



# *Methodology Implementation Guidelines*

## INDEX

ACTing project: Social agents promoting active ageing through ict .....	3
Outline of project work.....	4
TYPE OF TRANSFER.....	4
Experiences in which this project is based .....	5
METHODOLOGY AND WORK PLAN:.....	6
singular INITIATIVES: a working methodology .....	8
Description and Objective .....	8
Target audience. Who are the destinaries of these initiatives?.....	8
Characteristics of the singular initiatives: .....	8
SOCIAL AGENTS in acting project .....	12
Social agents: developers of SINGULAR initiatives. ....	12
Role of social aGENTS in THE ACTing Project.....	14
Intervention strategies of social actors .....	15

## ACTING PROJECT: SOCIAL AGENTS PROMOTING ACTIVE AGEING THROUGH ICT

**ACTING** is a transnational project supported by the European Commission (OAPPE, National Spanish Agency for the Lifelong Learning Programme) and led by FUNDETEC. It involves five partners from four different countries (Italy, Romania, Spain and Switzerland).

ACTing aims at transferring a teaching methodology for social agents working in the fields of **active ageing and digital inclusion**. This methodology mainly focuses on **empowering social agents working with senior citizens to promote the social and digital inclusion of the latter**. In other words, it is not about teaching seniors how to use ICTs but rather about making them aware that ICTs can be a useful, helpful and powerful means to achieve their objectives, develop their interests, enhance their social participation. In turn, it facilitates active ageing and inclusion into the Information and Knowledge Society for the seniors.

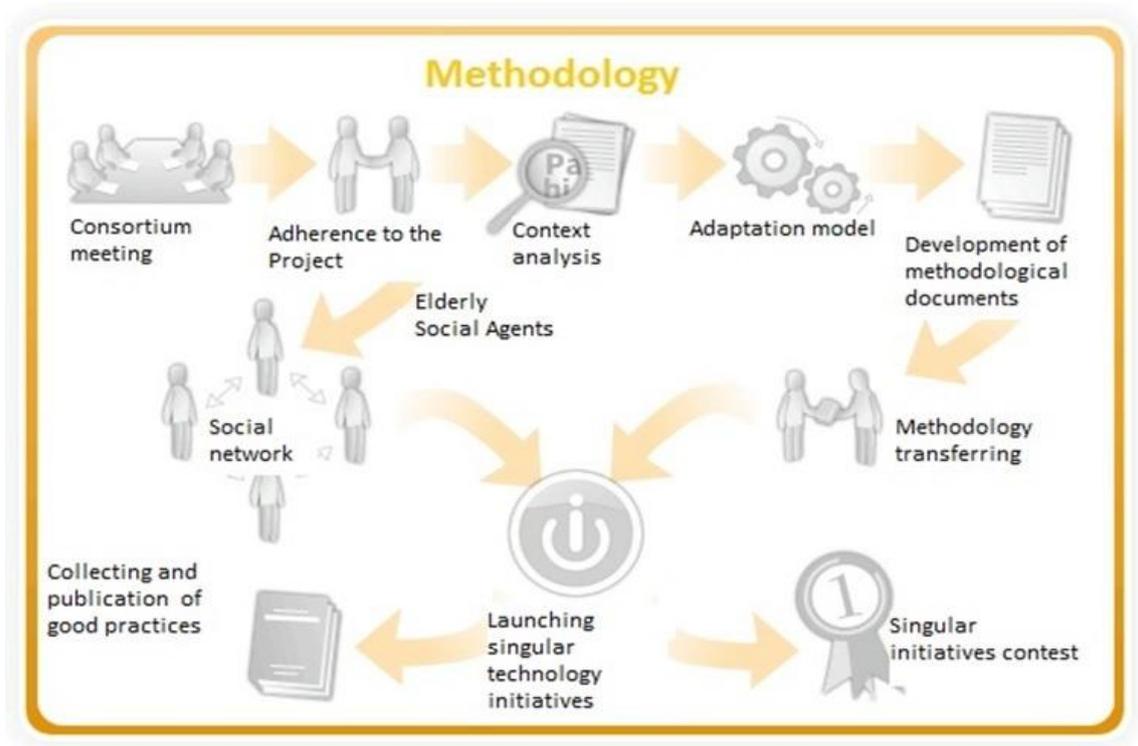
**ACTING** is a collective project, which proposes, as ultimate goal, to contribute to bridging the digital divide of age:

- Providing social agents with essential tools for the **e-inclusion** of elderly, through the development of ICT skills for everyday life, contributing to active aging, implementing innovative complementary actions, in many cases, the actions of digital literacy these individuals and entities already made.
- Understanding **ICT as help** to address many of the problems associated with aging, such as loss of memory, impaired vision and hearing, communication, access to information, lack of mobility and loss of independence ... helping elder people to remain active in their social environment.
- Proposing a dynamic working for the promotion of initiatives "**out of print**", not based on seminars and courses on closed issues, but an offer "on demand" from its own focus, led in all cases by elderly and supported by social agents associated with this group, aimed at generating product / final results, they can highlight and share with other people and organizations related to this group.

All this through a **strategy** of work by social agents, to:

- Communicate seniors the benefits that ICT can offer them with a personal and professional level.
- To sensitize this population on the advantages offered by ICTs to achieve social and technological integration, and active participation in society.
- Provide support and assistance to elder people to discover the usefulness of ICT in their everyday life.

OUTLINE OF PROJECT WORK



TYPE OF TRANSFER

ACTing is an export transfer of innovation project based on the former project [Mayores con Iniciativa](#) led by FUNDETEC. The transfer is foreseen to take place within the same sector, being this referred to the social context of social agents involved in **elInclusion** of senior citizens and **active ageing** projects. Nevertheless, we cannot - and we don't want either - delimit the profile of the social agent since their social work can come from very different contexts: day-care centres, neighbourhood or local associations, public telecentres... We believe that this is one of the enriching factors of this project, not closing the doors to those professionals interested and active in the field, as soon as they come from social spaces where elderly are among main target groups. Through this project, they will learn how to better face senior citizens elInclusion by applying ICT to their daily activities and interest development.

The process is to be adapted to the national realities, on the context analysis results (WP2), taking the geographical, cultural, social and economic approach also into account. This way we ensure that, despite the implementation of the innovative methodology from P0, this is somehow customized to make it as practical, applicable and profitable as possible in the implementing countries.

A "national referent" from each partner organization staff monitors and supports the overall transfer process, as a complement of the local Social Agents Training (WP5), local Pilot Testing (WP6) and Overall Monitoring and Evaluation (WP8). This will give more guarantees of success to the transferring process.

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## EXPERIENCES IN WHICH THIS PROJECT IS BASED

The original project “[Mayores con Iniciativa](#)” in which **ACTING PROJECT** is based on, has meant a revolution for Social Agents working with elderly in their approach to ICT in Spain, contributing to the reduction of the digital gap, still very present among this population group.

The main added value of this project and its results is the methodology in which the whole process is based on, covering the necessary knowledge, proceedings and attitudes (to know what, to know how and to want to) to be later on used by the leading social agent in the concrete implementation with the seniors’ group, making them active participants of the Information Society by focusing on their interests and hobbies.

The innovation in this methodology is mainly based on *its great adaptability and transferability*, making it possible that social agents perfectly adapt it to the specific needs of the addressed group and/or to the environmental circumstances, through a capacity building process which improves their social and inclusion work on the field. The interest focus is moved from the technology to the person, giving answers to his/her demands, concrete interests and needs through a methodology of contents development tested with hundreds of seniors in Spain.

The complementary products and materials have been selected by the ones who defined the original project’s methodology:

1. The set-up manual shows the definition and key elements of the tested methodology to be transferred by this project.
2. The Best Practices Catalogue shows some of the best initiatives developed in the former project, highlighting the most positive aspects to serve as model of reference to future implementers.

Throughout the whole process, we look for sharing and exchanging spaces to enrich social agents competences and skills and all involved actors motivation.

The other results are more focused on dissemination and visibility aims of the transferred methodology: the Contest proceeding, as a mean to highlight the value of the work and the efforts of participants – both social agents and seniors – in their capacity building process, including some testimonies.

You can see them through the following links:

- [www.mayoresconiniciativa.es](http://www.mayoresconiniciativa.es);
- <http://www.facebook.com/MayoresconIniciativa>
- <http://twitter.com/mconiniciativa>
- <http://www.youtube.com/user/MayoresIn>

These results are used as the starting point in the transfer process to the other partners after the context analysis.

## METHODOLOGY AND WORK PLAN:

The *transferor* partner plays a key role in the instrumentation of the methodological working plan for the achievement of project's specific objectives, as transferor of the innovative methodology to empower social agents for the final achievement of senior citizenship actively participating in the Information Society. Main actions regarding this work plan are:

- ✓ The coordination, dynamization, follow-up and training of the participant social agents.
- ✓ Supporting social agents at local level, where they will have to lead the ICT-initiatives proposed by the elderly volunteer participants (set-up, and overall implementation, managing and solving any incidents occurring in the process).
- ✓ Identifying the best practices developed during pilot local testing, ensuring their correct documentation.
- ✓ Generate and manage all the related information on a centralized basis (reference documents, assessment reports, initiatives registration, timeframe for action, etc.).

The whole process is mediated by a specific platform designed for training, communication and digital support aims, where both, the coordination team and the social agents will upload all the information. This will facilitate:

- Access to the work-on-progress information
- Access to training and support materials
- The establishment of a social network to be used as a sharing space
- Tools and solutions to help the development of singular initiatives
- A common working framework based on a standardized methodology
- The compiling of all generated information for its later analysis and best practices selection
- An efficient monitoring and assessment

### Concrete working plan:

1. **INITIAL CONTEXT ANALYSIS** (WP2) –Field research on key elements like the concrete space and environment where local entities and local social agents act; social agents and elderly profiles and expectations; inclusion and active aging through ICT strategies; resources available; networking and social fabric; etc.
2. **SOCIAL AGENTS CAPACITY BUILDING PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY TRANSFER** (WP4/5) – Including in the “social agent” concept people working in the elderly field both from public and private institutions, non-profit/profit with either a counselling, health-care, associative, technological or playful approach, but attending senior citizens’ demands and interests. Each recipient country has a *national reference* who took part in the ‘f2f’ training, held in Madrid last May 2014. This national reference, has subsequently transferred the acquired knowledge and methodology learned to a minimum of 10 local social agents. They all shall follow the additional deliveries online to complete their transfer process through the online platform, designed to support the whole process of training and translation.
3. **LAUNCH OF LOCAL SINGULAR INITIATIVES** (WP6) – Innovative actions which allow the ICT approach to those seniors furthest away from them, offering adapted answers to specific interests and needs. Through the initiative launching process they will acquire

the necessarily ICT related skills. The initiatives are developed by a group of seniors supported, coordinated and guided by a social agent. A key point of the process is the identification of the concrete interest, need or topic they want to develop, requiring group cohesion and a common well-defined objective that will be transformed in a tangible product (video, website, wiki, blog...).

4. **VISIBILITY ACTIONS** (WP6/ 8) – Two specific actions are foreseen: The Singular Initiative International Contest and the Best Practices Catalogue (see WP8).

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## SINGULAR INITIATIVES: A WORKING METHODOLOGY

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The starting point of this project, which will focus on the rest of the proceedings, is the launch of **SINGULAR TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVES**. This document contains, in the following sections, the work methodology to be implemented by different social actors involved with elderly (from telecentres, social and residential centers and other support center for this group), in the implementation of initiatives, meaning **strategies** and actions that contribute to **e-inclusion** of this group, through their natural empowering in the use of technologies to develop and enhance **skills and capabilities useful for everyday life** of older people.

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### DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVE

The unique **innovative** initiatives are actions that allow the approach to ICT of distant groups to them, focused on offering solutions adapted to their specific needs and interests. These initiatives involve the **acquisition of skills** related to the use of ICT by the beneficiaries. The technologies that work in each initiative, allow to develop **personal skills and abilities** important to maintain and extend, also improving the image of these elders before their family, friends and contacts, and even their own personal self-esteem. This encourages **social and technological integration** through a natural process based on the interests and needs of elder people (reducing isolation, avoiding travels, making information and some services more accessible, etc.).

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### TARGET AUDIENCE. WHO ARE THE DESTINATARIES OF THESE INITIATIVES?

On the one side, senior citizens, elderly associations, voluntary (cyber volunteerism), on the other side professionals interested in working with this group (telecentres staff, employment and local development agents, social workers, social educators and in general professionals in the field of social services, education or social inclusion).

As previously indicated, not only seniors - final recipients of this project - but also social agents working with this group, are encouraged to use these kind of initiatives which support and complement the range of services normally offered by social, technological, educational and healthcare institutions.

The development of a singular initiative in the frame of this project can be done either individually (with the participation of one person, in a particular way) or jointly as a group, sharing the goals and outcomes of the initiative from a group, which could promote, for example, interesting intergenerational initiatives. In any case, the protagonist of the initiative must always be **seniors**.

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### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SINGULAR INITIATIVES:

The singular initiatives proposed under this project should have the following common features:

- Include activities normally "off the list" of services provided.
- To be widely disseminated through media, both traditional and online at local, regional, national and international level.
- They will take part in an international contest, rewarding both participants in the winning initiatives and those responsible for its implementation and success (social workers, staff in telecentres/ Public Access Centers Internet, local organizations...)
- The coordination of the implementation process will be provided by the social agents involved, supported by the project ACTing team.
- Once the initiative is implemented and evaluated - degree of innovation, creativity and impact- it may become part of the catalogue of Best Practices.

Each initiative will make use of available **resources**, based on the interests of the participants. Each group will try to take advantage of various technologies within reach. The means used for the development of these initiatives are varied although, in any case, based on technologies, tools and applications that are affordable and easy to use for elder people participating in each initiative:

- Blogs
- Podcasts
- Videos
- Pictures and photo albums
- Presentations
- Documents / stories
- Web Pages
- Radio broadcast through Internet
- Wikis
- Email, Forums, Chat ...

Initiatives can be organized in different **CATEGORIES** of reference:

- **Intergenerational initiatives:** promoting greater participation of children and / or youth in a common work around ICT with elderly.
- **Recovery of Historical Memory:** creating stories collection, digitalization of photographs... in order to retrieve a personal, geographical, cultural ... memory or tradition.
- **Approach of ICT in daily activities:** to facilitate elderly everyday life through the use of electronic services, online communication tools to be used with family and friends or to reduce isolation being more "socially active", access to resources of interest, etc.
- **Active aging:** in order to enhance different skills and personal capabilities - both motor and cognitive level- that in the silver age is important to recover and train, doing it, in this case through ICT.

- **Use of technologies for social participation** (social web): blogs, podcasts, social networks, virtual communities around common reference to the collective interest.
- **Visibility of the collective:** this includes initiatives which main objective is to value and disseminate what elder people can do with or through ICT tools.
- **Digital Publication:** producing publications - newsletters, newspapers, magazines, diaries ...
- **Gadgets:** addressed to learn how to use new technological devices: GPS Navigator, Mobile, MP3, tablets ...
- **Gender initiatives:** promoting equality of opportunities between men and women in the Information Society and raising awareness about this topic also among senior citizens.
- **Your people, your association, your ... Internet:** to create accessible online resources showing the activities, concerns and issues of a particular group, also addressed to disseminate, give visibility or raise awareness on them.
- **More effective communication:** to open effective channels of communication between individuals and / or entities with different associations, social centers , organizations, businesses ...
- **Acquisition of new learning:** in which the priority is the scope of new knowledge and skills. From a level of knowledge, such initiatives would have been able to achieve a better understanding of the use of a specific technology or electronic service.

In short, all kind of initiatives can be developed within this project, as long as they are developed using any 2.0 tool, online space, electronic device or ICT-related element, keeping also in mind that elders must be the protagonists, either personally or in collaboration with others in their environment (grandchildren granddaughters, neighbourhood youth or association, professionals dedicated to the care of older people, etc.).

Regarding the implementation of singular initiatives, Spain has recently conducted a study<sup>1</sup> that addresses the relationship between which we can call 'Elder people of the future' - currently close to 65 – and ICT. The findings and conclusions of the same pose and propose various measures that can serve as a reference in identifying what type of initiative could be accomplished, such as:

- Initiatives aimed at increasing knowledge and advanced mobile phone use. The study indicates that while the **mobile phone** is a nearly universal technology, there are groups of people who either do not use it yet - a quarter of those with less than

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<sup>1</sup>TIC y Mayores conectados al futuro. Fundación Orange. 2012:

<http://www.vodafone.es/fundacion/es/conocenos/difusion/publicaciones/publicaciones/tic-y-mayores-conectados-al-futuro/>

primary school education - or making a really poor use. Those in this situation could have a field of interest to develop singular initiatives that help them to overcome the barrier of taking advantage of the big number of functionalities that modern mobile phones currently offer, beyond making or receiving phone calls.

- Initiatives to promote [social networks](#) as democratizing tools, through their recreational component beyond allowing communication and contact with others. This could be the gateway to the Internet and the digital world for those seniors already attracted to this kind of functionalities and services.
- E-Initiatives exploiting the positive assessment that elder people made of the use of [electronic services promoted by the government](#). The e-government approach to the elderly.

## SOCIAL AGENTS IN ACTING PROJECT

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Our targeted **social agents** are people working in different types of agencies and organizations (both public and private, non-profit and profit, associative...) on the advice and assistance of elder people, lending support to them and responding to their demands and interests, among other strategies, with the help of ICT.

In other words, throughout this document, we consider **social agents** those people or entities aimed at direct intervention with the elderly group. Their mission of bringing seniors closer to ICT is fundamental, since they are the ones responsible for designing the specific and direct route to implement individually or collective activities within its scope (association center day or elderly care, call center, etc.).

**Social agents** are becoming a key leading role in the intervention with elder people, in recent years. At present, in Spain for example, public authorities have a role in organization and resources distribution, which relies on the associative fabric directly involved in the environment of the elder person. In this context, the social agents collective is gradually becoming the more effective nexus between government and civil society, increasingly present in social reality.

Therefore, efforts should be made to bring technology closer to senior citizens, although this should not be limited to the implementation of actions addressed exclusively to this group, but should extend the scope of the group of social agents, with specific initiatives in terms of their demands and needs.

With the idea of addressing in detail the strategies to follow with the different social actors, we need to identify and define who these social agents are, firstly in Spain (serving as a reference to this definition, to help identify which individuals or entities play the same role in each of the countries participating in the project). In a generic sense, they are those mediators working with the elderly in their centres, associations, ICT spaces, and even people from their social or familiar environment. We are referring to volunteers, promoters of technological services and capacity building processes (telecentres), social workers institutions - public and private- working with this group, regardless of school or institution to which they belong.

Beyond the private or public nature or the specific area of intervention to which they belong, both groups share the goal of promoting digital literacy among elder people and, to this end, interact and collaborate on projects or common shares that can reach the final destination (the elderly) and to respond to their need to achieve or enhance their digital competence.

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### SOCIAL AGENTS: DEVELOPERS OF SINGULAR INITIATIVES.

For the implementation of singular initiatives - primary objective of this project - social agents must have a space able to gather:

1. Technology devices and services (computers, digital cameras, scanners, online services, applications, etc.) of interest to elderly (and hopefully, minimizing barriers and constraints for participation).
2. Dynamisation of people supporting the senior participants in each initiative in the use of ICT, pushing them together with initiatives to enable them to apply this technology to the service and interest of their group.

There are many areas that today, throughout the entire Spanish territory, have these



resources: care day centers and senior centers, libraries, technology spaces enabled by social institutions and / or associations as no, **telecentros**,<sup>2</sup> public spaces repositories, focused on generating projects and initiatives between people, connecting and promoting their ability to transform and improve the place in which they live through ICT.

7 out of 10 of these centers are located in Spain in towns with less than 10,000 inhabitants and represent a gamble for socio-economic empowerment. One of its 'target groups' is that of the elderly. Thus, over 90 % of the activities in call centers for people over 50 are directed at women and children, and above 60 % for groups at risk of social exclusion and disability. From his vocation and public character, activities and projects generated and "agitated" in these telecentres through ICT reduces barriers and close markets. These networks act as a fulcrum and lever to star in population development, wealth creation and employment of territories with more difficulties.

Spaces such as telecentres, or any other endowed not only equipment but also the commitment to bring and promote the use of ICT among the population, may be a good place from which to run a singular initiative. Listed below are some of the Spain -enabled spaces that could be used as a reference by the social partners to promote initiatives from:

1. **Department of Social Services and Social Work Units.** They are established as the first level of the public system of social care services in Spain, as close response to any demand or social need. From these centers for the elderly to more specific services and projects that respond to their needs for digital literacy or improve their digital skills is channelled.
2. **Associations, Social Works of banks, companies and foundations:** both public and private, that perform actions addressed to the elderly. Many of these programs are launched in the field of information and communication, specifically addressed to this group, promoting the installation of computer equipment in associations and social centers for the senior public.
3. **Day and / or accommodation for the elderly,** as social centers, day centers, multipurpose resource centers, nursing homes and sheltered housing resources.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.comuniddetelecentros.net/asociacion>

Among them stand out from the goal of digital literacy social centers for the elderly, an open community gerontological resource aims to promote active ageing by promoting personal development, coexistence and social participation.

4. **Promoters Center Intervention programs with elder**, addressing dependency prevention and comprehensive care of elder people living in remote rural areas. In many of these programs, ICTs bring their role as tools for achieving the objectives, often through direct collaboration with other entities or technological infrastructure (such as telecentres or classrooms to associations, corporations and private foundations put available).
5. **Educational services for elder people**, promoting - both national and regional level , from legislatures and city - a training offer addressed to adults providing basic training to improve their ability to participate in social, cultural, political and economic life. Among them, we include experiences such as the University of Staff, among other outreach programs promotes ICT or educational digital platforms, providing services and content for the teaching of ICT character open online.

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### ROLE OF SOCIAL AGENTS IN THE ACTING PROJECT

The various social agents from each participating country involved in the implementation of initiatives, actively participate in the project, in close collaboration with the **ACTING** project team:

- **Identifying specific needs and interests** in the field of Information Society and ICT among the beneficiary group, as well as potential interests for them to develop thematic initiatives.
- **The development of singular initiatives** based on those needs, allowing to bring ICT closer to elder people, actively promoting and participating in:
  - The planning, organization and development of singular initiatives and training activities that complement them.
  - The realization of the goal or end product by the development of the initiative (video, web page / blog, photo album, digital magazine, etc.).
  - The registration of the initiative using documentation and tools provided by the project staff.
  - The preparation of a final report on each initiative, coordinated from this center.
- **The involvement of associations and civil society** in the campaign of singular initiatives, such as tractors elements of this group in their inclusion in the Information Society, and the recruitment of beneficiaries for project initiatives.
- Collaboration with the **ACTING PROJECT** in other strategies and tools implemented from this:
  - Webs and/or social networks for the visibility of their work and final products.
  - Participating in the collection of Best Practices carried out nationwide.
  - As a steering committee of national initiatives promoted under this project advising about possible improvements when appropriate.

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## INTERVENTION STRATEGIES OF SOCIAL ACTORS

The **ACTING PROJECT** is aimed at all people and professionals described above. Considering the diversity of social actors and the intervention areas from which each of these people address their work, they could pose as **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**:

- The development and application of a common methodology of approaching ICT, aimed at elder people, responding to their interests and demands.
- Promote the role that these social actors have on the dissemination and awareness among this population on the benefits that ICT report them to achieve their social and technological integration.
- To train these agents as social innovators, transforming the social environment in which they perform their work, and providing tools to promote singular initiatives.

To achieve this, throughout the development of the project a **Team of Technical Coordination (project team)** will be made available to institutions and social agents involved in each of the 4 participating countries. This team will be in charge of structuring, managing and coordinating the actions described above. This team should systematize the project structure, the operating plan and ensure that the project is correctly implemented in all its phases.

The main functions of the project team are:

- Adapt and share their experience and knowledge in terms of implementation, methodology and project management of eInclusion of seniors.
- Promote networking to coordinate, streamline, monitor and evaluate initiatives undertaken by targeted seniors.
- Supporting participants to coordinate each initiative in the process of implementation, execution and closing, solving eventual problems arising during the development process.
- Identify good practices generated under this project for further documentation.
- Generate and manage project information in a standardized way (reference documents, evaluation reports, enrolment initiatives, performance schedule, registration documents and reporting initiatives, etc.).
- Assume and encourage the dissemination of information at the state level for the development of the initiative.

To perform these tasks, national referents and Project Team in each country, simply control the implementation process of the project and establish clear mechanisms. One will be online communication and support through a **2.0 PLATFORM**, in which all the information generated will dump by both the project team and the facilitators. This platform will facilitate:

- Access to project updated information.
- Creating a social network for sharing and exchanging experiences.
- Tools and solutions that enable participants to create high-quality singular initiatives.
- Establish a common working framework with a standardized methodology.
- The compilation of initiatives-related information for further analysis and selection of Best Practices.
- Monitoring and evaluation.