BE)(ES)(FI)(SI)(RO)
Social Media (FI)	Website (AT)(DE)(BE)(ES) (IE)(SI)(RO)
Website (SI)	Social Media (BE) (IE)
Paper-based activities	
Internal activities	External activities
Publications/Newspapers/Magazines (AT)(BE)(ES)(FI)(IE) (SI)(RO)	Publications/Newspapers/Magazines (AT)(BE)(ES)(FI) (IE)(SI)(RO)
Flyers/Posters (AT)(ES)(FI)(IE) (SI)(RO)	Flyers/Posters (AT)(DE)(ES)(FI) (IE)(SI)(RO)
Public Noticeboard (AT)(IE)	
Radio/TV	
Internal activities	External activities
n.a.	Local Radio Stations (RO)

The first version of the national dissemination plans show various activities that are additional to those stated in the project proposal. Partners also provided additional instruments of dissemination such as conferences, meetings and publications.

According to the first national dissemination plans approximately 165,448 persons and more than 386 organisations can be reached. The given number can be compared with average numbers of other projects. But it also needs to be mentioned that the numbers stated above are only estimations of this first template and that especially for internet based activities (networks, website visitors) it is very difficult to estimate how many visitors will have a look at this information.

There is no doubt that the dissemination activities and number of persons will change during the project period when it comes to reporting on activities that have really been implemented. The WP leader is recommended to keep it in mind to support partners as good as possible and to watch the developments until the interim report when the first reporting of dissemination activities will be analysed. The activities are well balanced in relation to the level at which they are aimed, i.e. local, regional, national, EU, outside EU.

Based on our experience in other projects the national dissemination plans do change during the project lifetime. New channels will be added that will correspondingly influence the number of persons and organisations reached through the activities. Other instruments might occur or existing ones will be used more frequently. The dissemination plans can be changed and updated by each partner at any time. E.N.T.E.R. will suggest specific target points to receive reports and actual information about the implementation and the future plans of activities in the field of dissemination. The summary of activities and the national dissemination plans for each partner are to be found in the Annexes.

5.3 Exploitation activities in Q-PLM project

In the Q-PLM project the WP of exploitation includes specific activities and outcomes that will be described and analysed separately in the exploitation strategy that will be delivered in March 2014. Further instruments such as a detailed stakeholder analysis, a final conference and as sustainability strategy including an agreement on intellectual property rights (IPR) will be developed within this WP. Exploitation and dissemination cannot be separated therefore the basics are included also in this dissemination strategy as well as in the dissemination action plan (Annex I). E.N.T.E.R. recommends a close cooperation between the WP of dissemination and exploitation and if the WPs are lead by different partners a very strong cooperation should be implemented from the beginning on between the lead partners.

6. Evaluation and Quality Assurance

To guarantee good quality and achieve the best possible results it is suggested to use different tools to measure the impact of the activities carried out. There are two main types of quality indicators, quantitative and qualitative data.

6.1 Quantitative data

- number of enquiries about a product
- number of orders for a product
- number of brochures, DVDs etc. distributed
- number of visitors to a website
- number of visitors attending a conference, seminar, workshop
- amount of press coverage (number of articles and items on radio or TV)
- size of audience reached through dissemination activities

The national dissemination plans will already include information about quantitative data. It should be an objective of the partnership to try to enlarge the activities implemented, meaning that it is possible to change the dissemination plans for each partner at any time. Furthermore, it is recommended for the partnership to identify further quality indicators in line with the overall internal evaluation approach.

6.2 Qualitative data

These indicators are more specific and not so easy to implement. They could be in the form of short surveys as part of brochures or publicity hand-outs. They can be distributed to participants at a conference, seminar or workshop. If the project has a single partner responsible for evaluation and quality assurance it might be useful to include a few questions in regard to dissemination material and/or activities in general surveys of project/process/product evaluation.

Qualitative indicators are useful:

- to obtain detailed, subjective feedback
- to give a general feeling of responses
- to offer specific ideas about what has been successful, how to do things differently next time or new ideas for future projects

6.3 Documentation

It is considered as very important to document all dissemination activities. On the one hand the documentation serves to keep an overview about dissemination activities in general and on the other hand it provides quantitative and maybe also qualitative data to measure impact and ensure quality. Each partner is expected to document its own activities carried out in the field of dissemination and exploitation. The form of documentation can vary depending upon the dissemination activity, e.g. pictures, presentations, hand-outs, list of participants, agendas, meeting minutes, notes, copies of emails, newsletters, press articles ...

During the project's lifetime there will be quarterly updates with regard to the partners' dissemination activities. The updates basically concern adjustments within the national dissemination plans and the collection of documentation material.

Administrative issues	
Date	Document
12/13	Dissemination templates
01/14	Dissemination strategy
05/14	National dissemination reports
10/14	National dissemination reports
03/15	National dissemination reports
09/15	National dissemination reports

7. General recommendations and further steps in the Q-PLM project

According to the next work packages and development of results E.N.T.E.R. gives the following recommendations to the project consortium to support dissemination. These are suggestions that should be taken into account in the project process.

- ➔ Develop a corporate identity of Q-PLM material and products (incl. templates for word, powerpoint to be used by all project partners)
- ➔ Presentation of Q-PLM at other conferences/seminars/project fairs/events etc.
- ➔ Connecting with other European projects working in the same thematic or related fields as well as with project teams in other funding programmes
- ➔ Project dissemination material to be used by all partners to promote and raise awareness
- ➔ Links from partner organisations' websites to project website
- ➔ Discussion within partnership about usefulness of further social media presence (twitter, linkedin...). If yes, decision on the most appropriate tool to reach stakeholders and target groups is necessary as well as the distribution of responsibility and participation of all partners.
- ➔ Links from other websites to Q-PLM website (other projects, organisations, networks etc)
- ➔ Continuous communication within the project partnership
- ➔ Continuous enlargement and updates of activities in national dissemination plans
- ➔ Continuous reporting of activities in details including documentation material
- ➔ In case of online documentation please provide screenshots instead of URLs and links
- ➔ Collecting feedback
- ➔ Active participation of Q-PLM project partners in all project activities
- ➔ Follow rules of corporate design and graphic identity from Q-PLM project and the European Commission
- ➔ Close cooperation between the leaders of WPs dissemination and exploitation

8. Conclusion

Project results can only be of sustainable value and use if the dissemination and exploitation of them is well planned and implemented at different levels. The strategy aims to support all activities in the fields of dissemination by presenting general aspects as well as specific information to be used by each project partner according to the national dissemination plans. Furthermore, the strategy tries to highlight specific indicators for achieving high impact as well as for how high quality can be assured in the implementation of the dissemination process.

As a result of E.N.T.E.R.'s experience in the field of dissemination the communication within the partnership is considered as being very important for achieving the best results. Even if not all partners are equally involved in each work package they must be kept up to date about developments and outcomes.

In general, dissemination can only be successful through close cooperation between all partners. Not only the communication but also the individual use of national dissemination channels, contacts and networks has great influence on the impact of a project.

Most partners of the Q-PLM project are experienced in European project business and therefore the partnership is supposed to produce valuable results in the field of dissemination.

E.N.T.E.R. as external expert supported the project consortia by the development of this document, by providing reporting templates for dissemination activities and will further on support and consult the implementation of activities whenever it is needed. E.N.T.E.R. itself will use the own network dissemination channels to promote Q-PLM. A close cooperation between external expert, coordinator and WP leader is foreseen.

E.N.T.E.R., Graz 01/14