

# Age Management in Practice (AMaP) Project

## Project No. 518590-LLP-1-1-2011-1-UK

### Minutes of Kick-off Meeting

**Dates:** Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> & Friday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2011

**Venue:** University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland, UK

#### Participants

Graham Smith, Brian McKechnie, Alice Morton & Lynda Scott (UoS, UK)

Iwona von Polentz & Gunther Ring (GEB, DE)

Dimitris Raftopoulos & George Stefanis (LLLRI, EL)

Paulina Wojcik & Dorota Kowalska (Semper Avanti, PL)

Susana Oliveira & António Jorge Oliveira (Kerigma, PT)

Ali Rashidi, Yevgeniya Averhed & Björn Engsten (FU Uppsala, SE)

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#### Day 1

##### 1. Welcome and Introductions

Graham Smith opened the meeting and introduced Brian McKechnie (Knowledge Exchange Manager) who welcomed the participants to the University of Strathclyde. Brian gave a brief history of the University and its vision to be a 'Place of Useful Learning'. He stated that, while the University had a long and illustrious past, its continuing mission was to work in a modern way and embrace innovative projects such as AMaP. He went on to say that age management, the theme of AMaP, was about older workers making a contribution in the workplace. Brian said that he considered European collaborations to be a productive process and was excited to host the kick-off meeting at the University of Strathclyde.

The meeting moved to the agenda for Day 1 and to the three key aims of the meeting which included:

- Building working relationships and getting to know our partners
- Reviewing project application and what has to be delivered
- Agreeing work plans and identify deliverables for the next 12 months

Graham Smith informed the meeting all documents pertaining to the meeting were available in the business pack and also on the USB included.

Each of the five partners gave a brief statement of their main areas of work.

- Gesellschaft für Europabildung e.V. (GEB), Germany
- Life Long Learning Research Institute (LLLRI), Greece
- Semper Avanti, Poland
- Kerigma, Portugal
- Folkuniversitetet, Sweden



## 2. Overview of the Framework and Administrative Rules

Graham Smith led on this item and invited discussion and clarification of the aims of this Leonardo da Vinci project which are:

- To support participants in training and further training activities in the acquisition and the use of knowledge, skills and qualifications to facilitate personal development
- To support improvements in quality and innovation in vocational education and training systems, institutions and practices
- To enhance the attractiveness of vocational education and training and mobility for employers and individuals and to facilitate the mobility of working trainees

## 3. Financial Management, Bilateral Agreements and Reporting Structure (WP1 & WP7)

Graham Smith led the meeting on this item with the following points being covered:

- Bilateral agreements sent out – first payment on return of signed copy
- 'Up front' payment system agreed with 3 payments per year (40%, 40% & 20%)
- Two part process for claiming : Completion of Financial Claim and Progress Report
- January 2012 - for payment in February 2012
- May 2012 – for payment in June 2012
- November 2012 – consolidation of project spend and progress for Interim Report due *December 2012*
- *Project must have demonstrated spend >70% of initial 40% pre-financing to trigger further grant payment*
- The system adopted should ensure a more robust Quality Assurance process and will help when submitting Interim/Final reports
- No evidence was required for indirect costs.

Graham Smith stated that staff costs were the actual costs per day and that no salary slips were required to be submitted. Discussions followed and a number of issues were raised by participants.

- Some clarification on the procedure for providing staff evidence, particularly where the allocated member of staff to the 'Staff Category' does not meet the contracted 'Cost per Day' and there are two people contributing to the project and providing evidence to support the claim. E.g. 2 Trainers/Researchers assigned to a project and providing staff timesheets, but neither meet the contracted 'Cost per Day'
- Regarding exchange rates, what rate should be used for conversion from pounds to Euros and should this rate be applied throughout the project? Also, there will be instances throughout the project period where conversions from pounds to Polish Zlotys, Euros to Zlotys and Swedish Kronor to Zlotys will be required.
- The issue of 'Per Diem' was raised, as some partners, particularly from Germany, Poland and Sweden, were expecting a lump sum to be paid without any evidence required in return. This linked to National agreements.
- Where smaller organisations have one person who may be contributing to different 'Staff Categories', e.g. the Manager also carrying out work as a Researcher/Trainer, how should this be captured and recorded?



- The use of volunteers to contribute to staff time, although the general view was that Volunteers cannot contribute to staff costs as they are not in receipt of a salary

#### **Action Point 1- Project Co-ordinator's Update**

Graham Smith will give an update to partners following his attendance at the co-ordinator's meeting in Brussels, January 2012.

#### **Action Point 2 – Staff Issues**

Graham Smith will e-mail the Commission in Brussels to seek clarification on the issues raised and will relay response to partners. In the meantime, all partners should retain all receipts for travel and subsistence as well as all other costs other than Indirect Costs.

Graham Smith went on to talk about the direct costs which were detailed in four sections

- Travel and subsistence
- Equipment
- Subcontracting
- Other

#### **Action Point 3 – Boarding Pass**

Each partner must retain original boarding passes and send a photocopy to the UoS

#### **4. Project Overview: Background, Aims and Objectives**

Graham Smith led this item and spoke about the points listed below:

- One of Europe's greatest challenges is its ageing population (EC, 2009)
- Policies and reforms that encourage older adults to work longer, however
- Organisational strategies adversely affect older workers;
- Older adults who exit the labour market are less likely to re-enter employment than their younger counterparts (TAEN, 2009)

He went on to report on the relationship between initial education and learning in later life:

- Widely accepted that participation in learning in later life is dependent on the amount of initial education received
- 57.5% of school leavers progressed to HE/FE in 2009 compared with less than 15% of school leavers in early 1960's (Scottish Government, 2010)
- Participation rates in VET/CVET considerably lower for older adults than for younger adults (Cedefop, 2010)

The meeting discussed each country's Qualification Framework and the European Qualification Framework (EQF). Some countries had a framework and others were working towards the development of one.

An objective of the project is that benchmarking against national qualifications frameworks should be explored. Each partner country should start a dialogue with the National Agencies involved with the qualification framework for their own country. This might include qualifications, informal learning and advice and guidance for adults.

#### **Action Point 4 – National Agencies**

Each partner country should initiate dialogue with the National Agencies linked to the qualifications framework and report progress at the next steering group meeting.



## 5. Methodology and Expected Impact of Project

The methodology of the project would be based on the 4 principles of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework: Planning; Implementation; Assessment & Evaluation; and Feedback.

The meeting considered the project overview which aimed

- To increase older worker awareness and participation in VET/CVET to support and enhance employability in later life
- Support key management staff within organisations in recognising the value and distinct needs of older workers and the benefits of implementing effective age management and lifelong guidance practices

## 6. Review of Work Plan and Work Packages

To conclude the agenda of day 1 the meeting reviewed the work plan and associated work packages:

- WP1 – Project Management (Lead: UK)
- WP2 – Learning Model for Older Workers (Lead: PT)
- WP3 – EQF for Older Workers (Lead: UK)
- WP4 – Employer Attitudes to Older Workers (Lead: SE)
- WP5 – Age Management Seminar for Employers (Lead: EL)
- WP6 – Dissemination and Valorisation (Lead: PL/UK)
- WP7 – Quality Assurance (Lead: UK)

Through discussion it emerged that the involvement of the Chambers of Commerce could be the central reference point and a vehicle to facilitate progress of the project and the work packages. It might also be used to issue questionnaires and recruitment of participants.

It was further suggested the Chambers of Commerce should be involved from the beginning and a project leaflet should be prepared. The project should be discussed with the Chambers and their views sought. Potentially, Chambers of Commerce could become partners in a future project.

### Action Point 5 – Project Leaflet

A leaflet outlining the project should be prepared to initiate engagement with the Chambers of Commerce by February 2012.

Discussions followed regarding issues focusing on cross-sector industries or a specific industry sector. It was noted that the IT industry sector employs, in general, younger workers, and that the public sector across partner countries appeared set on strategies for reducing the number of older workers.

The key components of the project were also discussed, covering:

- Learning Programme for Older Workers (WP2) – purpose to help improve participation rates among older workers in VET/CVET
- EQF Mapping/Benchmarking Tool (WP3) – purpose to help older workers recognise their skills, experience and qualifications against a recognised framework
- Cross-sectional Employer survey (WP4) – purpose to measure levels of awareness of an ageing workforce across Europe and attitudes to recruiting and retaining older workers
- Age Management Seminars (WP5) – purpose to provide information on the value of age management practices and policies



## Day 2

The meeting moved to the agenda for Day 2 and in-depth discussion on the individual work packages.

### **1. Detailed Work Package discussion WP2 (Lead: PT) & WP3 (Lead: DE)**

A group discussion considered the following points:

- What should the learning programme look like?
- What should be included?
- How long should it be?
- What is the timescale for delivery?

It was agreed that a draft of the learning model would be presented at the next meeting in Athens, May 2012 and that marketing materials were also required to be rolled out April/May 2012.

### **Action Point 6 - Work Packages 2 & 3**

Agree and create a platform for uploading and sharing materials (Moodle/ Office Gossip)

### **2. Detailed Work Package discussion WP4 (Lead: SE) & WP5 (Lead: EL)**

Group discussion on employer attitudes to older workers (WP4) and the development of a questionnaire took place. In particular, how long should the questionnaire be? What type of questions should be included? What method of distribution will be used? And should the questionnaire target specific industry sectors?

#### ***The following time-frame and activities were agreed:***

- Feb to May 2012: Desk research, questionnaire development, engagement with Chambers of Commerce
- May to Aug 2012: Questionnaire refinement
- Aug to Dec 2012: Questionnaire distribution
- Jan to Feb 2013 - Data analysis
- Feb to Jun 2013 - Written report

WP 5 considered a seminar on age management for employers. In particular, discussions focussed on what the content of seminars should be, the duration i.e. half-day or full-day and links with WP4.

#### ***The following time-frame and activities were agreed:***

- 'Age Management Awareness' would be used as the title for the seminar series
- Programme suggestions to be sent to EL by April 2012
- Discussions to be continued at next steering group meeting in Athens, May 2012 and programme to be finalised
- Budget to be reviewed to begin planning of invited guests for final conference
- Creation of content for seminar by December 2012
- Recruitment of employers via Chambers of Commerce, January 2013
- Delivery of seminars March 2013

### **3. Dissemination and Valorisation WP6 (Lead: PL/UK)**

It was agreed that Dissemination and Valorisation would be a standing agenda item for all steering group meetings. The group discussed the following points:



- Website – What do we want? What do we need? What can we have?
- Newsletter – what should we cover?
- Local/national/European dissemination
- ‘Development of ‘Talking Heads’ DVD – to be discussed in depth at next steering group meeting in Athens, May 2012
- Final Conference
- Journal Submission

#### **Action Point 7: Work Package 6**

Website proposals to Graham Smith from Germany and Portugal by December 2011.

Project logo 3 options by December 2011 – responsibility Poland.

#### **4. Communication Strategy and Project Calendar**

The group discussed how they would promote communication:

- 5 Partnership Meetings, roughly every 6 months
- All in contact via e-mail
- Use of Skype/Flash meetings and should this be done within work packages

#### **Action Point 8: Skype Addresses**

Partners to e-mail Skype addresses to Alice Morton by December 2012.

#### **5. Conclusion of meeting**

The date set for the next meeting was agreed and will take place on the 24th and 25th May 2012, Athens, Greece.

It was agreed that partners should consider bringing a representative from the Chambers of Commerce to this meeting.

Future meetings were agreed for: Barcelos, Portugal; Wroclaw, Poland; and the final conference in Berlin, Germany.



## Summary of Action Points

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