



# “Valorise or Vaporise”

State of the art – dissemination and exploitation in EU-  
Projects

## Summary

**C-E.N.T.E.R.** - Competence, Cooperation, Communication in the C-E.N.T.E.R. of Dissemination and  
Exploitation of EU Project Results  
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## Index

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Methodological research background and setup.....	2
2.1 Target group .....	2
3. Survey – Dissemination and Exploitation of EU-Project Results, state of the art, opportunities, threats, demands: Funding bodies.....	2
3.1 Specifications.....	2
3.2 Dissemination methods to be used as standard in projects .....	3
3.3 Potential and purpose of dissemination instruments.....	4
3.4 General satisfaction with dissemination and exploitation activities .....	5
3.5 Needs for the future.....	5
4. Survey – Dissemination and Exploitation of EU-Project Results, state of the art, opportunities, threats, demands: Project organisations and experts .....	6
4.1 Specifications.....	6
4.2 Dissemination instruments to be used in projects as standard .....	6
4.3 Potential purpose of dissemination instruments.....	7
4.4 Is dissemination easy or difficult .....	7
4.5 Demands, wishes and suggestions for support in dissemination and exploitation .....	8
5. Comparisons and deductions .....	10
5.1 Importance of dissemination instruments.....	10
5.2 Reasons for dissemination being an easy or difficult task: .....	10
5.3 Deductions and final conclusions: .....	11

## 1. Introduction

***“Next to doing the right thing, the most important thing is to let people know you are doing the right thing.” (John D. Rockefeller)***

Dissemination and exploitation of project results especially from European co-operation projects independent of its format, target group, target sector and other specifications is considered to be of crucial importance during the implementation process of co-operation projects. However, reality shows and a lot of examples proof, that this dissemination and especially exploitation of results is much easier said than done.

Especially with European co-operation projects in the field of education and training, project managers and organisations as well as funding bodies of these projects are facing a number of additional challenges, which may influence the success of dissemination and exploitation: different European countries have different education and training systems and needs, different challenges, different priorities, different main target groups and target sectors, different levels, different philosophical and historical backgrounds of education systems etc. This creates huge new challenges to projects and outputs, it seems literally impossible to produce one appropriate output for 27 different systems and also dissemination and exploitation appears to be more complicated.

Nevertheless the European Union and its funding bodies, agencies etc. put great emphasis on the dissemination and exploitation of results, all projects basically demand from their partnership the dissemination and exploitation of results to lead to a sustainable use, however only quite a few projects in the field of education and training can really show full success with this task.

Within the C-E.N.T.E.R. project – funded under the European Lifelong Learning Programme Key Activity 4 – 14 project partners from 13 participating countries are aiming for at least narrowing this gap in the sense of providing support tools for project promoters and partnerships to better achieve what is demanded in terms of dissemination and exploitation.

As a first step the project implemented a large empirical survey during spring and summer 2010 with representatives of funding bodies for European co-operation projects (National Agencies, Executive Agency, European Commission DG Education and Culture) as well as project promoters and experts in the field of European project management to empirically define the gap between demand and reality of dissemination and exploitation of results in European co-operation projects. The following pages will present a brief summary of the results identified.

The full study document including all detailed results can be downloaded from the project website:

<http://www.c.enter-network.eu/>

## 2. Methodological research background and setup

### 2.1 Target group

The survey concentrated on two different main target groups which appear to be significant in the process of supporting dissemination and exploitation of EU-project results which is

- a) **Funding bodies:** these are the bodies and organisations responsible for providing the project funding and for accompanying as well as administrating the single co-operation projects during their lifetime.
- b) **Experts and project organisations:** besides the funding bodies the study concentrated on the organisations and persons involved in the implementation of European co-operation projects and the dissemination and exploitation of their results.

## 3. Survey – Dissemination and Exploitation of EU-Project Results, state of the art, opportunities, threats, demands: Funding bodies

### 3.1 Specifications

The following paragraphs are presenting the results of the questionnaire survey implemented with funding bodies (national agencies, EACEA, DG Education and Culture) on the topic of dissemination and exploitation of EU-Project results with the main aim to identify needs and suggestions for additional tools, reasons for good and bad practice in dissemination and exploitation and to compare offers and demands from funding bodies and project organisations.

## 3.2 Dissemination methods to be used as standard in projects

One of the core questions to the funding bodies was which of the listed dissemination and exploitation methods / instruments they would expect to be used as a standard instrument in European co-operation projects. With this question it could be identified which method from the perspective of funding bodies is seen to be most important and a must within EU-projects. The following instruments and methods have been suggested in the questionnaire:

- 1) Informal internal meetings and round tables
- 2) Formal meetings and round tables with stakeholders and external experts
- 3) Email pools / groups
- 4) Press releases
- 5) Daily newspapers and magazines in general
- 6) Specific professional newspapers and magazines
- 7) TV
- 8) Radio
- 9) Project website
- 10) Internet forum / blogs / Youtube
- 11) Internet based networks (Facebook, Twitter)
- 12) Other project meetings
- 13) Flyers
- 14) Posters
- 15) Newsletters
- 16) Printing of documents (manuals, surveys etc.)
- 17) DVD / CD Rom / USB
- 18) Promotion clip
- 19) Face to face dissemination
- 20) Pilots / testing
- 21) Networking / Lobbying with relevant stakeholder
- 22) Thematic workshops, conferences, public events
- 23) Involvement of a dissemination expert as official project partner
- 24) Professional public relation manager / expert
- 25) Intellectual property rights
- 26) Dissemination platforms and networks

- 27) Sustainable implementation and usage of project products
- 28) Conference papers
- 29) Gadgets / Giveaways (pens, calendars, note pads, etc.)
- 30) Advertisement

The ranking list established shows that in the view of the funding bodies the most important dissemination and exploitation instrument which should basically always be used are formal meetings and round tables with stakeholders and external experts, followed by the establishment of an email pool or email group, on third position already specific magazines and newspapers appear which is quite surprising, as it comes even before the instrument of a project website. TV and radio are instruments where there is no need to be used identified by the funding bodies in general, also a promotion clip, a professional public relation manager or also gadgets and giveaways are not needed to be used in the view of funding bodies for supporting dissemination and exploitation of project results.

### 3.3 Potential and purpose of dissemination instruments

While the item before lead to a ranking list of dissemination instruments and approaches due to the need to be used within European co-operation projects the second and equally important question is which purpose the single dissemination instruments can meet. It may of course happen that a single instrument should often be used in EU-project dissemination strategy but it may happen that this instrument appears to be quite expensive, not target group oriented or also only reaching a very small target group. In this sense the following question tries to balance the selected preferences by the funding bodies with different aspects and potentials of the single dissemination instrument.

When interpreting the results it appears that e.g. formal meetings and round tables with stakeholders and experts, which have been ranked top in the previous question obviously have a lot of disadvantages also, they are quite difficult to be implemented, they are not so cheap, however they reach the target group and could quite well facilitate the sustainability of results.

Out of this perspective the by far most efficient and desirable instrument would be a project website, which is easy, cheap and has a huge and broad dissemination potential.

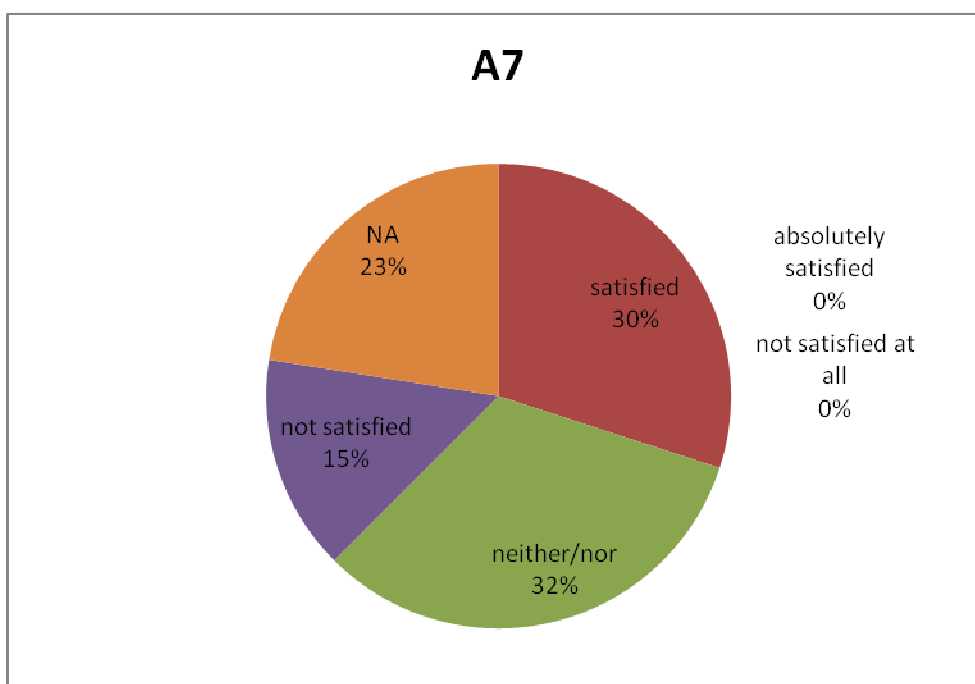
As a final deduction from the perspective of the funding bodies in terms of dissemination:

DO's: website, press releases, email groups, formal and informal meetings, flyers and posters as well as networking and lobbying

DON'T's: intellectual property right regulations (as a dissemination instrument), inclusion of a public relation manager, promotion clips as well as generally TV and radio

### 3.4 General satisfaction with dissemination and exploitation activities

In the final part the questionnaire asks the representatives of funding bodies if they are generally satisfied with the dissemination results from European co-operation projects as far as they can observe these during the last years. The answers to this question are in general quite expectable and show the following picture:



About 30% of the funding bodies' representatives are satisfied with the dissemination and exploitation results gained in EU-projects within the lifelong learning programme, however 32% have an average satisfaction level and 15% are to date not satisfied with the results and approaches. What is also quite remarkable is, that none of the funding bodies did state that they are absolutely satisfied but also no answers were given for absolute dissatisfaction. This shows however quite clearly that there is considerable improvement potential with dissemination and exploitation activities in these kinds of projects from the perspective of the funding bodies.

### 3.5 Needs for the future

Apart from the currently offered support for dissemination and exploitation activities of project groups, the interviewees have been asked to express wishes for future offers and support, which

could even more help project partnerships to fulfil their dissemination and exploitation tasks. The intention of this question was mainly to get new ideas what can and what should be done from the perspective of the funding bodies to improve the dissemination and exploitation performance of project partnerships. The results to this question are quite interesting and give food for thought and discussion.

Funding bodies expressed their wishes and ideas of future offers and support in the following categories:

- a) Training
- b) Networking
- c) Best practice
- d) Others

## **4. Survey – Dissemination and Exploitation of EU-Project Results, state of the art, opportunities, threats, demands: Project organisations and experts**

### **4.1 Specifications**

In the following paragraph we will present the results of the questions asked to 337 project organisations and experts mainly in the field of lifelong learning programme. The results have been aggregated on quantitative level as well as undergone a qualitative-interpretative clustering for all qualitative and open answers. Since the sample with 337 filled questionnaires is quite big compared to the target group a good significance of the answers and statements can be assumed and expected.

### **4.2 Dissemination instruments to be used in projects as standard**

One of the core questions also for the experts and organisations was which of the listed dissemination and exploitation methods / instruments they would use most in dissemination and exploitation of results. With this question it could be identified which method from the perspective of experts and organisations is most and less important. The list of suggested methods and instruments has been similar to the one for the funding bodies to allow comparison and interpretation.

The ranking list shows that in the opinion of experts and project organisations websites should basically always be used as dissemination and exploitation tool, followed by networking and informal meetings as well as thematic workshops, formal meetings and email pools/groups. As least important for dissemination in EU-projects the experts and organisations mentioned promotion clips, TV, radio as well as advertisements and the inclusion of a professional public relation manager.

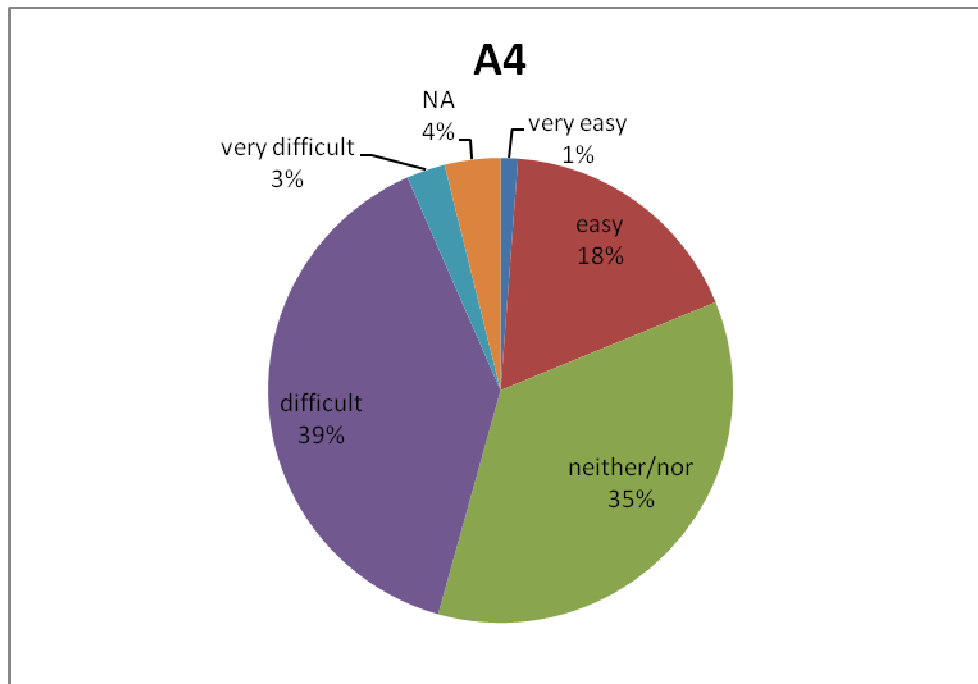
### **4.3 Potential purpose of dissemination instruments**

The interpretation of the results shows that the instrument of a website again (similar to the results from funding bodies) combines a number of positive characteristics and also from this perspective it is the dissemination instrument number one. Much more problematic it appears for networking, which is ranked second, however seems quite difficult to implement and can be quite costly. Other positive values appear especially for email pools and groups as well as for newsletters, which do show a very positive cost-benefit ratio in the opinion of the asked experts.

Most problematic in the sense of dissemination and exploitation appear therefore especially the intellectual property rights as well as TV and promotion clips. This picture is again similar to the answers of the funding bodies; however, a more detailed interpretation and comparison will be presented under chapter 5 of this document.

### **4.4 Is dissemination easy or difficult**

The experts and project organisations have been asked this crucial question to get a general overview if these persons find dissemination and exploitation of results basically an easy or difficult task assigned by the project and funding bodies. On the basis of the previous statements the result for this question is not surprising but nevertheless quite impressive.



Only 19% of the answering experts and organisations find dissemination an easy (18%) or even very easy task (1%). About 40% find it difficult (39%) or even very difficult (3%) to disseminate and exploit results of EU-projects.

#### 4.5 Demands, wishes and suggestions for support in dissemination and exploitation

The maybe most interesting question in the direction of future support strategies, offers etc. concludes the questionnaire for the experts and project organisations. In this questions they have been asked to express their wishes for the future, which should be taken into account by funding bodies. The results have been clustered on the basis of qualitative interpretation. Therefore support and new offers are wishful in the following areas (in order of importance):

##### a) Information and Training

- Dissemination guide
- Best practice collection
- Directories (media, magazines)
- Training programmes for dissemination and exploitation
- Databases for dissemination of results
- Extended services on the ADAM platform for marketing purposes

- Up to date information on dissemination and guidelines on the EU website

**b) Events**

- Events for projects with specific focus on dissemination and exploitation
- Events organized with and for stakeholders not only project presentations

**c) Budget**

- More funding for dissemination work packages
- Financial support for more multilingualism in dissemination activities

**d) Other:**

- More networks (also social web 2.0 networks)
- Newsletters, possibly by subprogramme, mailing lists
- Separate website on EU server for dissemination and support person to be contacted
- Certification of good quality dissemination products
- Follow up actions from national agencies
- Extension of funding period and budget for dissemination reasons
- Templates (e.g. for press releases)
- Short and readable handbook on the topic of dissemination
- Named dissemination expert within every national agency
- Return to projects 3 years after completion and assess their impact
- Do not preach water and drink wine yourself, be a good example
- More attendance from DG people at dissemination events

Deeper considerations about the different suggestions made will be elaborated in the following chapter.

## 5. Comparisons and deductions

### 5.1 Importance of dissemination instruments

- 1) **Informal meetings** are less important for funding bodies than for experts / organisations
- 2) **Professional magazines** are much more important for funding bodies than for experts / organisations
- 3) **Networking and lobbying** is much more important for experts / organisations than for funding bodies
- 4) **Daily newspapers** are much more important for funding bodies than for experts / organisations
- 5) **Flyers** are much less important for funding bodies than for experts / organisations
- 6) **Face to face dissemination** is more important for experts / organisations than for funding bodies

In general it can be assumed that all dissemination instruments mainly related to personal contact, human and personal interaction, face to face interaction appear more important for dissemination and exploitation for the participating experts / organisations whereas quite formal dissemination instruments (e.g. articles in newspapers and magazines etc.) are by trend more important for the funding bodies having more concrete support potential for the dissemination and exploitation tasks. This rule is clearly broken by the instrument of flyers which have less importance for funding bodies than for experts / organisations.

### 5.2 Reasons for dissemination being an easy or difficult task:

When comparing the answers of funding bodies as experts / organisations related to reasons why dissemination is an easy or difficult task in EU-project following issues are appearing:

- 1) Both target groups mention the possibilities and advantages of internet (including web 2.0) as one of most important reasons why dissemination is easy.
- 2) Existing networks from project organisations and involvement in networks is the second important reason why dissemination can be an easy task in EU-projects
- 3) Lack of stakeholder interest is the main reason for dissemination being a difficult task
- 4) Lacks of training programmes in the field as well as lack of budget for dissemination activities are also mentioned by both target groups.

The reasons mentioned by both target groups are in general quite similar and this shows that representatives of both groups basically have a similar picture of the situation and challenges within dissemination and exploitation activities of EU-projects.

### 5.3 Deductions and final conclusions:

When analysing the results of the survey on quantitative and qualitative level from a general perspective and taking into account the detailed interpretations from the chapters before, there is a number of 10 main conclusions, which can be drawn from the survey results:

- 1) **Dissemination and exploitation is a difficult task in EU-Projects:** The answers from both target groups clearly show that doing successful dissemination and exploitation work is a huge challenge to the project groups and partners. Surprisingly enough this challenge is seen by funding bodies even more dramatic than by the experts and project organisations themselves.
- 2) **Improvement potential for dissemination activities:** The satisfaction level for the current results and success in dissemination and exploitation is low; there is huge potential for improvement from the perspective of both target groups.
- 3) **Improvement potential for support activities in general:** There is a huge demand from the project organisations and experts but also from the perspective of the funding bodies that more support is offered to manage the challenges of dissemination and exploitation in a project
- 4) **Main demands for further support are:** training (in the field of marketing, dissemination and exploitation), better guidelines and documents on that issue, more budget for these activities (maybe also in a separated contract with the funding body only covering the dissemination tasks with own budget), collections of good practices for orientation, certification of dissemination excellence, media directories etc.
- 5) Funding bodies are generally favor structuralized and **more formal ways of dissemination** and exploitation like magazines, newspapers, conferences, websites etc. whereas experts / organisations prefer personal forms with lot of social and human interaction like informal meetings, networking and lobbying, face to face dissemination etc.

- 6) **Websites are a must in project dissemination.** Both target groups emphasize the need and impact of this instrument, however crucial advantages and disadvantages are mentioned for this tool and should be taken into account.
- 7) **Flyers** are the instrument, which separates most the estimations of funding bodies and experts / organisations. This instrument is much appreciated and used by experts / organisations, however is rated considerably low in importance and impact by the funding bodies.
- 8) **Promotion clips are useless:** from all ranked and estimated dissemination instruments, the development of promotion clips is seen to be at least meeting the characteristics easy, cheap, reaching broad target group, reaching specific stakeholders and facilitating sustainability
- 9) **Networking and lobbying** is best for reaching the stakeholders: this instrument is seen to be best suitable to reach the stakeholders of a project, however under some preconditions: the organisation / expert needs to be part of a network and needs to know the “rules” and “ways” of networking and lobbying, this could be an important issue for training programmes.
- 10) In relation to **training in the field of dissemination**, which is very much asked by the project organisations and experts but also from the side of the funding bodies, the following main training topics can be identified:
  - Website (content, development in general)
  - Dealing with press, print media
  - Calculation / budgeting / finances (fundraising?)
  - TV and other mass media
  - Web 2.0 for dissemination
  - Marketing principles
  - Communication and networking / lobbying
  - Dissemination products (flyers, posters, gadgets)

We are totally aware that a lot of further conclusions and elaborations would be possible on the basis of the raw data received, therefore raw data will be made available upon request for interested bodies.

In general the C-E.N.T.E.R. study has developed a state of the art record in the field of dissemination and exploitation of EU-project results in Europe. The results received do generally show a situation at funding bodies and experts / organisations, which allows much improvement potential. On the basis of the received results as well as recommendations and suggestions, the C-E.N.T.E.R. project group will do its best to provide concrete support products and to help improving the situation in dissemination and exploitation. With the support of the C-E.N.T.E.R. project we do hope to change the picture about dissemination being a difficult task to the positive side.

Many thanks should be expressed at this stage to all project partners for their support with the survey implementation in all partner countries and to all persons who participated in this survey.

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