

Quality Assurance
Evaluation of WP1 – WP3
Evaluation of Project Management

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Introduction:

This report is Ref. no 4 according to the Evaluation Plan. The following is the result of the audit of WP1 – WP3 and was made by interviews with ExBased Lead Project Manager Mikael Sorknæs and Co Project Manager Maibritt Solskov Lind. The report is divided according to the indicators (Ref. no. 2)

Evaluation:

Work plan:

Due to a turbulent start (see Documentation of Kickoff Meeting below) it was later in the spring 2010 a comprehensive and much more detailed work plan was made that included clear links between the partners, the work packages, the deliverables and the time frame. This detailed work plan was created by the project manager and the quality manager of the project in collaboration as we saw direct link between the work plan and the quality of the project. This detailed work plan was available on the ExBased forum from May 2010 and also publicly on the projects interim web site that was discontinued in the fall 2012 to make room for the re-designed final web site.

Kickoff Meeting:

Because of a partner change the kick-off meeting could not be scheduled before January 2010. Unfortunately a severe snow storm hit most of northern Europe at this time, so none of the English partners made it to the meeting. It was therefore decided at the kick-off meeting that a more detailed work plan would be made by the project management following the meeting and after consultation with the project partners. The first result was very superficial and inadequate.

Ongoing monitoring and plan of partner meetings:

The project has strived to make the partner meetings work as a transition from one work package to another. All partner meetings have therefore been placed at the end of one work package and the beginning of the next as stated in the project application.

This has created an excellent opportunity to look at the deliverables, discuss the status, make adjustments if necessary and agree on how to move forward. This was highly important not only for the project manager, but for all partners because everybody basically participated in monitoring the progress of the project.

From the agendas and especially the project meeting “minutes” (see appendices to Final report) it is quite clear that the different European backgrounds and professional skills have led to a number of changes in the project deliverables compared to what was envisioned in the project application.

Both the Training Module and the Tool Kit has changed along the way from the early development to the now fine-tuned versions. Through ongoing monitoring at the partner meetings we have definitely helped secure the quality deliverables we have ended up with.

Creation of an intranet with a dialogue forum:

It was very important from the outset to establish a communication platform. However, just as important as “WHERE” was the issue of establishing guidelines for “HOW” the project partners would communicate.

The intranet platform SharePoint because was chosen. It has the features needed, it is flexible and Project Lead had many years of experience working with this online platform. The ExBased SharePoint forum (<http://forums.exbased.eu>) was online before the project kickoff meeting in Esbjerg (DK) in January 2010 and was introduced to the project partners at this meeting.

Throughout the two-year project period the ExBased forum has served as primarily an archive, but also for collaboration on the content of the different work packages. To begin with the forum had a feature that made it possible for the partners to communicate directly, but this feature was not used because the partners preferred to communicate via email. It was therefore decided to remove this feature. The ExBased forum has served its purpose perfectly. There was a clear and simple structure implemented on the forum, so partners always knew where to find what they were looking for.

Dissemination plan:

In the ExBased project SDEO was the lead partner of dissemination and has developed both the overall project dissemination and exploitation plans. In the summer of 2011 the exploitation plan was revised as the partnership has grown over the time span of the ExBased project. On top of this all the partners have developed individual plans for both dissemination and exploitation. As for the overall project plans they list the initiatives, products and actions to be conducted in the time span of the ExBased project. The plans are useful guidelines for the project manager to ensure that dissemination and exploitation activities will be conducted. Especially the idea of each partner developing their own dissemination and exploitation plans at states what each partner will do have been effective from a project manager point of view. It helps to keep focus on dissemination throughout the project and not be an activity that you do at the very last minute of the project.

The main deviation from the plans has been the final conference. It was originally planned as a small final conference organized at the office of SDEO. Instead ExBased had the opportunity to chair two workshops at the Creativity World Forum in Hasselt, Belgium. This has been a major contribution to both the actual dissemination and exploitation of the project. Through the workshops we were able to first of all explain what process, results and products of the ExBased project is but more over we also guided the participants though one of the tools “the Customer

Experience Tool” developed in the project. They were able to get a real test of what this tool can bring of added value to their business in terms of taking in to account the desire among customers today to have a good experience when buying a product or a service. The feedback received at the end of the workshops were positive and many of the participants told us that they would take the tool home to their own company and use it to expand their understanding and not least widen their approach to their customers. It would not have been the same success with a more traditional set up for the final conference.

There is added value for Europe with this project. Some valuable tools have been produced and through the dissemination and exploitation plans and actions the partnership has been able to show and demonstrate the learning’s, the products and results out to a greater audience. The partnership have lifted as a common group and ensured a great team work.

Articles:

It has been extremely difficult to find newsletters or magazines interested in bringing an article about an EU project not devoted to provide policy input. SDEO has succeeded in writing and publishing two articles that has been published in April 2010 in the Newsletter of EICI (European Interest Group on Creativity and Innovation) and one in November 2011 in the newsletter of Creative Growth, which is now an ended EU funded project. Furthermore SDEO has written two different articles on ExBased in our own newsletter that goes to primarily actors in the region of South Denmark but also Danes in Brussels. Furthermore SDEO has on several occasions presented the ExBased project at several meetings when delegations have visited the South Denmark House in Brussels or when SDEO project officers have been on mission especially in the Southern Part of Denmark.

It is relevant to make articles about EU projects but as this project is not a policy project the relevance for European articles is limited. There are many EU project experiences and only the ones that produce guidelines for future policy actions might be able to catch the attention in the intense media flow in Brussels. Instead I believe that the focus should have been more on the local level and trying to getting out information and articles produced that are directly aimed at the ExBased target groups (SMEs as well as business consultants).

Website:

The finished project web site definitely reflects both the tone and feel of the ExBased project. It has a clear visual identity and it is structured to make most possible sense for users. We believe that the content provides a useful intro into the sphere of experience economy and a great on-line companion to our tools and their applicability in a business setting.

Relations that project partners create with consultants and companies:

This will addressed in Appendix 7