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First Evaluation report

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1 INTRODUCTION

This document presents the outcomes of the first internal evaluation round of the BESTFORM project.

The main purposes of the internal evaluation process within Best Form are:

- To monitor and self-review the project activities.
- To promote and enhance collaboration and cooperation of the project partnership as well as with network communities
- To contribute to competent and efficient implementation of the planned tasks;
- To monitor the project development and supervise the progress of individual WPs.

The report is based on the Best Form evaluation tool “project monitoring questionnaire” (annex 1). It presents and analysis the results of the first evaluation round, which took place in April 2011 as a follow-up of the second project meeting.

A detailed evaluation report in-line with the BestForm Quality Management Plan (QMP) will be presented at project mid-term, summarising the outcomes of the first and second project evaluation round, a monitoring report of the project development and progress, a risks analysis report,

2 RESULTS OF THE 1ST EVALUATION ROUND

In the following an overview of the current status of the project is given based on the project monitoring questionnaire (annex 1). The questionnaire was answered by all partner organisations. The questionnaire is divided into three sections:

1. general aspects of project development and the role of partners;
2. communication; and,
3. added-value (of immediate outcomes).

Under each of these sections the partners were asked to:

- a. make an overall assessment (1 worst to 5 best)
- b. comment on any problems encountered and how they have been overcome – was the outcome satisfactory?;
- c. comment on any positive aspects; and,
- d. general remarks?

2.1 GENERAL ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND THE ROLE OF THE PARTNERS

In the first partners were asked to state about the current project development process, focusing on the dimensions of roles, planning and activities. The results are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Overview of the satisfaction with the project development in its dimensions.

Dimensions	Participants stating a "high to very high level of satisfaction" in percentage(number of answers)	Missing answers
Role of the co-ordinator in project development	100% (7)	1
Feasibility/practicality of project planning	100% (8)	-
Handling of administrative and financial matters	62,5% (5)	1
Problem-solving	100% (8)	-
Relevance between stated		-

objectives and activities carried out	87,5% (7)	
Accord and shared visions within the WP	87,5% (7)	-
Satisfaction with the state of development of activities in the WPs	87,5% (7)	-

The partners are very satisfied with the role of the co-ordinator regarding the project development (100%) as well as with the feasibility/practicality of project planning (100%) and also with the aspect problem-solving (100%) both rated seven times with. 87.5% of the partners are also satisfied with the relevance between stated objectives and activities carried out, with accorded and shared visions within the work package and also with the state of development of activities in the work packages. More than the half of the partners (62.5%) is satisfied with the handling of administrative and financial matters.

Summing up the results indicate a positive development of the project although the handling of administrative and financial matters could be improved.

Below there are individual comments on each single question:

Comments on "Role of the co-ordinator in project development"

Problems encountered:

- Travel meeting organization sometimes confuse
- Certain lack of experience in managing these projects, difficulties in complying with the project deadlines.

Positive/satisfactory aspects:

- Enthusiasm, Producing concrete 'stuff', Facilitate good working atmosphere, Polite and give space for everybody to participate
- Motivation of all partners to work together, Experience exchange between experiences in different countries
- The coordinator is always available through Skype for any doubt or comment
- Efficient role of the coordinator in leading project development and ensuring the accomplishment of deadline's results
- good communication skills, sense of responsibility
- Every time very supportive, always in a good mood

- All documents are carefully prepared, the work is well organized and in friendly way

In general the partners describe that the co-ordinator makes a good job. He is good available, friendly, supportive and motivates the partners to work together.

Comments on “Feasibility/practicality of project planning”

Problems encountered:

- We didn’t have any problem during the implementation of the activities scheduled for WP2
- Sometimes the project goals are very ambitious
- The motivation for UNA in Germany is low, due to:
 - The high number of activities already taking place
 - No piloting will take place in Germany

Positive/satisfactory aspects:

- The implementation of WP3 is being done correctly and the documents made by Armando are very useful in order to face the adaptation of SIED products to Best Form project
- There’s been a good project plan, Flexibility has been introduced, There is clarity on what to do, who should do it and by when
- We feel we are on the right track, and everybody is doing great efforts to keep the deadlines and do quality work
- the project planning is very well detailed
- All project partners were very committed towards the UNA process and also all activities related to WP3

There are many comments that the project planning works in a very satisfactory way because it is detailed, clear regarding its instructions and flexible to a certain extend.

Comments on “Handling of administrative and financial matters”

Problems encountered:

- Information sometimes is not very well distributed and this causes some confusion
- The only thing to comment (but is not a problem) is that SPI sent the documents a little late
- Communication related to administrative and financial issues should be earlier respect the deadlines

- None yet – hope the first claim does not give rise to any issues
- the time of response could be shorter

Positive/satisfactory aspects:

- Clear Contractual documentation, System for collecting data from partners
- the financial team is experienced in these kinds of projects
- financial rules are clearly presented, templates and assistance is provided

There are quite positive comments on the handling of administrative and financial matters, but there are also aspects mentioned which could be improved. The experience of the financial team in this kind of projects is appreciated and also that the financial rules are clearly presented and that templates and assistance are provided. Whereas: The distribution of information could be improved. The communication related to administrative and financial issues should be earlier considering the deadlines. The time to get an answer should be shorter.

Comments on “Problem-solving”

Problems encountered:

- The fact that some partners will not deliver a pilot programme might be making more difficult for them to fully benefit from the project, The issue of who is the target audience might also be difficult to resolve

Positive/satisfactory aspects:

- Good application from SPI to solve existing problems
- Partners are experienced and mature, so issues are discussed frankly but in the spirit of finding solutions
- In our opinion we have not yet encountered many problems or difficult obstacles
- partners are very efficient and pragmatic
- Partnership is effective in solving problem and applying changes if necessary.

There is a positive feedback regarding the aspect problem-solving. The partners are efficient, pragmatic and share the spirit of finding solutions.

Comments on “Relevance between stated objectives and activities carried out”

Problems encountered:

- Need analysis has been difficult to achieve regarding existing entities
- All activities are fully in accord with stated objectives

- due to the ambitious of some project goals, partners have encountered
- In some countries needs analysis were difficult to conduct because of specific conditions.

Positive/satisfactory aspects:

- Good acceptance from Portuguese public entities in migrant action like ACIDI
- The interviews carried out are very useful for the development of National need analysis report
- The amount of work already done, which shows good progress
- A lot of sources available from Research centres
- The project has just started, but we think we are on the right track. The needs analysis results will be very important for the further work on the project
- Partners have been doing amazing efforts to carry out the proposed activities
- as already stated UNA is all countries is not very needed
- Methodology of needs analysis enables individual treatment of each country situation.

Additional comments:

- Maybe the number of people contacted for the interviews (20) was too excessive.
- Number of people to involve too high

Generally the comments on the aspect of the relevance between stated objectives and activities carried out were positive. In addition there were comments that the number of people contacted for the interviews (20) could have been too high. This is a relevant information for the set-up of future projects.

Comments on “Accord and shared visions within the WP”

Problems encountered:

- It will take more time to create a common vision amongst partners; people have different perceptions and operate in different realities

Positive/satisfactory aspects:

- There is much interest in the concepts and the model, there is also willingness to think laterally, which can only be good for developing the approach further
- People are aware of what are LLP projects and of what they have to do and this eases the task of reaching agreements

Although it could be that it will take more time to create a common vision amongst partners because people have different perceptions and operate in different realities, there are also optimistic comments that there are interest in the concepts and the model and also the willingness to think laterally, which can be beneficial for the development of the approach.

Comments on “Satisfaction with the state of development of activities in the WPs”

Problems encountered:

- A few workpackages have some minor delays

Positive/satisfactory aspects:

- Good understanding of everyone role in the project
- During the 2nd TN Meeting we discussed a lot of aspects related to the future activities (WP3-WP4) and this was so good in order to have clear ideas on how to work the next months
- Good amount of work
- Everything is accordingly to schedule
- In general we are on schedule with the deadlines
- The work in the WPs is clear
- I think all partners are motivated and put a lot of efforts to perform their task properly.

Summing up the partners are satisfied with the state of the development of the activities in the work packages. The work in the work packages is clear and the partners are motivated. In general the partners are on schedule with the deadlines.

Some actions should be undertaken to improve the distribution of administrative information.

2.2 COMMUNICATION

Secondly partners were asked to state about the communication and information flow within the BestForm project. A special focus was also given to the tools used to support the communication process. The results are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Partners rating of the communication process in the project (processes and tools)

Dimensions	Participants stating a "high to very high level of satisfaction" in percentage (number of answers)	Missing answers
The role of the co-ordinator in the communication process	100% (7)	1
Communication flows among partners	87,5% (7)	-
Level of attention on the developed work (e.g. feedback)	62,5% (5)	-
Partners' active attitude (e.g. initiative in presenting proposals and themes for elaboration/discussion)	87,5% (7)	-
Technical issues using the project communication tools	100% (6)	2

The partners are very satisfied with the role of the co-ordinator in the communication process and also with the technical issues using the project communication tools. 87.5% of the partners are satisfied with the communication flow among partners and the active attitude of the partners which is expressed through the initiative in presenting proposals and themes for elaboration and discussions. More than the half of the partners (62.5%) is satisfied with the level of attention on the developed work, for example feedback.

In summary the communication is in a positive state, but there could be a greater focus on the level of attention on the developed work.

Below there are individual comments on each single question/aspect:

Comments on “The role of the co-ordinator in the communication process”

Criticalities:

- Seems to depend too much on one person
- Sometimes there is a delay (not serious) in responding ;)

Positive/satisfactory aspects:

- The coordinator has established a positive leadership in the communication process
- Always is a very good mood!
- Coordinator responds to every email and organizes skype conference to ensure good communication

The co-ordinator has established a positive leadership in the communication process. The partners appreciate that he responds to every e-Mail and organizes skype conferences to enable a good communication. It should be considered that possibly too much depends on one person.

Comments on “Communication flows among partners”

Criticalities:

- I would like to have more communication flow. Nevertheless, I think that it is good
- There does not seem to be a good flow between partners for example bi-lateral exchanges, informal dialogue.

Positive/satisfactory aspects:

- Good communication flows thanks to frequent contacts among partners
- Coordinated or moderated communication works well
- We think there is good communication within this project, and people provide feedback and comments

The coordinated and moderated communication is satisfactory. The communication works well because of frequent contacts among the partners although some of the partners wish to have more communication.

Comments on “Level of attention on the developed work (e.g. feedback)”

Criticalities:

- Feedback is not very substantial; comments tend to limit to ‘well done’ or ‘very good’ but that misses the point of what feedback should be about

Positive/satisfactory aspects:

- All the partners are positive involved in the work development
- Some partners take the time to digest other people’s work and comment on it
- Again, We think partners have good innovative ideas and provide feedback to each other

In general there is the opinion that all partners are positively involved in the work development. The feedback could be more detailed and profound in order to benefit more from it.

Comments on “Partners’ active attitude”(e.g. initiative in presenting proposals and themes for elaboration/discussion)

Criticalities:

- Some lack of continuous feedback

Positive/satisfactory aspects:

- I think that all partners have good work attitude and they are working appropriately
- Satisfactory attitude in the project themes discussion in a proactive way
- There is a good attitude and people do come up with ideas for further discussion
- We are satisfied with partners’ engagement
- All partners are very engaged in the project work

The feedback to the partners’ active attitude is very positive although there is one comment mentioning the lack of continuous feedback. It has not been specified who should give more feedback. This aspect should be discussed during the next Flash meeting of the project.

Comments on “Technical issues using the project communication tools”

Positive/satisfactory aspects:

- Virtual conference seem to have worked well
- Communication tools are efficient (emails, skype)

Additional comments:

- The project communication tools (website, ..) have to be implemented

The communication tools are described as efficient (e-Mails and skype). One comment says that project communication tools (website, ...) have to be implemented.

In general partners are satisfied with communication processes, level and tools in the project. The active role of the coordinator in the communication process has been highlighted. Feedback frequency and quality has been criticised in a few cases, some partners stated that feedback should have a higher quality (e.g. more details and more focused on the content rather as on the form)

2.3 ADDED VALUE (of Intermediate Outcomes)

Finally the partners were asked to state about the expected added value from a project, organisational and individual perspective The results are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Partners assessment of the added value of the Bestform project for the target groups as well as for the organisations involved in the project

Dimensions	Participants stating a “high to very high level of satisfaction” in percentage (number of answers)	Missing answers
Expected added value of the planned project outcomes for the addressed beneficiaries	87,5% (7)	-
Added value of the	75% (6)	-

project compared to similar initiatives which you know of / you participate in		
Expected learning outcomes from participation in the project activities	87,5% (7)	-

7 of 8 partners see the expected added value of the planned project outcomes for the addressed beneficiaries and for the expected learning outcomes from participation in the project activities.

75 % of the partners see an added value of the project compared to similar initiatives which are known due to own participation for example.

Below there are individual comments on each single question/aspect:

Comments on “Replication of the model in different country situations”

Critical aspects:

- Replication of the model in different country situations
- This is a difficult area because some partners are not clear how the project will add value to the target group – We need to work on this if the pilots are going to throw good results
- defining exactly what is the target group of the project is a critical issue
- In fact in our country there is lack of direct beneficiaries (business advisory services) so we need to address the outcomes to other institutions working with migrants.

Positive/satisfactory aspects:

- Some partners do have some clarity of how the project could benefit the target group
- We really believe that we are addressing a problem and that people will actually be able to use and benefit from the results of this project
- we are helping to develop and innovative approach towards business advice and immigrant entrepreneurship
- There is a niche in our country, no similar products are available. Exchange of best practice from other countries.

The partners are very optimistic and hopeful regarding the replication of the model in different country situations. There is the hope to improve the situation for migrant entrepreneurship in the country of each project partner. One partner for example writes that there is a niche in his/her country and that there are no similar products available. The concrete definitions of the target group and the expected project's value should be considered.

Comments on "Added value of the project compared to similar initiatives which you know of / you participate in"

Critical aspects:

- Capacity to work with migrant communities in several countries
- Italian context offers similar survey and research
- It's too early to comment on possible added value to the target group. However, I hope the project is proving to add value to some partners, particularly those where enterprise development is not well developed
- it is important to be innovative as there has been some similar activities to Best Form (SIED, UBA, etc.)

Positive/satisfactory aspects:

- Experience learning and diffusion on migrant entrepreneurship
- As mentioned, I believe the project is already proving beneficial to some partners
- We think it will, because the tool will be tailored to individual needs
- the main issues of the project are very new and innovative, there is still a lot to do in this field

There are opinions that there is an added value of the project compared to similar initiatives because of the consideration of individual needs and because the main issues of the project are very new and innovative. Whereas: The aspect of the needed capacity to work with migrant communities in several countries should be considered. In some countries there is similar research on this topic (for example in Italy), which should have kept in mind as well. One partner stresses the importance of being innovative because there have been other activities similar to BEST FORM (SIED, UBA, etc.).

Comments on “Expected learning outcomes from participation in the project activities”

Critical aspects:

- Capacity to move the project in the future after project completion
- The expected learning outcomes are all excellent. The trick will be to realise those outcomes given the issues mentioned above
- Learning outcomes can be difficult to define, and we need to think carefully about this, before defining them

Positive/satisfactory aspects:

- partners are involved in creating one multi-country network and to expand Best Form
- The Need analysis report enhance a better understanding of the immigrant entrepreneurship and business advice activities towards immigrant in seven different national contexts.
- Very good expected outcomes both for partners and for target audience
- since the issue is new to many people in the project, it will be very useful for partners and beneficiaries
- Have a good recognition in the area of supporting migrants. (contacts, cooperation with public authorities, foundations, and other institutions)

The partners estimate the expected learning outcomes from participation in the project to be very useful in general and especially for different national contexts. It is mentioned that it could be difficult to define learning outcomes, so it is important to think carefully about it. It also should be thought about the future of the project after its completion.

2.4 STRENGTHS OF BEST FORM AND SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Strengths:

- In my opinion, the most important strength of this project is its partnership. We are working according to the activities planned with a good work attitude and a collaborative environment. This is the spirit of a European project.
- The experience of each partner in working in an international context ensure an efficient collaboration. Each partner give a personal contribution in the project

development thanks to the competencies in different fields from academic institutions, consultancies and Ngo's.

- Good project management
- Access to people with experience on the key subjects
- Access to learning materials and programmes which could be adapted or used as they are
- Enthusiastic, professional and friendly partners
- In our opinion the partnership is very strong in terms of collaboration and engagement. All partners do also have great experience within their area, which guarantee high quality results.
- Deep and consolidated experience of the partners in LLP projects.
- Efficiency and dedication in fully complying the tasks and in carrying on with the responsibilities assigned.
- Interest in providing a project with an innovative approach and with a high value added
- BestForm has very engaged partners and a very clear work plan
- Coordinating institution is very experienced in managing LLP projects.
- Good organization of works.
- Good motivation of partners.
- Products for transfer are really innovative for target countries.

There are many very positive comments on the strengths of the project BEST FORM. Many project partners describe a well-functioning partnership with well-structured and planned activities (good project management and organisation), a good work attitude (high motivation) and a collaborative environment. The experience of each partner working in an international context ensures an efficient collaboration. Each partner contributes in a personal way in the project development thanks to the competencies in different fields from academic institutions, consultancies and Ngo's. One of the main goals is the interest in providing a project with an innovative approach and with a high value added.

Suggestions for improvement:

- The key issues at hand are complex and references to the SIED project can sometimes be confusing because the scale of Best Form is much more limited

compared to SIED. Best Form is essentially a pilot programme but with the aim of setting in motion a development that is meant to be of strategic dimension

- We need to be very aware of to reach our target group and to make sure that we are creating a product that people actually wants to use and can learn something from.
- Lack of sufficient feedback to the project outcomes
- The non-piloting countries have a certain disadvantage
- Situation in partner countries is very different in case of immigration. In some countries supporting immigrants in entrepreneurship is at very low level or not organized at all. It is not easy to find channels for exploitation of the results. There is a need to first rise awareness of this matter, "prepare the soil" before implementing the product.

It is mentioned that references to the SIED project sometimes can be confusing because the scale of BEST FORM is limited compared to the SIED. One project partner stresses the importance of having the aim in mind to reach the target group and to make sure that a product is interesting and that one can learn from it. Another partner writes that there is a lack of sufficient feedback to the project outcomes. Two partners think that the non-piloting countries have a certain disadvantage. There are very different situations for migrants in the partner countries. In some countries the support regarding entrepreneurship for migrants is at a very low level or not organized at all. There is a need to first rise awareness of this matter and "prepare the soil" before implementing the product.

3 CONCLUSIONS AND FOLLOW-UPS

The general assessment of the project is very satisfactory. All three main aspects had good to excellent ratings, the comments provided by the respondents illustrate well the reasons for the positive rating and point-out some minor aspects that can be improved

Partners are very satisfied with the coordination, planning and distribution of tasks in the project. The work in the work packages is clear and the partners are motivated. In general the partners are on schedule with the deadlines. The distribution and reporting process for financial matters could be improved.

In general partners are satisfied with communication processes, level and tools in the project. The level of attention in some tasks can be improved. The active role of the coordinator in the communication process has been highlighted. Feedback frequency and quality has been criticised in a few cases, some partners stated that feedback should have a higher quality (e.g. more details and more focused on the content rather as on the form).

Furthermore the added-value generated through the participation in the project is seen as high. The additional learning can be transferred for the national contexts, as obviously a EU multilateral project targets. Partners are already concerned with the sustainability of the project outcomes, though the project proposal already includes well defined tasks and indicators towards sustainability.

This document has provided a report and a brief analysis of the first internal evaluation round within BestForm. On month 12 a detailed quality and management report will be provided that includes the presentation and discussion of the first and second internal evaluation rounds as well as the assessment of the project risks and the monitoring of the project activities in relation to the project planning.

4 ANNEX 1: PROJECT MONITORING QUESTIONNAIRE



Summative EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR Project partners
March 2011, 1st evaluation round

The present questionnaire aims at collecting project partners' views on three key evaluation domains referring to project development:

- general aspects of project development and the role of the partners
- communication flows
- added value

Project partners are asked to provide their opinions on the strengths and weaknesses they perceive in the project. Please be as concrete as possible, this is a support instrument

The information will be treated confidentially. The key outcomes of this preliminary evaluation exercise will be used as prompts for discussion and reflection in the evaluation session to be held during the second coordination meeting.

Quality and Evaluation Plan

Please, after completing the questionnaire, email it to: sonia.hetzner@fim.uni-erlangen.de

1.- GENERAL ASPECTS OF PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ROLE OF PARTNERS				
Dimensions	A) Overall rating	B) Problems encountered	C) positive/satisfactory aspects	D) additional comments
<u>Role of the co-ordinator</u> in project development (e.g. _____ project management, monitoring of work processes & deadlines)	①-②-③-④-⑤ <i>dissatisfactory - satisfactory</i>			
Feasibility/practicality of <u>project planning</u>	①-②-③-④-⑤ <i>dissatisfactory - satisfactory</i>			
Handling of <u>administrative</u> and <u>financial</u> matters	①-②-③-④-⑤ <i>dissatisfactory - satisfactory</i>			
<u>Problem-solving</u>	①-②-③-④-⑤ <i>dissatisfactory - satisfactory</i>			

GENERAL ASPECTS OF PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ROLE OF PARTNERS (Cont.)				
Dimensions	A) Overall rating	B) Problems encountered	C) positive/satisfactory aspects	D) additional comments
<u>Relevance</u> between stated objectives and activities carried out	①-②-③-④-⑤ <i>dissatisfactory - satisfactory</i>			
<u>Accord and shared visions within the WP</u>	①-②-③-④-⑤ <i>dissatisfactory - satisfactory</i>			
<u>Satisfaction</u> with the state of development of activities in the WPs	①-②-③-④-⑤ <i>dissatisfactory - satisfactory</i>			

Please, use this space if you wish to add further remarks (free text):

2.- COMMUNICATION				
Dimensions	A) Overall rating	B) Criticalities	C) positive/satisfactory aspects	D) additional comments
The <u>role of the coordinator</u> in the communication process	①-②-③-④-⑤ <i>dissatisfactory - satisfactory</i>			
<u>Communication flows among partners</u>	①-②-③-④-⑤ <i>dissatisfactory - satisfactory</i>			
Level of attention on the developed work (e.g. feedback)	①-②-③-④-⑤ <i>dissatisfactory - satisfactory</i>			
Partners' active attitude (e.g. initiative in presenting proposals and themes for elaboration/discussion)	①-②-③-④-⑤ <i>dissatisfactory - satisfactory</i>			
Technical issues using the project communication tools	①-②-③-④-⑤ <i>dissatisfactory - satisfactory</i>			

Please, use this space if you wish to add further remarks (*free text*):

3.- ADDED VALUE (of Intermediate Outcomes)				
Dimensions	A) Overall rating	B) Critical aspects	C) positive/satisfactory aspects	D) additional comments
Expected added value of the planned project outcomes for the addressed beneficiaries	①-②-③-④-⑤ <i>dissatisfactory - satisfactory</i>			
Added value of the project compared to similar initiatives which you know of / you participate in	①-②-③-④-⑤ <i>dissatisfactory - satisfactory</i>			
Expected learning outcomes from participation in the project activities	①-②-③-④-⑤ <i>dissatisfactory - satisfactory</i>			

Please, use this space if you wish to add further remarks (*free text*):

Please explain what are, in your opinion, the strengths and the weaknesses of BestForm, in terms of internal processes (e.g. collaboration processes, contribution to project development, harmonisation of ideas, 'centrifugal' forces, etc.):

Strengths:

Weaknesses: