



**European Linguistic  
Standard for  
Professionals in  
Tourism 2.0**



**Lifelong  
Learning  
Programme**

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**Interim Evaluation Report  
SLEST 2.0: European Linguistic Standard for  
Professionals in Tourism  
Project No: 2013-1-ES1-LEO05-66445**

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## 1. Project overview

The SLEST 2.0 (Standard Linguistico Europeo per il Settore del Turismo) project aims at preparing tutor-supported, semi-autonomous language learning materials and environment in the field of tourism.

It is a follow-up project of a previous and successful SLEST project (see <http://www.slest-tourism.org/>) developed under the Leonardo da Vinci Programme (Language Competences), No 2004-I/04/B/F/LA-154018.

The SLEST 2.0 project consortium comprises of six organisations from six European countries, both from the field of education and vocational training, and professionals working in the tourism industry.

- Spain: Facultad De Turismo, Universidad De Málaga (UoM)
- Italy: UET (Istituto Europeo Per Il Turismo)
- Germany: Fachverband Für Touristische Ausund Weiterbildung E.V.
- United Kingdom: European College of Business and Management
- Turkey: Selçuk Üniversitesi
- Greece: Educational & Training Consultants - ETC

The project aims to produce language materials for waiters, receptionists, travel guides, and travel agents for A2 and B1 levels (CEFR). They are intended for self-study, semi-autonomous and tutor-supported learning.

## 2. The External Evaluation Plan: Rationale

The purpose of the External Evaluation is to ensure the success of the project and evaluate the design and the implementation of the project compared to the actual outcomes by analysing its:

- *relevance* - to objectives and to in-country needs
- *efficiency* - in providing inputs promptly and at least cost
- *effectiveness* - in achieving planned results and project purpose
- *impact* - on overall objectives to which the project purpose should contribute
- *sustainability* - over time, usually after the inputs have all been provided and external support stops

### Actual achievement of component outputs against plan

The key External Evaluation issue is the project to achieve what it set out to, and this to be done in a good way. Other aspects being planned and evaluated include evidence of good practice, outcome quality and partner involvement.

The External Evaluation process includes quantitative and qualitative aspects, familiarisation with the project objectives and the documents, observation and comments, and feedback from the partners and participants.

The External Evaluation outcomes focus on the achievement of the tasks as set out in the project proposal.

The External Evaluation allows for formative evaluation in the form of feedback from partners and other project participants, as well as interested parties involved. The External Evaluation Plan is being written in the interests of the project partners and end users, the Spanish National Agency and experts, and of the European Commission and EACEA officials involved in the Programme.

The sources of information on which the External Evaluation is based include all the project documents that are available in different form, the mail-bounce documents, and direct feedback on the project from the partners and from the participants. The success criteria include the project outcomes in terms of the aims and objectives set out in the original proposal, and evidence that proper processes of consultation, communication and project management were followed.

### 3. The External Evaluation Plan: SLEST 2.0 Project Evaluation

#### Types of Evaluation

1. Planning Evaluation (leading to a External Evaluation/Quality Assurance Plan)
2. Formative Evaluation (leading to Progress Reports and Quality Assurance Recommendations)
3. Summative Evaluation (leading to Impact Reports and Quality Assessment)

#### Evaluation aims: what, how and when?

##### What:

- to assess the understanding of the project's goals, objectives, strategies, and timelines
- to assess ongoing project activities
- to provide clear and transparent benchmarks for measuring progress
- to provide information to improve the project and to steer it back on track
- to point out unexpected developments before they have an impact
- to point out delays, even small ones
- to clarify expectations and motivation
- to draw attention on the areas of highest potential impact
- to possibly bring about a re-distribution of tasks
- to draw attention to possible problems in the cooperation between partners
- to assesses whether the project development is being conducted and delivered as planned

How: through observations, questionnaires and one-to-one interviews

When: from the start and throughout the project

#### Implementation questions:

- Were the appropriate participants selected and involved in the planned activities?
- Do the activities and strategies match those described in the plan? If not, are the changes in activities justified?
- Were activities conducted in line with the proposed aims and objectives?
- Was a management plan developed and followed?

#### Critical factors:

- lack of clear general goals that all the partners share
- vague task identification for the Project groups and individuals
- loose commitment to the project implementation of some partners, leading possibly to drop-outs, reduced contribution or 'pushing own agenda'
- insufficient usage of the versatile expertise of the partners
- too little time for the core tasks in relation to administration and finances, supporting activities, etc.

### 4. Success Criteria

The External Evaluation is based on agreed success criteria looking at the following:

- Did the project do what it said it would do?
- Did it do it in a good way?

The External Evaluation will look for the active:

- Participation of all partners
- Participation of end users

The External Evaluation will cater for and will look for evidence based on:

a) Feedback from partners and users in the form of:

- Collated results of feedback from all partners on meetings, and results of training
- Factual: statistics available via questionnaires

b) Evidence will be provided by:

- partners
- users
- the website and other relevant sources

## 5. Evaluation methodology

The general External Evaluation aspects include:

- evidence of good practice,
- quality of outcomes, and
- partners' and end-users' involvement.

The External Evaluation execution and process include:

1. Formative evaluation:

- On-going contact and email discussions with project co-ordinator and partners
- On-going observation and analysis of project documents via the mailing list and website
- Observation of meetings
- Text-based discussions (on-line chats)
- Face-to-face interviews with project partners at meetings
- Observation and feedback from end users
- Evaluation of the relationship of outcomes to stated objectives

2. Summative evaluation

- Analysis of end results of the project
- Evaluation of whether stated objectives have been met
- Application of quality principles
- Evaluation of whether this was done in a good way

Quantitative and qualitative data to be collected:

- results from trials
- statistics / feedback
- website / workspace / mailing list
- evidence of progress against target (as stated in the Proposal)
- evidence of participation (of partners, of end users in developmental and final trials)

## 6. Deliverables

**Deliverables include:**

- External Evaluation/Quality Assurance Plan with Indicators of Achievement (IoA)
- Quality Assurance Monitoring and Evaluation
- External Evaluation/Quality Assurance Reports

**External evaluations and reports**

Two yearly reports to give:

- ✓ a clear picture of the project development
- ✓ the quality of the work undertaken
- ✓ the impact of the project outputs

They will compare all achievements against agreed Quality Principles and Indicators of Achievement (IoA) and make recommendations for improvement.

## 7. Indicators of Achievement re project products and materials

1. Appropriateness for the target group
2. Focus on specific needs of target user
3. High relevance of materials
4. Assessment of operational competence to international standards
5. Clarity of aims (objectives, skills, levels)
6. Clarity of achievement (regarding success and weaknesses)
7. Clarity of presentation (clear, logical structure)
8. Clarity of rationale (of approach used)
9. Consistency (between aims and realisation)
10. External coherence (between parts)
11. Methodological integrity
12. Linguistic integrity (appropriateness of language used)
13. Practicality (of activities)
14. User-friendliness (easy to use)
15. Interactivity (stimulation of response)
16. Motivation
17. Personal development

## 8. Indicators of Achievement re project website, based on Website Usability principles

1. Easy access
2. Clear structure
3. Easy navigation, functionality
4. Pleasing interface design
5. Adapted to different screen resolutions
6. Optimised: supporting different browsers
7. Comfortable to read materials and resources
8. Opportunities for downloading
9. Providing reliable and exhaustive information
10. Well-edited and consistent materials
11. Providing feedback and contact form

## 9. Areas of Evaluation

**7 main areas considered crucial for project success are being evaluated, and namely:**

1. Objectives, results and products
2. Coherence between work-plan and activities carried out to date
3. Partnership and transnational dimension
4. Management and functionality
5. Financial management
6. Evaluation and Quality Assurance, Quality and Validity of Outputs
7. Dissemination and exploitation (Valorisation)

**The evaluation looks at:**

1. Objectives, results and products: Are all planned project outcomes / results available and are they in accordance with aims and objectives as declared in the original application or as officially amended?
2. Coherence between work-plan and activities carried out to date: Have the planned activities been implemented in accordance with the project's work-plan as declared in the original application, or as officially amended, and have any variations been adequately justified?

3. Partnership: Are there clear indications of a real and effective involvement of partners and their concrete contribution to the project results? Are there significant changes in the partnership when compared with the application? If so, are such changes justified?
4. Management: How was the project managed? To what extent did the consortium use any mechanisms for effective monitoring to ensure that all project objectives will be reached within the project lifetime? Were the decision making and problem solving adequate? Have any variation from original plans been satisfactorily justified?
5. Financial management: Are the expenditures appropriate and in line with the project's activities and results as described in the relevant reports?
6. Evaluation and/or quality assurance: How well was the project's strategy for evaluation implemented? To what extent has the project considered the comments or recommendations addressed following the external assessment and the NA recommendations?
7. Dissemination: How effectively did the project carry out its plan for dissemination? What is the quality of the dissemination activities? To what extent has the consortium addressed the issue of the exploitation of the project results during and beyond the project lifetime?

## 10. Results of evaluation undertaken

### 10.1. Note

The SLEST 2.0 project progress evaluation was executed via online questionnaires filled in by the project partners, interviews and discussions with project partners mainly via email exchange and Skype meetings, and external evaluator's review of project processes and products development at this interim stage, and regular communication with the coordinator and the internal evaluation partners. These were intended to give a better picture of the developments so far. The progress evaluation was designed to look into the 7 main areas stated above and considered crucial for project success, as follows:

1. Objectives, results and products
2. Coherence between work-plan and activities carried out to date
3. Partnership and transnational dimension
4. Management and functionality
5. Financial management
6. Evaluation and Quality Assurance, Quality and Validity of Outputs
7. Dissemination and exploitation (Valorisation)

The SLEST 2.0 project has all the prerequisites for success. This is based on the fact that SLEST 2.0 is a TOI of a very successful project. Other important prerequisites are the previous history of cooperation between some of the partners. The native speakers' availability is crucial for the editing of the materials and their language appropriateness. And last but not least the Quality Assurance Board team with the professional expertise and experience of its members is a major prerequisite for meeting the quality criteria and subsequently, ensuring greater project impact and sustainability of project outcomes.

### 10.2. Area 1: Objectives, results and products

This section deals with the project objectives and results.

Though the project results are of interim nature and some are still drafts, the evaluation looks and will be looking at the following aspects:

1. Quality of results
2. Relevance of the results
3. Tangibility of the results
4. Durability of the results
5. Added-value of the results
6. Visibility of the results

The materials are, in my opinion well developed and their piloting will generate fruitful insights and feedback. Further below there is a number of observations on the drafts as they are at present.

The collection of materials is exhaustive and covers all angles needed to make the SLEST 2.0 work a useful and indispensable tool for the relevant targeted language learners.

As the materials have been written by different partners from different countries some synchronisation and standardisation in layout and content may further be needed reflecting the already set Indicators of Achievement (IoA) and quality standards.

Other approaches to materials that will guarantee the **Reliability** of the materials that also need to be addressed in the final stage of the project are as follows:

- Consistency (between aims and realisation)
- Internal coherence (between parts/units)
- Methodological integrity
- Linguistic and factual integrity
- Textual integrity (integrity of genre)
- Practicality (of exercises, activities)

### **Review of the major SLEST 2.0 project outcomes:**

#### **Website:**

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The project website (<http://slest2-0.eu/>) was launched relatively early in the project, and is now operational and in use. It is available in the six partners' languages: Spanish, Italian, English, German, Greek and Turkish.

The consortium has clear and shared understanding that website is a major tool for the project materials piloting, dissemination, and last but not least – exploitation of results, and informing the general public and the interested parties about the project developments.

At present the website hosts six pages: Home page, About SLEST 2.0, Downloads, News, Contact and Collaborators.

The Downloads page is vital for the project as it hosts the major outputs of the project and materials developed. The first materials and documents have already been published on this page.

The downloadable materials are free of charge and no password-protected which provides easy access to the results to the end-users and the general public.

The Collaborators sections are still to be developed but the beginning is promising. The first steps in this respect have already been made and in the Spanish “Colaboradores” section there are two institutions linked, i.e. La Asociación de Empresarios Hoteleros de la Costa del Sol (AEHCOS) and La Confederación de Empresarios de Málaga (CEM).

It is also advisable the supporters of the previous project listed at <http://www.slest-tourism.org/uk/marco.htm> to be invited to become network partners or involved in some other way, as these are well-recognised institutions in the field of tourism, e.g. the Hilton, Sheraton and Marriott hotels, Deutscher Reise Verband, etc.

The project website has proved to be a great tool for project management, product development, and for dissemination and exploitation of the results.

As seen from above the project materials are made available on the project website for all those interested in the exploited pedagogical approach in language teaching. In addition, it is used in the dissemination and exploitation of the project results.

The materials are easily accessible at no cost, which is a very good prerequisite for greater impact and use of the project results.

The project website also provides information about the partners and their contact details.

The project website (the News section) redirects to the SLEST 2.0 Facebook page which is seen as positive.

**Notes from the external evaluator:**

On the whole the website meets the criteria set out in the Indicators of Achievement re project website, based on Website Usability principles, and namely:

1. Easy access
2. Clear structure
3. Easy navigation, functionality
4. Pleasing interface design
5. Adapted to different screen resolutions
6. Optimised: supporting different browsers
7. Comfortable to read materials and resources
8. Opportunities for downloading
9. Providing reliable and exhaustive information

Further attention shall be paid to the last two criteria, and namely

10. Well-edited and consistent materials
11. Providing feedback and contact form

The website shall be regularly updated and should contain all relevant information and materials uploaded in due time.

The consortium shall try to make the website and project materials more appealing and avoid professional jargon and project slang.

The text could need a change in terms of ensuring better readability: bigger fonts, and different colouring for instance.

As it is a major dissemination tool all versions of the dissemination materials should be uploaded and all materials to be transferred in PDF format.

The website and its content should continue to be available in all partners' languages as this will ensure greater impact and usability of the results.

The good web statistics is important and the consortium needs to investigate further how to increase the number of visitors and users, to ensure greater impact and sustainability of project results, larger dissemination and exploitation. Some suggestions in this respect would include using free but more detailed counters such as Webalizer and Google Analytics, ensuring Usage Statistics, information re unique users, page visits, Summary by Month, day, etc., visits by country.

Partners may want to consider adding more relevant links.

It might also be a good idea to provide link(s) to the EC, EACEA, Spanish National Agency and the LLP (could be done as hyperlinking the LLP programme logo), and possibly make a link to the new Erasmus Plus programme.

Associated partners can be invited to exchange links and hyperlinked in order to ensure greater visibility and project impact.

Adding a section called Useful links might also be considered. Links to other relevant sites referring to languages for the tourism industry are important and can contribute to users' involvement.

Partners are advised to make a link to the old/initial SLEST project (<http://www.slest-tourism.org/>) and making sure the old website is in existence.

Partners may also want to consider whether to place an online contact form for the visitors who may want to get in touch with the project.

It might also be a good idea to have an online feedback form for people who may want to provide comments, suggestions and recommendations for improvement, which will ensure broader piloting of the project products, videos and other materials for instance.

Links to other websites have to be regularly checked so no dead links to be found.

Partners should consider placing the LLP disclaimer in the respective language in the national pages, and not just in English.

### **SLEST 2.0 Facebook page**

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The Facebook has established itself as one of the most powerful social media and is a great tool for making your project visible and your products usable.

The consortium has developed a SLEST 2.0 Facebook page to reach wider audience and ensure greater dissemination and exploitation of results. The page is hosted at <https://www.facebook.com/slest2.0>. The Facebook group was created in order to make the project outputs known to the potential users and provide a forum for discussion.

The SLEST 2.0 Facebook page and the project website are interlinked and the project website redirects to the SLEST 2.0 Facebook page which is seen as positive.

550 people have liked the SLEST 2.0 Facebook page so far. The page provides project information and links to the website and features various events.

A Twitter account has also been created: <https://twitter.com/search?q=%40SLEST2&src=typd> but needs further attention not to stay empty.

The evaluator finds the idea of using this most popular social media as very positive. Partners may also explore the opportunities for attracting more visitors and/ or look into other tools like Pinterest, G+, for example. Any project-related news of interest to the public has to be featured there as well.

### **SLEST 2.0 Materials**

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Partners have completed the work versions of the materials with minor technical delays, created layout for all language versions and uploaded them onto project web site

The creation of platform on the website with materials has been slightly delayed but is now in place.

The updating of SLEST material was executed in due time, even finished two months before the deadline, which shows serious commitment of project partners.

A Handbook with Instructions for working with the SLEST 2.0 E-learning materials was prepared by the coordinator UET and the UK partner (United Kingdom: European College of Business and Management), which is of great help.

Guidelines for SLEST 2.0 e-learning courses were developed to assist partners in this most challenging task, which the external evaluators finds most positive.

A Survey (questionnaire) about e-learning language courses was prepared and agreed upon.

#### **Documents (Downloads section):**

The documents published on the website are divided into two main sections as follows:

- A. Standardized Models, and
- B. Additional materials

The Standardized Models are subdivided by:

- Language level, i.e. A2 and B1, and
- Linguistic and occupational features: General and Specific

The Specific Standardized Models are not published yet but the work is well on progress.

Each Standardized Model features the four occupations targeted by the project:

- 1) Waiter
- 2) Receptionist
- 3) Travel agent
- 4) Tourist guide

The documents are presented in the six languages of the partners: English, German, Greek, Italian, Spanish, and Turkish.

The Additional materials section is intended to host useful materials as follows:

- final report (public)
- flyer
- phrasebook
- glossary
- handbook on how to work with SLEST 2.0
- results from surveys

The Documents section ensures easy reference and different approaches in browsing and searching.

Partners are advised to review the national pages regularly so they follow the same organization and navigation patterns for consistency.

As previously stated the materials are easily accessible at no cost, which is a very good prerequisite for greater impact and use of the project results.

#### **Videos:**

The videos (2 for each profession) are ready. They were made with Italian actors, and the next task is to dub them in the other languages.

The consortium has expressed clearly the need for realistic, authentic scenarios which are crucial.

Using the Vimeo platform and creating a You Tube channel for the videos is also advisable for both piloting and for dissemination and exploitation purposes.

Videos and audio recordings need special attention to avoid some potential risks. The external evaluator would like to point out some development aspects to be taken into consideration, such as:

- adding short description of the video
- need for good dynamics
- linguistically correct stuff
- good camera work, recording and editing
- appropriate length/duration (N.B. Partners have agreed on duration is between 1 1/2 and 3 minutes)
- interesting content/topics including cultural context videos (N.B. Partners have agreed the videos to be closely related to the "stories", the centre part of the language material, which is rather positive)
- usefulness as teaching and learning material (linked to / with exercises)
- suitability for language subtitling if need be and always with text next to it (N.B. Partners have already decided on the latter)
- language exercises of different types
- appropriateness with regard to CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) principles and standards
- task-based exercises to accompany the video materials (N.B. Partners have already decided on this)

Though not a technical expert the external evaluator recommends the partners to pay special attention to:

- quality of image and sound - make the best of the equipment used
- proper lightning
- higher resolution videos where possible
- environment: background noises (unacceptable for people with hearing aids and for (language) learning purposes
- sound and image synchronized
- relevance of the videos: a) fit for purpose and b) fit for use
- appropriate speed of speech depending on the level of the language learner
- appropriate length of speech depending on the level of the language learner
- balance between different parts (e.g. avoid long introductions)
- appropriate subtitling
- LLP logos and disclaimers as required to be added and in the national language

### **Exercises:**

This has been a very ambitious and time consuming task, given the large volume of exercises to transfer. Additional support of an IT specialist was needed. Moreover the limitations of the software had to be taken into account. Efforts have been made to make the exercises user-friendly and engaging, accessible and easily understood.

The database of exercises is in place. A total of more than 800 exercises are now available divided into relevant sections as follows:

- Waiter
- Receptionist
- Travel Agent
- Tour Guide
- General Exercises

The SLEST materials were updated in due time. The Greek versions of the materials were delivered on time. E-and u-learning contents were decided upon.

The quality of the eXelearning exercises is good. It has to be noted the differences in the design across different languages are inevitable as the versions of eXelearning are different for the various languages. Nevertheless the design in each language version is the same. Partners have taken a very good decision re the need to re-think how to classify the exercises in terms of levels.

### **Notes from the external evaluator:**

Piloting is vital for the success of the project. An important note is that in the piloting phase learners' motivation will be a key factor for the success of the piloting to avoid drop-outs. Moreover the consortium envisages appropriate numbers for piloting such as at least 30 people in each country and 80 hours of work.

Creating a webpage for piloting as agreed at the first meeting shall be seen as immediate task at this stage of the project.

It might be a good idea as already suggested to have an online feedback form for people who may want to provide comments, suggestions and recommendations for improvement.

The European Dimension issues should always be addressed e.g. links from the website and the materials to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, to the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe, and also to European Language Portfolios, and Europass Language Passports are advisable. The linking to online dictionaries will also be of help for the users.

Partners have agreed and this has been clearly stated in the developed Handbook to refer always to the CEFR (Common European Framework for Languages) levels and use the CEFR skills, and namely:

- Listening
- Spoken Interaction
- Spoken Production
- Reading
- Writing

Using level names like 'simple' or 'medium' shall be avoided as they are not in compliance with the levels of the CEFR and this may cause confusion.

In any case partners are advised to refer back to the application where the targeted levels of the materials are specified as A2 to B1.

The peer-to-peer evaluation will be crucial for the success of the project. Piloting of the materials with potential end-users is also vital both for the quality and the appropriateness of the materials, as for the end users involvement in the project at all relevant stages.

The quality of audio recordings is crucial as poor sound and external noises may hamper the Listening Comprehension, prevent proper assessment of skills and bring misleading results in the assessment. Therefore the partnership is advised to address this issue early in the materials design phase and avoid complaints at the piloting phase that may bring up the need for re-recording and/or re-shooting.

The Consortium can take into account the possibility of the language learning material to become a course (or part of) organised by partners in the future for further exploitation and sustainability of the project results. Passing grades shall be established and clearly explained.

Partners should use the same logo and disclaimers in their national language everywhere. Check for consistency and standard layout is needed.

To make hyperlinks from the contents page to the relevant section in the text for easier reference and no need to scroll down and search the whole document is advisable.

Partners shall make sure the required logos, disclaimers, project number and written mention appear everywhere as requested.

The copyright issues shall always be addressed, esp. with regard to pictures to be used for the exercises. When partners provide their own pictured quality of pictures and/or images shall be considered. Some proper pictures might be bought for a small fee from specialized sites.

As previously stated links to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, to the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe, and also to European Language Portfolios are advisable.

Examples:

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages at

[http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/cadre1\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/cadre1_en.asp)

Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe at <http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/>

The European Language Portfolio portal of the Council of Europe at

<http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/>

Users may not be familiar with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the Council of Europe levels, and may also be interested in downloading (for free) and completing their own language portfolio.

One other suggestion is to make a link to the Europass Language Passport page at

<http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/european-skills-passport/language-passport>, so that users may use the self-assessment tool for their language skills and qualifications, and also, to create their own Europass Language Passport.

The issues re copyrights (music, text, etc.) have always to be properly addressed.

## **Conclusion:**

The envisaged outcomes are on progress despite some delays mainly due to technical difficulties and lack of or small experience with technology of the new partners.

The planned project outcomes so far are available and in accordance with the aims and objectives as declared in the original application

Specific and tangible progress indicators have been adopted by the partnership.

Despite some difficulties encountered there is strong commitment in the consortium to have everything in place as promised in the application! The external evaluator has no reason to believe there are obstacles that may jeopardize the success of the project.

All the materials produced so far meet the quality standards agreed and are in conformity with the principles set by the European Commission, EACEA and the LLP Programme.

The expertise and experience from the old partners, the methodological and technical support, and the proper guidance and counseling on their part, have lead to a great progress of the new partners in the development of the project outcomes and results.

The internal quality management is based on monitoring activities and milestones, and is executed by the German partner. Each partner of the consortium reports and provides feedback including assessment of products.

Most of the milestones and tasks included in the latest Management Plan were met and the quality of the products meets the established standards.

With regard to the above, the next Project Meeting in Rome, scheduled for October is crucial for the SLEST 2.0 project quality of outcomes and the successful completion of project tasks as envisaged in the proposal.

### **10.3. Area 2: Coherence between work-plan and activities carried out to date**

The planned activities are being implemented in accordance with the project's work plan as declared in the original application. There is coherence between the revised work plan and the activities carried out to date. The project ensures real and effective involvement of the partners.

Project activities have been in accordance with the project's work-plan reflecting the original application. The activities implemented are consistent with the work packages declared in the proposal.

There have been some minor changes in the work-plan, which have not influenced project's development.

The variations have been justified and the revised work-plan provides clear structure, tasks and deadlines, as well as partners' responsibilities.

The consortium has regularly used various tools for ensuring the coherence such as:

- Reports
- Comparison checks at project meetings
- Management Plans updated regularly
- Comparison checks with Milestones and Tasks documents produced

The project progress to date is satisfactory. There is clear enough picture of the project development so far. The planned project outcomes/results are in accordance with the aims and objectives as declared in the original application. All planned interim project outcomes/results are available at this stage. The quality of the work undertaken is good and the envisaged final outcomes are well on progress.

### **10.4. Area 3: Partnership and transnational dimension**

Partners seem to show and share better common understanding and responsibility.

There has been concrete distribution of tasks between partners, and all partners have been involved effectively.

The partners' tasks proposed have been allocated according to their initially declared competences and expertise.

There has been effective involvement of the partners in general, concrete distribution of tasks between partners and their contribution to the project processes, results and outcomes.

Despite the lack of experience in such projects and being a new partner in the project the Greek partners have shown responsibility and commitment and have delivered on time.

Diversity is encouraged and language diversity is also encouraged.

There have been shared aims of the Project, but the partnership has to make sure all partners share common understanding of Project functioning principles.

The work atmosphere is generally positive and relaxed, though in the initial stages of the project there were a few members who did not seem to feel always part of the team. There was also limited understanding of own role in the case of some partners at the start, which has considerably improved in the later stages.

The external evaluators finds it positive that the major issues are solved and the partnership works properly at the moment, thanks to the team-building initiatives on one hand, and, on the other hand, to the increased interest in the project activities alongside with the increased confidence and competence acquired at and following partners' meetings and in the work process.

#### **10.5. Area 4: Management**

Management Plan has been in place from the very start and agreed by the partnership.

Two partners' meetings have been held so far: kick-off in Dusseldorf, Germany, and in Athens, Greece.

The results of the external evaluation surveys conducted after each meeting were positive.

Minutes have been released in due time.

The coordinator UET and AJT, the German partner, responsible for quality, have supplied the consortium members with Status reports reflecting the state of the project and the developments (end of February 2014 and mid May 2014). These reports are a key tool for checking the actual achievement of component outputs against plan.

Besides the day-to-day communication every 6 months partners submit a report on the progress of the different parts of the project.

As already stated the management of the network in general is based on clear proceedings.

The managerial structure and communication channels have been appropriate and have improved.

Proper involvement of partners and division of tasks are in place.

Appropriate mechanisms are in place and used for monitoring of progress and quality assurance.

Reporting procedures seem adequate.

All relevant documents including minutes are made available to partners in due course.

Internal communication strategy has been in place using various communication tools such as mail, email, online (Skype) meetings, as well as the platforms used by the project.

Partnership meetings are adequately serviced in terms of infrastructure.

Trust among partners is good.

There are no crucial delays but deadlines and time frame are generally not always respected.

There have not been discussions with partners re distribution of tasks – the results are positive when these are discussed in timely manner, sorted out, and, if need be, reflected in the budget.

Management role, decision-making and problem-solving processes seem to be more adequate. The coordinator may further need to apply Risk Management skills in dealing with unexpected situations, time constraints and deadlines pressure in this crucial stage of the project, and to ensure proper involvement of all partners, division of tasks among the members of the consortium, and their effective contribution to the project results.

Though most of the issues have been solved in due course, the project partners may consider a few good practice examples for improved communication and management:

Re-assess the roles and expectations of all partners

- assess the role partners currently have and roles they might see themselves fit to take
- reassigning roles and resources (including budget) according to partners' capacity, performance up to now, and current situation, if need be

Clarify management style and roles

- autocratic or democratic? supportive/directive or laissez-faire?
- give clear roles to people, with a "job-description" and hierarchical line (reporting patterns, questions, etc.)
- increase the role of the Project Coordinator and the Contractor (UoM)
- improve communication within the partnership, and between the Project Coordinator, the Contractor, the internal evaluator, and the partners

Improve meeting planning and organisation

- present Agendas well in advance (e.g. 2 months first draft, some time for comments, final one month before) to allow time management (both in terms of booking flights and on site)
- share roles at the meeting among partners to draw on existing expertise
- use a sheet for allocation of responsibilities for each meeting (share roles between management, host, and partners)
- send in advance the materials/proposals/changes that are to be discussed to allow focus on decision-making and future planning

Improve work efficiency within the Project

- re-allocate tasks within the Project by submitting a contractual amendment to the NA
- make a new roadmap with roles and deadlines
- encourage initiative, but control the work and monitor it against agreed transparent benchmarks
- improve monitoring and internal evaluation (each partner to be involved)

Final note: the project is well-managed and the management and coordination arrangements have been efficient. The consortium uses mechanisms for effective monitoring to ensure that all project objectives will be reached within the project lifetime. The decision-making and problem-solving have been appropriate and adequate. Appropriate decisions have been taken to support effective implementation and problem resolution. Variations from original plans have been slight and have been satisfactorily justified.

## **10.6. Area 5: Financial management**

The financial management is run by the coordinator and each partner has an assigned financial officer for the proper financial management of the project. The financial management of the partnership is appropriate and based on clear proceedings. Expenditures so far have been in line with project's activities. There is a fairly transparent budgeting.

Partners were provided with all relevant documentation including the Administrative and Financial Handbook and given clear explanations regarding rules and regulations at meetings.

All relevant documents were distributed to partners and discussed in detail at meetings.

Some partners may need further assistance given their small experience or lack of such.

On the whole the financial management has been solid and based on clear procedures. The expenditures made so far seem appropriate and in line with the project's activities and results. Budget variations are justified and well-documented. The consortium receives the necessary advice on financial management and reporting issues.

### **10.7. Area 6: Evaluation and Quality Assurance, Quality and Validity of Outputs**

The consortium has the German partner as an internal evaluator and external evaluation of the partnership's work is also in place.

Quality Management Plan has been in place from the very start and agreed by the partnership.

Internal evaluation criteria were set at the start. They include:

#### ***Relevance***

- User-centredness (personal and professional needs)
- Accountability (general aims)
- Appropriateness (to context)

#### ***Transparency***

- Clarity of aims (objectives, skills, levels)
- Clarity of achievement (regarding success and weaknesses)
- Clarity of presentation (clear, logical structure)
- Clarity of rationale (of approach used)

#### ***Reliability***

- Consistency (between aims and realisation)
- Internal coherence (between parts/units)
- Methodological integrity
- Linguistic and factual integrity
- Textual integrity (integrity of genre)
- Practicality (of exercises, activities)

#### ***Participation***

- Involvement (in the learning process)
- Personal interest (users' own opinion and interests)
- Partnership (sharing responsibility)

The consortium has agreed and adopted a Quality Assurance Plan with Indicators of Achievement (IoA). Benchmarks have been and will be used for summative and formative evaluation over the relevant project phases.

#### **The Indicators of Achievement (IoA) adopted are as follows:**

- Clear learning objectives
- High relevance and motivation
- Autonomous learning
- User-centred learning
- Focus on specific needs of target users
- Task-based materials

Evaluation and quality assurance are being implemented effectively and an external assessment of the partnership's work is ensured.

Nevertheless the Evaluation and Quality Assurance activities have to be responsibility of all partners, and not just the German partner and the coordinator.

The Quality Assurance shall be seen as a continuous process throughout the project

- from project start-up;
- continue throughout its implementation, and
- beyond project life.

The Quality Assurance activities will provide

- monitoring and advice during project implementation,
- ex-ante evaluations

The Quality Assurance will help improve

- the manner in which the project objectives and requirements are specified and implemented
- the quality of the final project deliverables

The Quality Assurance guarantees common understanding of and agreement on key issues such as:

- project objectives
- partners' roles and responsibilities
- meeting users' requirements
- critical success factors, risks, constraints
- impact

Evaluation strategy is in place (internal and external). Qualitative and quantitative indicators have been established and followed.

Monitoring and recommendations have been implemented.

The project also provides opportunity for external feedback from experts and potential users.

Recommendations from the NA were taken into consideration.

Partners have to pay regular attention to quality criteria to ensure the success of the outputs.

Attention should be paid to more active involvement of target groups, including policy makers, in the development of outputs (also as potential new users and working groups).

There has been innovative use of methodology (e-learning and u-learning), intended for self-study, semi-autonomous and tutor-supported learning, as well as envisaged reference to EU initiatives: e.g. the reference to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

On the whole the project's strategy for evaluation is well-implemented.

The evaluation activities so far have been satisfactory.

The project caters for active feedback from stakeholders and end-users.

#### **10.8. Area 7: Dissemination and exploitation (Valorisation)**

The dissemination and exploitation strategy adopted by the partnership aims at ensuring impact and sustainability.

A dissemination plan has been developed involving all partners and using different approaches and forms for different target groups. It includes various tools such as the website; the promotional materials developed and produced; contacts with the stakeholders and the partners' counterparts, participation in various events.

The Deployment Plan has been designed and is currently under re-development featuring proposals from all partners. It will be regularly and will be a work in progress.

Flyers were ready on time. Same for press release texts. The publication of the newsletter was postponed as the partners have agreed it should go public when the important materials are in place to be presented to the general public and target groups. This decision seems reasonable.

The added-value on a personal level for the participants in relation to the envisaged development of the project has already been visible.

This area is not evaluated extensively yet and there is limited information so far on the impact. Still there are good prerequisites for innovation and impact, given the various platforms and communication channels and tools provided or envisaged.

As already noted the website is crucial as SLEST 2.0 is a TOI project. It shall be functional, regularly updated and operational and perhaps more lively and appealing. Samples/materials are to be placed there in due time, and it is to be considered whether to have a Feedback form and/or Join us form for direct contact.

As already stated the good web statistics is important and the consortium needs to investigate further how to increase the number of visitors and users, to ensure greater impact and sustainability of project results, larger dissemination and exploitation. Some suggestions in this respect would include using free but more detailed counters such as Webalizer and Google Analytics, ensuring Usage Statistics, information re unique users, page visits, Summary by Month, day, etc., visits by country.

The partnership is committed to producing copyleft materials, including videos suitable for language teaching and learning, which is a good prerequisite for wider dissemination and exploitation of the project results.

The partnership uses various communication channels and tools and there have already been some very good examples of dissemination activities.

The partnership is advised to change Deployment Plan to Exploitation Plan for consistency with the accepted EU project terminology

The partnership is also advised to prepare a Sustainability Plan (exploitation beyond project life).

In general, though still at development stages the project carries out its plan for dissemination effectively. The dissemination activities carried out so far have been of good quality.

The consortium addressed the issue of the exploitation of the project results during and after the project lifetime. The project caters for active participation and involvement of stakeholders and end-users. The project has also considered ensuring bigger impact of the project outputs.

#### **Some recommendations from the external evaluator:**

All partners should be more involved in the valorisation process. To ensure successful dissemination and exploitation partners shall consider how genuinely new the activities and additional products are to the target group and what their European added-value is. Dissemination and exploitation plans shall be updated regularly identifying targeted groups and users.

All news and materials added have to be featured in the various tools used: website, Facebook, etc., as these tools are interlinked, and may often have different users/visitors/members. New opportunities like You Tube and/or Vimeo can also be explored. Use of social media may further be addressed: beside the Facebook page partners may consider other options like, Pinterest, Google +, LinkedIn, etc.

A Twitter account has been created: <https://twitter.com/search?q=%40SLEST2&src=typd>. The partners are advised to start publishing notices, etc, so it does not stay empty of content.

The Consortium is strongly advised to use some databases to register the project such as the Adam Database (<https://www.adam-europe.eu/adam/homepageView.htm#.VASXC5SSw7k>) in making the results of the project available to a wide public; moreover SLEST 2.0 is a Leonardo project.

There are other great opportunities provided by the EC to ensure better dissemination and exploitation of the products, the innovative contents and the interesting practices, such as the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE) at [http://ec.europa.eu/education/opportunities/adult-learning/epale\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/opportunities/adult-learning/epale_en.htm)

In looking for potential interested partners and networks the consortium may consider the newly created dissemination platform, i.e. the Erasmus+ website for dissemination and exploitation of results at <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/>, where for instance the initial SLEST project is featured (see <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/e1e52642-cbff-4bc5-a1c2-0b6b8b9f8638>).

Alongside with the project website, and the project pages on partners' websites, these shall be regularly updated in order to enhance their use and the number of new and returning visitors

The partnership is advised to review the envisaged activities, update the plan, and explore all opportunities for further dissemination and exploitation of results in the last stage of the project, and also plan for sustainability and use of the results beyond project life.

## **11. Critical factors challenges and risks to be taken into account**

These have already been pointed out in the previous communications and meetings, and taken care of by the SLEST 2.0 project management, but the external evaluator will bring them to the partners' attention again.

### **11.1. General critical factors that may jeopardize the project's success:**

- lack of clear general goals that all the partners share
- vague task identification for the Project groups and individuals
- loose commitment to the project implementation of some partners, leading possibly to drop-outs, reduced contribution or 'pushing own agenda'
- insufficient usage of the versatile expertise of the partners
- too little time for the core tasks in relation to administration and finances, supporting activities, etc.

### **11.2. Challenges and risks seen at this stage are**

Given the nature of the project a serious challenge could be if a partner has no previous experience with

- Projects (some partners may need more assistance)
- Language teaching
- Computer Assisted Language Learning & CLIL
- VLE, ICT, etc., tools

The risks may also refer to:

- Delays, e.g. subtitles, videos
- Milestones and tasks not strictly followed
- Delays in distribution and completion of tasks
- Reporting, e.g. reports not to be delivered on time
- Absence of partners at meetings
- Documents not to be well on time prior to meetings
- Changes of people working on the project
- Different work styles and communication problems
- Intercultural issues and cultural differences to be taken into consideration Interpersonal skills
- Insufficient impact
- Sustainability not planned
- Conveying the message: use of Europeak, professional jargon
- EU Communication guidelines not followed, missing logos, disclaimers, etc.

- Milestones and tasks not followed
- Minutes coming late

## 12. Final Comments and Conclusions

This is the project's turning point from preparatory stages to implementation. Therefore the coordinator and the consortium partners shall do their best for the successful completion of the project, making sure all share common understanding of and agreement on key project issues such as:

- project objectives
- partners' roles and responsibilities
- meeting users' requirements
- critical success factors, risks, constraints
- organisational impact.

The Intellectual Property Rights agreements have to be signed as soon as possible.

The issue of the exploitation of the project results beyond the project lifetime via a Exploitation Beyond Project Life and Sustainability Plan has to be addressed, with realistic provisions to ensure the durability of the project's results and envisage appropriate mainstreaming processes.

The consortium should make sure partners, interested parties and stakeholders be more actively involved in the project activities with special focus on dissemination and exploitation, given the nature of the project: Transfer of Innovation. In other words the impact is crucial as SLEST 2.0 is a TOI project; hence Dissemination and Exploitation are absolutely vital for project's success.

The consortium partners have to stick to the financial rules and do not allow any overspending or ineligible expenses.

Based on the results, findings, critical factors and risks, the consortium shall make sure the 7 main areas evaluated are addressed and ensure that:

### Area 1. Objectives, results and products

- The envisaged outcomes are on progress and completed in due time
- The planned project outcomes are available and in accordance with the aims and objectives as declared in the original application

### Area 2. Coherence between work-plan and activities carried out

- Project activities are in accordance with the project's work-plan reflecting the original application
- The activities implemented are consistent with the work packages
- The changes in the work-plan to be minor and do not influence project's outcomes as promised. The variations have to be justified and the revised work-plan /Management Plan in this case to provide clear structure, tasks and deadlines.

### Area 3. Partnership

- Partners have to show and share better common understanding and responsibility
- Commitment in this final stage is crucial
- There has to be concrete distribution of tasks among partners, and all partners to be involved effectively in the final stage

### Area 4. Management

- The management of the network shall be based on clear proceedings.
- The managerial structure and communication channels have to be appropriate
- Proper involvement of partners and division of tasks have to be in place

- This is the time when all reporting shall be clarified and partners understand all issues, including administrative and financial rules, reporting documents, proofs, etc.!

N.B. Some partners may need further assistance

#### Area 5. Financial management

- The financial management run by the coordinator shall be based on clear proceedings
- Partners have to be provided with all relevant documentation and given clear explanations regarding rules and regulations
- Financial reporting rules and regulations have to be absolutely clear to every partner to avoid any confusion and problems at the final reporting period

N.B. Some partners may need further assistance

#### Area 6. Evaluation and quality assurance

- The consortium has an internal and an external evaluator and recommendations from both have to be taken into consideration plus the Progress Report assessment form the NA.
- Qualitative and quantitative indicators established have to be checked to ensure the successful end to the project.
- Certification: the consortium may consider the option for joint certification for increasing the EU-dimension of the project and ensuring wider impact.

#### Area 7. Dissemination and exploitation

- The dissemination and exploitation strategy adopted by the partnership aims at ensuring impact and sustainability and has to be checked to ensure the successful end to the project
- Intellectual Property Rights Agreement (IPRA) has to be reached.
- Exploitation Beyond Project Life and Sustainability Plan has to be agreed
- The next meetings should produce an action plan for the last months to be followed by each partner with clear structure, tasks and deadlines, and ensure partners' commitment.
- The consortium should make sure partners, interested parties and stakeholders be more actively involved in the project activities with special focus on finalization of products, and also further dissemination and exploitation, given the nature of the project.
- The partnership shall avoid "project speak" in web and dissemination information and follow the EU rules on visibility, disclaimers, etc.

Despite some difficulties encountered so far and some possible misunderstandings in the consortium there are all the prerequisites for a successful project and tangible outcomes in the end. There has been evidence of good practice, quality of outcomes, and partners' and end-users' involvement, and there is no reason to believe the stated objectives will not be met, and that end results of the project will not reach the established quality criteria in the next months, in case partners share common understanding, dedication to the project success and commitment to the project results.