



Executive Agency, Education, Audiovisual and Culture



em2.0

EXPORT MANAGER

Web Advanced Export Manager – EM2.0

Final Report

Public Part

Project information

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Executive Summary

Web Advanced Export Manager – EM2.0 is the European project aiming at the development of an innovative training course for Export Managers (so-called **Export Manager 2.0**). The general objective of the project was to improve the export capacity of European SMEs by upgrading the current capacity and readiness of EU export managers to use web tools, web-related ICT and new networks as a daily toolkit for export and internationalisation activities, both at strategy and operational level. The project addressed different target audience (beneficiaries), with different objectives: i) **SMEs**, by providing a new opportunity to train internal staff with additional skills (in particular import/export managers); ii) **VET institutions**, to enlarge their training offer with innovative training courses; iii) **professionals**, especially young ones, by providing them with further opportunities to create their own job by delivering specialised internationalisation services to SMEs. The **project was implemented by team** from different types of organisations, including Regional Agencies for Internationalisation, Chambers of Commerce and VET organisations, complementary covering the wide range of expertise required for the implementation of action.

The **approach adopted** for the development of the EM2.0 course was inspired by the idea of avoiding a replication of existing training offer already on the market (i.e. *training for export managers* and *training for web-marketing operators*). It rather aimed at defining a training course specifically addressing only the theme of “*export and internationalisation through web and ICT tools*”, in order to be at the same time i) suitable to be delivered as a stand-alone course, and ii) suitable to be embedded, integrally or in single modules, into existing training offer of EU VET system (modularity). This holistic approach unleashed the full project potential in terms of **valorisation** of results, dramatically enlarging the audience of Organisations potentially interested to take over, entirely or in part, the training course.

The project activities started with the **analysis of existing training offer** for export managers in Italy, Spain, UK, Bulgaria, Slovenia, and existing “**Resources 2.0**” for export. **Matching this two type of results** enabled the design of the EM2.0 Training Course structure. A long period was then devoted to the development of a provisional version of the 12 modules EM2.0 training course (*compendium + slides + tests*). This alpha version was tested twice (in Slovenia on students, and in Italy on Export Managers). One additional desk test of Resources 2.0 was also performed, addressing the specific field of Extra Virgin Olive Oil, with impressive results. The testing phase allowed to get important hints and suggestions for the improvement of the draft version of the course, resulting in a fine-tuning and subsequently into the final version of the EM2.0 training course in EN version. The original English EM2.0 training course version was translated in IT, SI, BG, and IT.

The project was accompanied by a significant **communication and dissemination** campaign coherent with the C&D Strategy drawn during the first months, addressing the EU and National/Regional levels, implemented mostly by mean of the project website (www.exportmanager20.eu), newsletters, a dedicated *Twitter* page and the implementation of further dissemination actions among the national and regional communities of stakeholders. An “open approach” was adopted regarding the **participation of third parties to the project**. 1 “Collaboration Agreement” was signed with the most important Italian agency for internationalisation, while 11 Organisation applied to become Associate Partner of the project (potential transferee Organisations of the EM2.0 course after the end of the EU project). A significant part of the work was devoted to define the most suitable and promising **strategy for the exploitation** of the project results. The strategy was agreed and signed by all partners, providing a concrete evidence of the partner commitment for a wide use and dissemination of the training at local/regional/national level. It is foreseen the delivery of the first EM2.0 training course – in market conditions – in the second half of 2015.

Table of Contents

- 1. PROJECT OBJECTIVES..... 5**
- 2. PROJECT APPROACH 6**
- 3. PROJECT OUTCOMES & RESULTS..... 13**
- 4. PARTNERSHIPS 18**
- 5. PLANS FOR THE FUTURE 20**
- 6. CONTRIBUTION TO EU POLICIES 21**

1. Project Objectives

The project overall challenge was to provide European actors of *Export* (mostly SMEs and their export managers, but also students and professionals) with a new training offer able to upgrade the export management skills with the ability to use of most advanced web related resources and ICT, for export. In other words, to make EU businesses more competitive thanks to new and efficient ways to manage international activities with a strategic, intensive, aware use of the wide range of tools available nowadays in internet and thanks to the ICT. The EM2.0 training course contributes to embed web related tools into ordinary export management activity of EU SMEs not only toward the EU internal market but – expectably – against extra EU competitors, contributing to fill the gap between EU businesses and extra EU competitors.

In this perspective, the specific objectives were:

- i) **to develop an innovative training course** on Export Manager by upgrading traditional EM competences into a new profile able to leverage on most advanced ICT solutions and web marketing approaches.
- ii) to promote the **take over and delivery** of the new EM2.0 training course **by VET Institutions**, regardless their previous experience in EM training or not.

Communities of users/final beneficiaries:

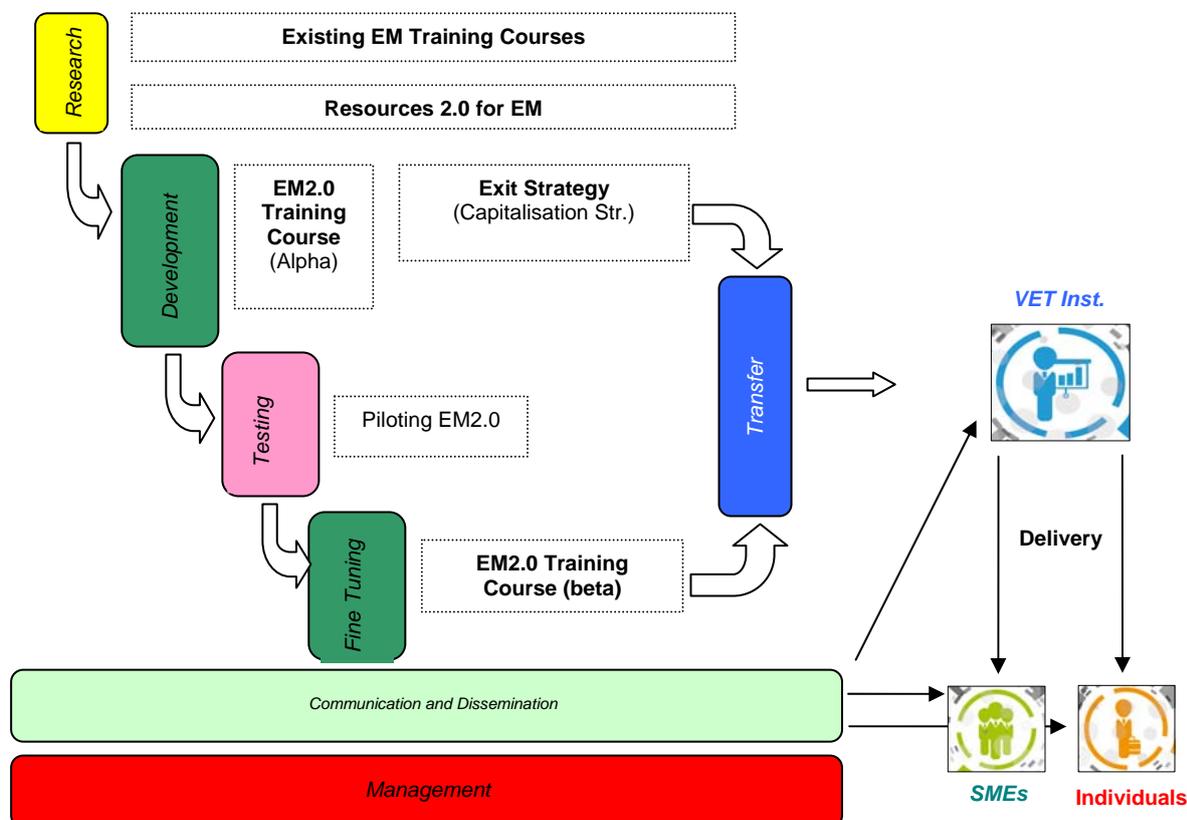
- **EU businesses and their export managers**, mainly SMEs or crafts. In the are of Internet 2.0 companies need highly competent and specialized human resources able to design growth strategies and effective marketing policies, entering new markets and adapting to fast changes to compete globally. Thus, export strategies must be integrated by innovative and creative marketing approaches suitable to intercept and anticipate market trends, and communicate with effective promotional campaigns. The increasing use of ICT and web marketing support the adoption of innovative marketing approaches. SMEs were involved in the project during in particular in the testing phase and the implementation of the valorisation strategy. In fact, a prototype of EM2.0 course has been pilot-tested on a test bed of EMs and students Once the delivery of the EM2.0 course will be started, it is expected a first impact on this target group within a period of 2-5 years, consisting in the improvement of SMEs export and presence abroad of EU businesses.

- The second community is represented by **VET Institutions**. In the context EM2.0, these are a very large group composed of Business Schools, Universities, Vocational Training Centres, Chambers of Commerce, Trade Unions, Associations of Entrepreneurs. Currently training offer in *export management, business internationalization, international marketing* misses modules dedicated to innovative ICT and advanced web-based tools for export. The present group was involved mostly during the 2nd year of project, with the expression of interest to take over the new training course and improve own training offer. At the end of the project, 12 VETS organisation from 8 EU countries registered as supporting organisation of EM2.0 (UK, IE, BG, HR, BE, MT, ES, FR).

- The third target group is composed by **professional of export management**, consultants providing their professional services to SMEs. They might be individuals in training period or already active in the market, looking for an upgrade of their competences and business model. This training market growing fast (given that companies are looking for EM2.0 expertise, but not in condition to internalize this function). This group was also involved during the pilot testing phase as trainees. The expected impact for this target group is an enlargement of the number of EM service providers, specialised in web tools and ICT for export, differentiated from “web marketing agencies” thanks to their specialisation on Export processes.

2. Project Approach

The project workflow during the two years was characterised by the activities described in the scheme below:



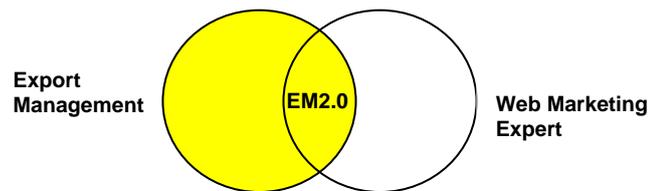
i) **Research activity** addressed two fields of investigation:

- i) State of art of Export Management training courses in the areas covered by the project;
- ii) Web-related, ICT, and other innovative resources for export management.

The research was implemented taking into account the expected final professional profile of the EM2.0 and the characteristics of the EM2.0 course. The EM2.0 is an ***EM with a sound preparation in traditional export management and business internationalization, enriched with a lively knowledge about the potentialities from the most innovative and advanced web-based Resources (so-called Resources 2.0)***. Such integration represents the added value of the project, as the application of innovative and strategic approaches from web tools and ICT can provide an original approach to the traditional activities of the export manager, reinforcing its competences and competitiveness.

The initial discussion among partners about the **core features** of EM2.0 training course defined the overall research & development context of the project. The EM2.0 training course was conceived to be:

- **focused**: in order to avoid the risk of duplication and overlapping with existing “Export Manager” and “Web Marketing” training courses, the EM2.0 needs to stick to that area where the two disciplines overlaps, exploring which Resources 2.0 can “serve” the Export Manager mission.



- with defined **boundaries**. In order to be both “effective” and “reasonably accessible” by different kind of final beneficiaries, the course needs reasonable boundaries to its contents. The trainee of EM2.0 is not expected to become a “*superman*” of Export Management (highly skilled in the use of web tools or most advanced technologies). It is still an Export Manager and its core mission remains at strategic level (export strategy and operational planning), never going too far, into the daily work on web and ICT tools (or partially does!).

- **modular**. In order to make the highest number of potential VET institution benefiting from the course, it was necessary to make the contents easily accessible to VETs. The goal was to build the EM2.0 course in a way that also single parts of it could be merged, mixed and embedded into VETs existing courses (upgrade of traditional EM courses);

- **updated**. In the field of web resources and ICT, the cycle of obsolescence of approaches and tools is very short. To avoid a premature obsolescence of the EM2.0 course, the knowledge transferred with training modules needed to be sufficiently accurate to describe “*how to*” benefit from Resources 2.0 for export (innovativeness in EM approaches thanks to the web environment, potential of EM2.0 in terms of strategies and the tools available, adoption of a wider approach to export management). But training modules couldn’t go too in depth in the description very technical web related aspects (where the obsolescence is too fast). The deep insight into technical aspects of Resources 2.0 was postponed to a second time, right before the delivery of the EM2.0 training course (and performed by transferee VET institutions). Such “update”, which will catch the “*state of knowledge*” at the time of delivery in the relevant matter, is to be performed with the support of VET experts and trainers.

- **appealing**: this feature refers in particular to the way the training course was communicated among stakeholders and perceived by companies. Smart, light, professional.

Research approach

The research addressing the **state of art of EM training** provided a picture of the complex and differentiated world of the traditional training for EM in the five project countries: Italy, United Kingdom, Spain, Bulgaria and Slovenia. Thanks to this, it was possible to a frame of Export Management/internationalisation training in the different EU countries, distilling a comprehensive training course structure out of it. To make it possible, all partners provided examples of most relevant, complete and upgraded EM training courses in their countries. Research tool and brief were prepared to this extent. The question leading the research was: “***what kind of training, contents and modules are currently offered as training courses for Export Managers by VET institutions in the countries represented in the project?***”

Subsequently, results were processed by putting information into a comparative grid in order to identify similarities and common elements and to highlight the most innovative elements. Modules and contents descriptions were carefully analyzed with the aim to identify the “classes” and groups of modules with similar contents. Then, modules belonging to the same or to similar classes of contents were merged and a single title, choosing among the most significant or renaming the modules. The comparison helped to mash up the most significant modules and to integrate basic knowledge of business management, international trade, business internationalization, marketing with more specific modules, taken from *executive* courses and *highly specialized* courses (mostly directed to professionals and managers), such as customs techniques, taxation and tariffs policies, international web marketing,

negotiation and sales techniques. The synthesis was a complex framework including all the basic and specific modules thus creating a long and complete curriculum, whose contents are to be considered as the milestone for the training of the professional profile of the export manager, currently existing in the project partners' countries. In order to ensure the access to sensible information, the project resorted to Cooperation Agreement (CA) with third parties¹. A model of CA was set up accordingly.

In parallel, **the research addressing Resources 2.0** adopted a similar methodology, looking for **2.0 resources potentially useful to be employed in the Export Management activity**. In order to make the research more effective and "export-driven", a comprehensive list of the most significant "export management activities" was defined, basing on partners experiences and from the outcomes of the previous first research. Characterising element registered for each Resource 2.0 were: description of the resource, relevance with Export Management and with Export Manager activities and its relation with the traditional EM Training Module(s).

In order to gather an organic collection of information, ensuring a first classification of the information on the existing Resources 2.0, the latter have been sorted by:

A) **NATURE** of the Resource, and split in:

- **WEB tools** (web based software, applications and tools);
- **Technologies** (available technologies and hardware with the potential to innovate, facilitate, enrich, boost the Export Management)
- **Web-based networks** (networks of companies and service providers/Organisations supporting Export management, mainly working through the internet).
- **Other resources** potentially interesting for the purpose of the research.

B) Level of **INTERVENTION ON EXPORT MANAGEMENT:**

- o **Strategic** Level
- o **Operational** Level

The results of the research were further processed in order to create a match between Resources 2.0 and i) Export Management typical activities, ii) learning objectives of EM traditional training course. This research was conducted to identify **most popular tools "on the shelf"**. The ratio behind this choice was that Export Managers 2.0 must be enabled to work since the very beginning of his/her "*new deal*" without incurring in limitations due to significant additional costs for the company.

The **overall architecture of the EM2.0 training course** was discussed among partners since the end of the research and was driven by the features of course

- ✓ Facility of take over (by VET institutions) for inclusion in existing training offers (including embedment into existing EM training courses);
- ✓ Perceived level of attractiveness of the course, compared with traditional ones;
- ✓ Capacity to be stand-alone, and suitable for VET Inst. without a previous experience in EM training.

¹ Besides of the purpose of cooperation for technical aspects, Cooperation Agreement are also intended for dissemination purposes among key stakeholders, aiming at raise interest for the EM2.0 project, paving the way for the future exploitation and capitalization strategy (take over of the EM20 training course by third parties).

Accordingly, the final E:2.0 training was shaped as follow:

- **Course structure:** modules mirroring traditional EM courses (Learning Outcomes and Export Management Activities);
- **Contents** based on the question: *How the Resources 2.0 can improve and have impact on EM strategic and operational activities? How it works? When should it be used?*
- **EM2.0 trainers:** selected both among advanced professional operators of Export management and expert in Resources 2.0 (according to the final decision of the delivering VET).

Approach in the Development of the Training Course, Pilot Test and Exploitation strategy

The development of the training course was performed by all partners in parallel, splitting the responsibility of each Training Module among the consortium, under the coordination of partner CCB. All partners took part to the development of the training course, excepted ECDEMP, which mostly performed an activity of internal review of development outcomes.

Before starting the development of the training course, the details of **EM2.0 training course**, were set, including title, contents and learning objectives of each training module. The work was driven by the “**Market Survey**” performed in the frame of the exploitation strategy and aiming at getting an insight into the perception of final beneficiaries (trainees) and key stakeholders (VETs institutions) about their feeling about the future training course for Export Managers 2.0. The results of the Market Survey mixed with the partners experience, strategic approach and vision, provided the basic inputs to define the main elements of the EM2.0 training course.

The result was a **12-training-modules course**, for a duration of **max 84 hours** of frontal lesson, enriched by additional training material available online, and characterised by a practical approach to contents, addressing a large range of typical trainees (students, export managers, internationalisation managers, entrepreneurs).

Training modules are characterised by a **common structure**, in order to provide the EM2.0 training course with a sufficient level of homogeneity. The responsibility of the development each module was distributed among partner according to their experience, internal knowledge and best attitude. For each module it was identified a “*developer*” in charge of drawing the first version and finalize the last version, and a “*reviewer*”, in charge of providing feedback on the outputs of the developer.

The **development** of the training course revealed as a lively, open, interactive process which took several months (from M12 to M23), and constantly enriched by discussion between the partners and the coordinator, in order to keep partners in the “track” of the EM2.0 objectives.

Once the first draft version of the training course was ready, **two pilot tests** were implemented, respectively in Ljubljana (SI) in May 2014 and in Perugia (IT) in September 2014. The first pilot, organised by the Institute for Business Education of the Chamber of Commerce of Ljubljana addressed a mix of students and export managers. The second one, organised by Centro Estero Umbria and Sistemi Formativi Confindustria Umbria, placed in Perugia addressed only export managers, with an additional participation of “observers” (students). The pilot phase of the project allowed to get important feedbacks from the on-field application of the training. Such lessons learnt triggered the further improvement of the training course, bringing to **the production of the final version of the course**, in the different languages of the project.

Since the beginning of the second year of project, the consortium was also concentrated in the definition of a suitable and effective **exploitation strategy**, enabling partners to make EM2.0 a structural element of their ordinary activity, creating the ground for a successful transfer of the course to interested third organisations, making the entire system self-sustainable in the mid-term. The entire WP6 was devoted to design a consistent exit strategy, starting from the (above mentioned) Market Survey, elaborating a Strategy negotiated and agreed among partners, and generating a Transfer Methodology for EM2.0 coherent with the objectives of the strategy.

Approach for Comm&Diss activities and Quality Assurance

Communication and Dissemination activities were designed and defined in a general project **C&D plan**, addressing both the EU level and the National/Regional level. The C&D plan approach took into account 4 types of target groups, according to the following concentric approach.

Target group 1: Partner Organisations of EM2.0 project (internal dissemination):

Target group 2: Core target Group outside the consortium, primarily SMEs, Associations of Entrepreneurs and VET institutions:

Target group 3: Stakeholders and decision makers,

Target group 4: the general audience:



The C&D work was implemented in two phases, i.e. before and after the milestone represented by the two pilot testing:

PHASE 1: PRE-PILOT PHASE: The organisation, implementation and the delivery of the Pilot Testing actions entailed a communication which was orientated to the **information and awareness raising about the project** and it was carried out starting from February 2013. During the pre-pilot, phase the project was already running, but it had not produced any concrete output for the interest of the public. So the main goal was to **create expectations and to inform about the developments of the project**. Both phases addressed the widest audience even if the communication and the scope of the spreading was partially different.

PHASE 2: POST-PILOT PHASE: This communication phase accompanied the fine-tuning of the EM2.0 training course, and the preparation of the transfer package. It was aimed at reaching the highest number of VET Institutions interested to take over the EM2.0 course and include it into their offer (*transferee*); SMEs and Associations of entrepreneurs, to boost the demand of training on the market; Other organisations (policy makers, in particular), to raise political consensus and create a favourable environment for the further dissemination of the course among VET institutions, and to facilitate the access of trainees to such training offer (inclusion on the EM2.0 course into the VET offer supported by public funds, e.g. regional funds for education, ESF, national funds).

The project adopted a sound mix of traditional and innovative instruments of communication, such as the project website (www.exportmanager20.eu), leaflet in 5 languages, electronic newsletters, social network profile (twitter: @exportmanager20), including the realisation of a commercials of the training course.



General Visual Identity: Starting from a coordinated visual identity, specifically designed by an internationally awarded Studio of Design taking into account the desired message and impact on target groups, different messages have been accompanied by different images.



Three sub-messages addressing the three groups of final beneficiaries were adopted, each one targeting the very core their interest:



Icon for Businesses - Message: "Boost your international sell, by upgrading your export manager's skills!";



Icon for VET Institutions - Message: "enlarge your VET offer, get access to new market demand and be the first to deliver the EM2.0 training course;



Icon for individuals/professionals - Message: "Improve your skills and get the chance to create your own opportunity of work/business."

Being the EM2.0 training course dedicated to people wishing to benefit from an advanced knowledge of Export Management knowledge and techniques, communication and dissemination activities were conceived to reach and have impact as much as possible on the following three type of subjects:

1. groups of people already **trained in Export management**;
2. groups of people already **trained in web marketing and innovative ICT tools**;
3. groups **without training**.

Quality Assurance activities has been fulfilled in accordance with the "European Reference Framework for quality assurance in vocational education and training" (EQAVET) and the methodology of the "Quality Cycle" has been applied. The monitoring and quality control has been done at 4 steps: At the "Entrance" – to specify the quality criteria for each WP; "Monitoring of implementation" of quality indicators; "Monitoring emerging risks"; "Control of Outputs"- to assess the qualitative and quantitative results to achieve the project objectives.

Specific templates have been made in order to help all partners in submitting information and following up the quality applied criteria in the monitoring of QA at "the Entrance" and in "Monitoring of the implementation". Information about the planned activities and the eventual changes is being followed up thanks to other templates, as well as the necessity for quick reaction is covered by "WP7_T7.3_RiskTrackingLog_P5" Template . The fourth step is done with the Template "Scope Change Log", which helps the effective management of EM2.0 and the review of the intermediate and the final results.

The project **management** was conceived to be as light as possible in terms of structures and governing bodies, in order to devote more efforts to an accurate and proper monitoring technical and financial management. Accordingly the management structure of the project was composed by: 1 Project Coordinator; 1 Project Secretary; 5 Members of the Steering Committee (one per partner, excepted the coordinator, represented by the Project Coordinator); The committee was convened five times during the entire duration of the project, at M1 (Brussels - BE) and M7 (Perugia - IT), M13 (Barcelona – ES), M19 (Ljubljana – SI) and M24 Brussels - BE) all of them addressing management a technical issues.

The project governance and the relation among partners were set thought the signature of a **Consortium Agreement (CA)**. The agreement integrates the rules set in the Grant Agreement signed between the Coordinator and the Agency.

The approach adopted to the overall management of the project (internal and external communications, leading of WPs, reporting, distribution of pre-financing among partners) was characterised by the widest mutual trust among project partners

the consortium has largely recurred to e-mails, call conference, video conference for internal communication, only for the official documents (e.g. the Consortium Agreement), recurring to express courier.

All partners were involved in the project management from the very beginning, along with the possibility to benefit from EU pre-financing since the first instalment. This “open” approach stimulated the general partnership pro-activity and contributed to create the favourable conditions for fruitfully working in team. This trustful approach was compensated by a tighter control over partner expenditure, by mean of quarterly interim financial reports due by partners to the coordinator. The Partners were also required to present interim technical reports of activities undertaken. Accordingly two internal report (additional to those foreseen for Progress and Final report) were foreseen: 15/05/2013 (1st internal report); 15/11/2013 (Progress Report); 15/05/2014 (2nd internal report); 20/11/2014 (Final Report)

3. Project Outcomes & Results

The project produced a variety of outcomes and results, referring to the different activities of research, development, testing, preparation of the exploitation strategy, creation of links and agreements. This report takes into consideration main final results only, i.e. the **EM2.0 training course**, the **2 pilot tests**, the **Transfer Package** and the **Exploitation Strategy**. Interim results (including the results of the research activity) are widely described in the project Progress Report, available at this [link](#).

3.1 EM2.0 Training Course

The *Export Manager 2.0 Training Course* is a training course for a new generation of export managers, focused on innovative approaches and tools for import/export and internationalisation. The project output consists in the TC structure and the relevant the training material i.e. slides, compendium, tests.

The course structure consists of **12 training modules**, addressing different topics and Resources 2.0 for I/E and internationalisation. Each module targets specific learning objectives and contents. The EM2.0, as delivered by the project, has to be intended as the basis on top of which to perform the *executive planning* by the VET organisation which will deliver the single training course. The basic structure of the course foresees a duration of 84 hours of frontal lesson, in case of the full training delivered.

#	Name of the Module	Learning Objectives	Duration
1	Introduction	The trainees will be taught to understand in depth the structure of the course, the logic behind the selection of the Modules, the grouping of Resources 2.0 and how to embed them into the ordinary international activity of the company. The trainees will receive a summary of all the Resources 2.0 described during the entire training course.	4- 6 hours
2	International Context	The trainees will be able to use the most important online resources to learn, understand, assess the international business environment, including most relevant international institutions governing global trade, being able to find always updated information.	4 – 8
3	International Market Analysis	The trainees will be enabled to use the different Resources 2.0 to perform an online international market analysis.	6-8 Hours
4	International contracts and business law	The trainees will be able to use the most important online Resources 2.0 to learn, understand and use different types of international contracts. They will understand risks in export and the possibilities of legal (contract) insurances and how to solve some legal actions, economic or conflicts about intellectual property rights.	4 – 6
5	Customs and Logistics	The trainees will be able to know how to access free and official online information about customs, duties; They will be able to use the customs tariff nomenclature, preferential origin of goods and documents; They will be able to use web 2.0 resources for expeditions, logistic and custom procedures.	8–12 ours
6	Payment instruments	The trainees will be enabled to understand the different ways of collecting foreign trade operations, both on-line and off-line, and what are the Resources 2.0 that speak of them.	4-8 hours
7	Calculations of import/export activities	The trainees will be taught how to understand the different ways of calculating import and export prices and how to interpret and manage the costs in foreign trade.	4 – 8 hours

8	IDMP ² 1- Attracting potential clients	The trainees will be able to use the most important online resources to understand how to develop the International Digital Marketing plan of the company.	4 -6 hours
9	IDMP 2- Converting visitors into customers	The trainees will be able to use the most important online resources to learn, understand and develop the International digital Marketing plan of the company.	6 – 8 hours
10	IDMP 3 - Using social media for Business Development	To know and use social media to promote our products and brands. Know and use social media as a tool to contact potential customers worldwide.	2 – 4 hours
11	Internet and international HR management	The trainees will be able to use the most important online resources to learn, understand methodology, cases and tools to develop actions within the international Human resources departments. The trainees will be also able to select agents, distributors, and dealers in other countries or to find the right professional in another markets.	4-6 hours
12	Online Business Opportunities	The trainees will be able to resort the widest European network of service providers backed by the European Commission. How to “use” the EEN services,, in Europe and in the other international where the EEN has contact points. The trainees will learn how to find O/L information about main international fairs and B2B events.	4 hours

The 143 pages compendium of the EM2.0 training course (EN version) is accompanied by 12 .ppt presentations including the training course basic set of slides, introducing each module and illustrating, one by one, each related Resource 2.0 and its relation with Import/Export & Internationalisation added value, including how the Resources 2.0 works. The EM2.0 training course is provided in the 5 languages of the project.

Examples of slides



3.2 EM2.0 Transfer Guidelines

A further and fundamental outcomes of the project was the Transfer Guidelines. This is the instructions manual for VETs in order to take over and deliver the EM2.0 training course. It is included in the “EM2.0 Transfer Package” The aim of this document is to enable and facilitate the transfer process (from EM2.0 consortium to third parties) in order to reach the highest number of target trainees all over the Europe, reinforcing the VET system with a renovated training offer for internationalization and export management, ideally boosting the capacity of import/export of EU businesses.

The transfer guidelines is composed of two parts:

² International Digital Marketing Plan

- ✓ a **Public Part**: which contains general information about the EM2.0 course, potential beneficiaries, methodology, general contents. It is addressed to stakeholders and to the general public, with the aim of raising their awareness about the course, stimulating their interest to take over the course or to attend it, disseminating information among the wide community of import/export related players in the EU.
- ✓ a **Confidential Part**: which contains the core contents of the course as resulting from the EU funded project Web Advanced Export Manager. This part is reserved to third parties which have concluded an agreement with the consortium which grants the right to use the EM2.0 course and its contents.

The **guidelines** includes the description of the transfer process, the core of which is represented by the access to information contained in the Confidential Part. The transfer process has been developed in order to match with the approach adopted in the EM2.0 Exploitation Strategy (see below). The process is described to be performed in the frame of future joint venture among project partners to exploit the project results (a EEIG is expected to be created for this purpose), but it is suitable also for the case the exploitation will take the form of an individual exploitation by each single partner.

Along with the description of the transfer process, the guidelines describe also the set of rights and obligations of third parties becoming EM2.0 delivering organizations.

The core of the Confidential part of the Guidelines is the guide to the Executive Planning of a EM2.0 Training Course. This part guides the transferee organization during the entire planning process, from the take over of the training material to the delivering of the training.

The executive planning includes 8 steps:

1. *Definition of delivering approach (stand-alone VS embedment);*
2. *Selection of the EM2.0 Training modules to be delivered;*
3. *Economic planning and sustainability;*
4. *Identification of team of lecturer/trainers/teachers;*
5. *Definition of the marketing and trainees recruitment plans;*
6. *Contracting the staff required for the delivery of the training course;*
7. *Customization of the lesson;*
8. *Delivering of the EM2.0 labelled training course.*

This part, enriched with tips and suggestions, has been drawn on the basis of the experience matured during the lifetime of the project, in particular during the implementation of the 2 pilot testing of the course, performed on a sample of real trainees and trainers (closeness to market conditions).

The project quality was monitored through a continuous activity of **Quality Assessment**. This included:

- ◆ A The “Quality Assurance Plan”, helping partners to implement quality criteria and self-evaluation technique;
- ◆ A common approach for securing QA which applied in every country where EM2.0 training course could be implemented;

- ◆ Quality requirements process – helping in adapting and developing additional tools for QA in the participants' countries and helps to meet the expectations of the target groups;
- ◆ Quality control and risk management activities – encouraging joint efforts of the participants in EM2.0 for implementing the EU successful practices in securing good quality in the professional education and training for EM;
- ◆ Activities for finalizing the EM2.0 project tools;
- ◆ Activities for defining the quality standards for all participants in EM2.0 for monitoring and control of the training process.

The Quality Management Plan described how to ensure that the future training target group's quality requirements are achieved. It was the place to describe the processes and activities that will be put into place to ensure that quality deliverables are produced. The Quality Management Plan also helped to understand when deliverables were complete as well as correct.

One of the successful elements of the project was the **C&D activity**, which gave a consistent visibility to the project at regional but also at EU level.

i) Project Website: <http://www.exportmanager20.eu>, full available in EN, and most relevant sections in IT, ES, BG and SI. The website was visited in the period December 2013/2014 some 30.500 visitors, with 12.960 unique visitors 6.100 as new visitors. European visitors were from Ukraine, Poland, Italy, Spain, France, Bulgaria, Belarus, Czech Republic and Slovenia.

The website hosts the communication material produced during the project, in particular the [EM2.0 commercial](#), [the set of interviews to pilot trainees and trainers](#) (in Italian, subtitled EN), the electronic version of the newsletters (in the section [Products and Results](#)).

ii) Local Events: Local events in partner countries revealed a powerful vehicle to stimulate the interest of the target audience toward the project.

Italy: 2 dedicated events: 8th of May 2014 – Perugia, *“Export Manager 2.0 – Usare Internet e le nuove tecnologie per migliorare l'export delle imprese umbre”*; 30th of September 2014 – Perugia *“La comunicazione ai tempi dei social network”*;

In Spain lectures during international business and international trade courses were held: 19th of February 2014 Barcelona, 21st of October 2014 Barcelona *“Do you want to sell on the bigger market in the world? Key success aspects for catalán companies in China”*; 30th of October 2014 *“Strategies and key tools to be more competitive in international commerce”*;

Bulgaria: has also been co-organizer in three events in Bulgaria with P&P Slaveykovy Publishers – Mar/Oct. 2013 at IPS/University of World Economy, where the project has been presented to the Bulgarian students and trainees and during 12-16th of September 2014 in Varna with regional Chambers of Commerce and Industry and regional VET Centres and during October 2014 in Sofia at the Institute for Postgraduate Studies, where other target groups have been approached.

On October 10th, 2014 ECDEMP has presented EM2.0 at the meeting with The KAIZEN Institute in Bucharest, where the project has been presented to directors of educational institutions from Romania, Hungary, Macedonia, Czech Republic and Turkey.

During October 28th-30th, 2014 ECDEMP participated in an international conference in Tokyo, where EM2.0 has been presented to 370 participants from Asian, African and Latin

American countries, which has been a contribution of ECDEMP, without any costs for the project.

Two local events took place in Ljubljana (Slovenia), in April and May 2014, with the purpose of presenting the project and its potential for the future, addressing students and trainees.

iii) Social Networks

TWITTER (EM2.0 account + Partners accounts): the twitter account **@exportmanager20** (<https://twitter.com/ExportManager20>) was quite animated, especially during the testing phase to stimulate the interest of potential participants. In November 2014 the account has 110 followers, following 210 stakeholders of internationalisation and export, communicating through 31 tweets. Partners were very active through their organisation's twitter profiles, tweeting new messages and re-tweeting EM2.0 tweets.

FACEBOOK: a Facebook page was created by the Slovene partner, only in Slovenian.

iv) Newsletters: 4 issues during the life time of the project, delivered in relation with milestones: i) General presentation of the project; ii) On-Line Survey for the market analysis; iii) Pilot Test; iv) Presentation of the final structure of the course (12 modules);

v) Leaflets: three folders F/R A4 colour leaflet, translated in 5 languages, disseminated during project events and available at the front desk of partner organisations.

vi) Even if not intended for a C&D purpose, the **2 pilot experiences** in Slovenia and Umbria gained also a dramatic attention of the specific target of SMEs and students (more than 200 request of participation).

4. Partnerships

The multi-country partnership's composition (Italy, UK, Spain, Bulgaria and Slovenia) ensured the access to EU added value in terms of access to variety of different cultural and methodological approaches, different ways of approaching training for export management and internationalisation, different expectations of project impact at regional/national level and, finally, five different level of maturity of training for Export Management.

Geographically, the project presented a good coverage, bringing into the project 5 EU countries with 5 different cultural background. The partnership ensured also a significant variety of experiences in terms of technical skills represented, covering the full range of expertise and skills required for the implementation of the action.

As highlighted by the research performed during the project, training for EM in the different EU countries presents several differences, including different habits to name the same topic (export management, I/E activities, internationalisation, etc). In addition, the activities implemented by the Export Manager in the different national contexts and cultural environments follow different approaches too, and the comparison among EM trainings (implemented at the beginning of the project) represented a factor of cross-fertilisation resulting in a blended approach which constituted the base of knowledge on top of which the EM2.0 training course will be built.

The multi-cultural and multi-experience background revealed a true added value while considering that Export Manager (as a professional profile) is required to address different cultural and business environments. In that sense, the trans-national nature of the consortium revealed a pre-requisite to develop the training course.

The EU dimension of the project worked also as a evidence of reliability of the consortium and of its expected results, contributing to attract the interest of national-class training institutions, became third parties, contributors and supporters of the project.

It has been observed by some hasty observer that the expected output of the EM2.0 project (i.e. an innovative EM training course based on Resources 2.0) did not strictly require an international partnership for its development and implementation. This position must be firmly rejected, as it doesn't consider that the final product's ambition is to be suitable for transfer to VET institutions at EU level. Accordingly i) the base of knowledge about existing EM training courses, ii) the different cultural and methodological approaches to the EM, iii) the different sensibility to the identification of the Resources 2.0, cannot be ensured without a multi-national dimension. A training course elaborated under one point of view only would be hardly "understandable" and "recognisable" as reliable, from the entire European community of VET institution and export managers operators.

During the development of the training modules, a further ground for the demonstration of European added value revealed to be the different impact that Resources 2.0 have in different contexts. Having different point of views from different countries enabled to identify which technical tools and solutions were more effective in a certain country, while being ineffective in others.

Besides of technical added value brought by the multi-country dimension of the project, working in multi-country team represented an added value in itself. All partners were already experienced in working in international projects, so there was not a significant added value in that sense. What appears interesting and worthy of mention is the "European dimension" of the project, intended as the perception of being working into a European context rather than simply international one. It refers to the consuetude to work and think in terms of European dimension, the awareness and familiarity with EU programmes working procedures (like a common, shared, and consolidated working methodology), the perception of a European final scope of the project.

The last mention to the partnership added value of the project, in the experience of Web Advanced Export Manager – EM2.0 refers to the **partnerships external to the consortium**, enabled by the project implementation.

These partnership can be sorted in formal and informal partnership.

Formal partnership: One has been established by mean of a Cooperation Agreement with the Italian Governmental Trade Promotion Agency *ICE* owner of one of the most significant EM training course delivered in Italy, providing a legal and operational framework for the access to training contents. Two further CA, with the Faculty of Economics and PIN Consortium (University of Florence) are under negotiation at the time of the present report.

Informal partnerships have been initiated and/or consolidated at local level with communities of target audience (VETs and Associations of Entrepreneurs), especially in Italy, Spain UK and Bulgaria. BCC established informal partnerships with the Catalan Council of Chambers of Commerce and the Spanish Council of Chambers of Commerce, which acted as a multiplier to reach 25 further chambers of commerce all over Spain.

UK Sheffield Chamber has initiated a dialogue with some key intermediaries to examine the possibility of dissemination of the materials and the promotion of the training package. It has developed partnerships with Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam Universities to encourage dissemination of the training to its business school and management school students. Likewise SCCI has set up a partnership with Sheffield College. In addition EM 2.0 programme has already been discussed with representatives of the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC), and the Overseas Business Network which has recently been established through the BCC. As well as this SCCI is holding meetings with the Small Business Federation and other local Chamber partners with a view to creating a wide network of delivery of the modules, and it is actively promoting the course to business support organisations, primarily through the National Enterprise Network.

In addition, during the project, an open call for expression of interest was published in the project website during the second year.

- Exemplas ltd - Enterprise Europe Network East of England (UK)
- Cork Chamber of Commerce (IE)
- Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce (UK)
- Institute for Postgraduate Studies - division at UNWE (BG)
- International University College (BG)
- Science and technology park of the University of Rijeka – Step Ri (HR)
- Chamber of Commerce & Industry Mechelen (BE)
- Paragon Europe (MT)
- Bulgarian Industrial Association (BG)
- CIFP Simón de Colonia (ES)
- Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie Auvergne (FR)

5. Plans for the Future

The plans for the future, after the end of the project, were developed and illustrated in the *EM2.0 Exploitation Strategy*. This is the basic programming document aiming at fully exploit the potential of the project's results. The strategy was conceived as an ongoing process, started during the project and surviving to the conclusion of the funding, for the benefit of the project's partners, of the wide community of stakeholders and for the long term impact of the action. The Exploitation Strategy is the result of the discussion among project's partners, based on project's results, its perceived potential compared with the current VET's market conditions, the training demand for Export Managers and statistical data concerning the situation of training and import/export in EU.

The strategy, based on a stakeholder analysis performed via a market survey and desk research, sets a credible and sustainable scenario of exploitation to get the most of benefits for the partners, for the beneficiaries of the training and the stakeholders, built on 4 pillars:

1. Creation of a “**EM2.0 Label**”, in order to make the training course recognisable and visible toward the target audience and the stakeholders.
2. Possibility for each partner to reserve the **right to deliver the EM2.0 Labelled course at National level, during the first year**;
3. Creation of an autonomous, light, stable and sustainable **Management and Coordination structure** among consortium partners to manage the project results (tentatively named EM2.0 Academy);
4. Opening the EM2.0 Academy to **the membership of third parties**.
5. Definition and implementation of a sound, sustainable, agreeable **promotional plan**;
6. Additional initiatives addressing **non-EU countries**.

In order to balance different needs of partners and actual possibility of delivery of the EM2.0 training course, the strategy was shaped around different options of *timing* and *methodology of exploitation*:

- i) *Timing*: a two-step process, splitting exploitation during Year 1 and after Year 1;
- ii) *Methodology of exploitation*: Direct exploitation vs. Indirect Exploitation.

In brief, the strategy enable the following scenario in a short / mid term period:

- **M0- M6** : (Direct Exploitation) Partners start the delivery of the training at regional/national level, without the possibility to transfer the course to third parties (3rd parties can be involved only as co-organizer of the local delivery). In the same time, the coordinator starts the process to set up the Academy, including the elaboration of a detailed business plan, the registration of logos and trademark. The first experiences of delivery at local level allow the consortium to create a “historical background” and a library of additional contents, enriching the “value proposition” for future transferee organisations.

- **M6 Y1**: (Direct Exploitation) partner continue to deliver the training on a individual basis, but start the process of creation of the EM2.0 Academy.

- **After Y1**: (Direct & Indirect Exploitation). If the Academy is set, partners jointly manage the rights related to EM2.0. In case, due to actual conditions, the establishment of the Academy is not possible, partners are entitled to use and transfer the course in their Country, excepted the coordinator (other countries), unless the impossibility of establishment is due to the coordinator itself.

6. Contribution to EU policies

The EM2.0 project is contributing to several EU policies, in different policy areas.

The first is related to LLL specific objectives, addressing trainees and VET system:

1. concerning trainees: *“To support participants in training and further training activities in the acquisition and the use of knowledge, skills and qualifications to facilitate personal development, employability and participation in the European labour market”* - In fact, the EM2.0 training course improves the quality and quantity of trainees' competences. Trainees will acquire competences belonging to 2 different knowledge domains, but having in common the potential to boost SMEs capability to be competitive on global markets. This mix of competences in a single professional profile increase dramatically the employment and self-employment opportunities of trainees, gaining competitive advantage in their position in the labour market.
2. Concerning VET system: *“To enhance the attractiveness of vocational education and training system”*. The project outcomes enhance the attractiveness of VET systems as the EM2.0 professional profile is currently subject to a strong boost of demand. European SMEs are (slowly but relentlessly!) discovering the huge and largely unexploited potential of the Resources 2.0 as marketing and selling tool and this course is expected to be very required by most innovative and open-minded companies.

In terms of operational Objectives of the Action EM2.0 contributes to:

3. improving the quality and to increase the volume of co-operation between institutions or organisations providing learning opportunities, enterprises, social partners and other relevant bodies throughout Europe. In fact, the project is implemented by organisation operating for the benefit of SMEs, being Chambers of Commerce, VET institutions, Regional Agencies. From different angle of action, they work to strengthen regional economies, labour markets and social conditions. The possibility to transfer the results of the project will attract the interest of all those type of actors, pushing to cooperation in view of bringing to the territory an innovative and useful training offer able to have concrete impact on regional economies.
4. Developing Vocational Skills considering the labour market needs (*New Skills for New Jobs*). The labour market needs was the primary driver of the original idea of the project. EM2.0 comes from the acknowledgment of companies' continuous demand of expertise to improve international trade and global competitiveness, when the economic and financial downturn force to constraints which impede hiring resource and significantly invest in internationalisation. Now companies need to reduce costs, increase business, and to go abroad. EM2.0 aims at providing a solution to those needs.