

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION PLAN

PROJECT “I CARE”

Informal Competences Assessment and Recognition for Employment
LLP-LDV-TOI-10-IT-487



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Summary of the project I CARE

The project **I CARE Informal Competences Assessment and Recognition for Employment**, co-funded by the Leonardo da Vinci Sectoral Programme Multilateral Projects Transfer of Innovation, aims at transferring procedures for the recognition and validation of informal competences and for the transparency of qualifications, within common frameworks at regional, national and European level (such as EQF and ECVET) and with particular reference to white jobs (baby sitters, carers of the elderly and for disabled people, etc.)

The project, promoted by TECLA Association for the local and European transregional cooperation, involves scientific organisations coming from Italy, UK and the Netherlands (respectively, La Sapienza University of Rome, the Institute of Education of the University of London and the Foundation Empowerment Centre EVC) as well as the Italian Provinces of Brescia, Campobasso and Pisa and the Romanian Employment Agency of the County of Bistrita-Nasaud.

In both Italy and Romania, in fact, given a highly selective labour market and a demographic characterised by an ever-older population, the scarcity of qualified and skilled workers is exacerbated by still inadequate qualification systems, the difficulty in making workers of the white jobs sector emerge from the submerged labour market and the lack of specific certification procedures for workers of such sector, who are often formally under-qualified despite gaining significant skills while working which, however tend to remain unrecognised.

In the first place, I CARE promotes the transfer to the staff of Italian and Romanian Employment Centres the innovative results of the project TIPEIL (www.tipeil.eu), that is of the digital portfolio methodology (and of the web based platform which supports that) which makes formal but in particular informal and non formal competences visible by including evidence of different kinds (texts, photographs, video footage) so as to show the individual's overall set of competences – in particular informal ones.

In the second place, I CARE favours the further development of such methodology in a Model for the assessment and certification of informal/non formal competences, related to the white jobs identified by the project. In order to integrate such Model in the employment centres, consistently with their current tools, all stakeholders operating in the training, labour and guidance sectors are involved (Regions, social bodies, professional associations, etc.)

1.2 Objectives of the external Communications Plan

The External Communications Plan described herein is a product of the I CARE project and specifically of “WP8 Dissemination and Valorisation”. Drawn up by TECLA Association and shared by all project partners, the Plan aims at a systematic presentation of the external

communication and dissemination strategy and activities¹ envisaged for the whole duration of the project (October 2010-September 2012) and at detailing, among other aspects, its objectives and related actions, the tools to be used, the target groups, the available time frame and the partners responsible.

As such, the Plan is a key document primarily oriented towards the project partners that acts as a Guideline to be consulted on a periodic basis for the effective and efficient planning and implementation of all envisaged dissemination and valorisation activities.

On another level, the Communications Plan is useful in providing all parties outside the partnership (including the same recipients of the communication activities) with an organic reference framework of the objectives, tools and methods of implementation of I CARE project communications activities.

2. STRATEGY

Effective and efficient communication is a key component for the success of a project. This particularly applies in the case of the I CARE project given its function as a Multilateral Project for Innovation Transfer (within the Leonardo da Vinci Sectoral Programme).

Indeed, if projects of this type aim, through the adaptation and transfer of innovative contents and results developed in previous Leonardo da Vinci or other projects, at producing real impact on education and training and on the organizations involved, the dissemination and distribution of project results both to direct recipients and to the various stakeholders that can support their integration at system level are crucial elements in attaining the objectives of the project.

For this reason, an entire WP has been devoted to communications activities (which will operate for the duration of the project) coordinated by TECLA as I CARE project leader and in which all partner organizations play a significant role.

In general, the purpose of the external communications activities is to promote the broad dissemination of project results and products to sectors/target groups as well as to raise awareness among potential users and the various stakeholders in the project issues (including the general public) in order to increase their involvement and contribute in the long-term to the steady-state operational implementation of I CARE results.

Specifically, the objectives of the communications activities are to:

- Disseminate information about both the project in general and on specific activities and products developed within it, highlighting their added value and innovation
- Strengthen and extend the involvement and participation of systems/target groups
- Raise the awareness of all other stakeholders (cf. Section 3 - Recipients) regarding the issues addressed by the project
- Inform the general public about what is happening in their area
- Provide the project with a “brand”, namely an image that becomes familiar hence easily and immediately recognisable

¹ Communications activities *within* the partnership will be performed via the following tools: private area on the project website, 3 partnership meetings, phone, fax, e-mail and Skype.

- Publicise financing by the European Commission thus what it is doing for the development of local areas and citizens

The communication strategy involves three phases of implementation.

During start-up and the first months of the project, the specific objective will be to provide information about the project and its products/results to be transferred, illustrating their potential and innovative character in order to build consensus and support concerning the project – elements necessary for the development of subsequent project activities.

Once I CARE is in the implementation phase, ongoing updates will be provided on the state of progress and the activities and the products developed, in order to strengthen and extend participation and interest in the project.

Lastly, in the final phase of the project it will be important to disseminate the lessons learned, best practices developed and the results achieved in order to ensure the sustainability of I CARE after its conclusion.

At all stages, the communication strategy will take into account the following principles in order to ensure that the actions of dissemination and their implementation have effective impact:

- avoid conveying too many messages at the same time (information overload produces confusion and dispersion)
- ensure the transparency of the messages to be conveyed
- use tools of different types (both “media” and “non-media” - cf. Section 4 Tools)
- model the language to the target groups in order to make the message interesting, personalised and relevant to each of them
- use at all times language which, although technical, is clear, understandable, direct and accessible
- disseminate the messages at local level in partner territories in Italy and Romania (Province of Brescia, Pisa and Campobasso and the County of Bistrita-Nasaud) and/or national level and/or European level, and promote as far as possible a two-way approach that involves the dissemination of information about the project on the one hand at local level and within the territories themselves (from top to bottom and diffusely at the base) and, on the other, from the territories towards, and for the attention of, national and European systems and towards other European countries and territories (from bottom to top).
- adhere to the guidelines on the visibility of the Programme and in particular include in all project-related communications and products the logo of the LLP, where possible that of the National Agency Leonardo da Vinci and where necessary the disclaimer of liability²

3. TARGET GROUPS

Listed below are the target groups/recipients of the communication and dissemination actions of the I CARE project, divided into direct target groups/recipients and other stakeholders to be reached.

² The I CARE project is financed with support of the European Commission. This (publication, document, communication) reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Direct target groups/recipients

- Employment Centres/Agencies (and similar bodies) in the partner territories in Italy and Romania
- Administrators/decision-makers in matters related to training standards, competences and professional qualifications (Italian regions belonging to the Partner Provinces, National Agency for Employment in Romania etc.).
- Media (local newspapers/ TV and radio stations etc.)

Other recipients

- Employment Centres/Agencies (and similar bodies) in other territories in Italy and Romania
- Other Italian Regions
- Workers in the white jobs sector
- Professional associations operating in the white jobs sector
- Training bodies, particularly operating in the white jobs sector
- National and local organisations that deal with the recognition and certification of competences
- European Commission
- Other LdV projects at European and national level
- The scientific community/experts in matters related to the recognition and certification of competences, particularly acquired in non formal and informal settings
- The general public

4. INSTRUMENTS

Illustrated below are the tools identified for communication and dissemination actions in the ICARE project, including the specific objectives and targets, the time frame and the partners responsible. The envisaged tools include those related both to specific communications and dissemination (website, seminars, etc.) and to project-related activities, which, however, are crucial in disseminating information and raising awareness about the issues addressed by the project (training workshops, etc.).

4.1 “MEDIA” Level

4.1.1 Graphic layout of the project

Specific objective: identify the project in a clear, immediate and highly communicative manner

Specific targets: all

Description: The graphic design primarily includes the logo, which is inserted in all project documents, communications and products as well as a standardised letterhead, presentations in .ppt format and the layout of brochures, posters and newsletters.

Implementation date: Month 1

Partner responsible: Province of Brescia

4.1.2 Project website

Specific objective: provide specific and constantly updated information on the project and its progress

Specific targets: all

Description: The website is particularly useful as a tool for disseminating information about the project to the general public and therefore to all target groups and stakeholders. The website, registered to a domain such as www.progettoicare.eu, will be produced in Italian and English and will include a public and private area. The public area will include specific information about the project and its objectives, activities, expected results, products and partnership; all project public products will be uploaded to this area (communication materials, publications etc.) as well as periodic news updates on the development of project plus links to sites of interest related to project issues (LdV, informal knowledge assessment etc.). The private area will instead be used only by partners for internal communication purposes and sharing project technical documents (minutes of meetings, reports, management and administrative formats etc.).

Implementation date: Month 3

Partner responsible: TECLA Association

4.1.3 Project Newsletter

Specific objective: provide prompt updates on the development of the project

Specific targets: employment centres/agencies (and similar bodies), administrators/decision-makers, professional associations, training institutions, local/national competence certification organisations, the scientific community.

Description: 3 thematic issues (in PDF format) of the newsletter will be produced containing updated information on the progress of project activities. The newsletter will be produced in Italian and English based on a model designed by TECLA Association; the partners will in turn send articles and contributions. The issues of the newsletter in PDF format will be uploaded to the public area of the website and sent to the target groups (mailing list made up by each partner).

Implementation date: Months 6, 12 and 18

Partner responsible: TECLA Association

4.1.4 Press releases&conferences in the partner territories in Italy

Specific objective: spread information about the project at local level in order to strengthen participation and raise awareness among the various stakeholders and the general public

Specific targets: employment centres/agencies (and similar bodies), administrators/decision-makers,

professional associations, training institutions, local/national competence certification organisations, the scientific community, media, general public.

Description: press releases will be issued by the Partner Provinces at key phases in the project such as the start-up of activities, organisation of training workshops and focus groups etc. The Italian Provinces will hold press conferences at the start and end of the project.

Implementation date: throughout the duration of the project at key phases.

Partners responsible: Partner Provinces in Italy

4.1.5 Dissemination of news about the project at local, national and European level

Specific objective: disseminate basic information about the project at local, national and European level in order to raise awareness among all stakeholders and the general public.

Specific targets: all

Description: news containing basic information on the project (objectives, activities, etc.) will be distributed at local, national and European level through the following channels of communication: partner websites, websites specializing in project-related issues, e-mailing lists, the ADAM European portal of projects and products developed within the Leonardo da Vinci Programme.

Implementation date: throughout the duration of the project

Partners responsible: All

4.2 “NON-MEDIA” Level

4.2.1 Project brochure

Specific objective: provide a clear, concise and easily understandable overview of the project

Specific targets: all

Description: the brochure will be produced in Italian, Romanian and English and will include basic information about the objectives, activities, expected results and the Partnership (1000 copies)

Implementation date: Month 4

Partner Responsible: TECLA Association (production), Province of Pisa (printing)

4.2.2 National information seminars

Specific objective: inform a wide audience made up of operators, experts, local authorities, etc. of the objectives of the project, results achieved and products developed.

Specific targets: employment centres/agencies (and similar bodies), administrators/decision-makers, professional associations, training institutions, local/national competence certification organisations, the scientific community.

Description: 2 national informational seminars will be organized in Italy and Romania. The first, to be held in Rome, is specifically designed to present the methodology and products developed in TIPEIL for the recognition of informal knowledge as well as the processes and methodologies for the assessment and certification of informal knowledge already implemented and validated in the Netherlands and the UK.

Implementation date: Months 3 and 12

Partners responsible: TECLA for the Seminar in Italy and the Employment Agency of the County of Bistrita-Nasaud for the Seminar in Romania.

4.2.3 Final project publication

Specific objective: disseminate the results of the project and best practices developed and transferred

Specific targets: employment centres/agencies (and similar bodies), administrators/decision-makers, professional associations, training institutions, local/national competence certification organisations, the scientific community.

Description: The final publication will be produced in Italian, English and Romanian and illustrate, among other aspects, the results achieved by the project and the best practices developed and will include the Model for the assessment and certification of informal/non formal competences for the profiles identified (2000 copies).

Implementation date: Month 24

Partners responsible: TECLA Association (production), Province of Campobasso (printing)

4.2.4 Final project conference

Specific objective: disseminate information on the results achieved by the project and discuss their sustainability and possible follow-up actions with the members of the partnership and the various stakeholders involved.

Specific targets: employment centres/agencies (and similar bodies), administrators/decision-makers, professional associations, training institutions, local/national competence certification organisations, the scientific community, European Commission.

Description: the final conference, lasting half a day, will be attended all project partners as well as representatives of national and European institutions and experts in the issues addressed by the

project. A presentation will be made of the results achieved, activities and best practices developed and lessons learned and, in particular, of the Model for the assessment and certification of informal/non formal competences developed during the project in order to discuss possible actions to be taken after the conclusion of ICARE.

Implementation date: Month 24

Partner responsible: TECLA Association

4.2.5 Dissemination of information during project meetings with target groups

Specific objective: disseminate specific information on the project (added value, innovation, objectives, activities etc.) in order to strengthen (and extend) participation in the project of the target groups

Specific targets: employment centres/agencies (and similar bodies), administrators/decision-makers

Description: in valorising the project and acquiring and disseminating results to recipients/potential users through the comparison of knowledge and experience between project operators and the involvement of stakeholders, particular importance is assumed by the project meetings and events aimed specifically at systems and target groups. Firstly, these involve the meetings of the Steering Committee, a multi-level body in charge of governance of the process for the assessment and certification of informal knowledge in addition to the Italian partners in the project, of representatives of the Regions hosting the Partner Provinces and of representatives of the social partners and the professional associations. Secondly, reference is made to the focus groups and training workshops conducted in Italy and Romania with the operators of the employment centres/agencies as regards, respectively, the validation of the Model for the assessment and certification of informal/non formal competences and the transfer of both the digital portfolio methodology and of the Model.

Implementation date:

- Steering Committee meetings: 3 meetings at the key phases in the project, i.e. Month 2, from Month 13 to Month 18; from Month 19 to Month 23
- Training workshops: from Month 4 to Month 9; from Month 19 to Month 23
- Focus groups: from Month 13 to Month 18

Partner responsible:

- Meetings of the Steering Committee: TECLA Association
- Training workshops: conducted by TECLA Association and La Sapienza University of Rome DPSS and organised by TECLA Association in Italy and by the Employment Agency of the County of Bistrita-Nasaud in Romania
- Focus group: TECLA Association in Italy and by Bistrita-Nasaud Employment Agency in Romania

5. MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

As project leader, TECLA Association will monitor and assess the communication and dissemination activities according to the following indicators related to the various communication tools identified:

TOOL	IMPLEMENTATION INDICATORS	RESULTS INDICATORS
Coordinated graphic design	1 logo produced	Logo inserted on all project communications, documents, products etc.
Website	N° of web pages published N° of documents uploaded in the reserved area	N° of visitors to public area Use of private area/other forms of communication
Newsletter	3 issues of the newsletter produced	N° of e-mail addresses to which the newsletter is sent N° of newsletters downloaded from the website
Press releases/conferences at local level	N° of press conferences held	N° of articles published in local press
News at local, national and European level	N° of news items published on Partner websites N° of news items published on other websites	
Brochure	1000 copies of the brochure printed	N° of brochures distributed N° of brochures downloaded from the website Representativity of recipients
National information seminars	2 seminars held	N° of invitees N° of participants Level of representativity of speakers Level of representativity of participants Level of satisfaction of participants
Final publication	2000 copies of the publication produced Publication on the website	N° of copies distributed Degree of diversification of recipients N° of downloads from the website
Final conference	1 final conference held	N° of invitees N° of participants Level of representativity of speakers Level of representativity of participants Level of satisfaction of

		participants
Project meetings with systems/ target groups	3 Steering Committee meetings 4 training sessions held 2 focus group meetings held	N° of participants Level of representativity of speakers N° of requests for further information Level of satisfaction of participants