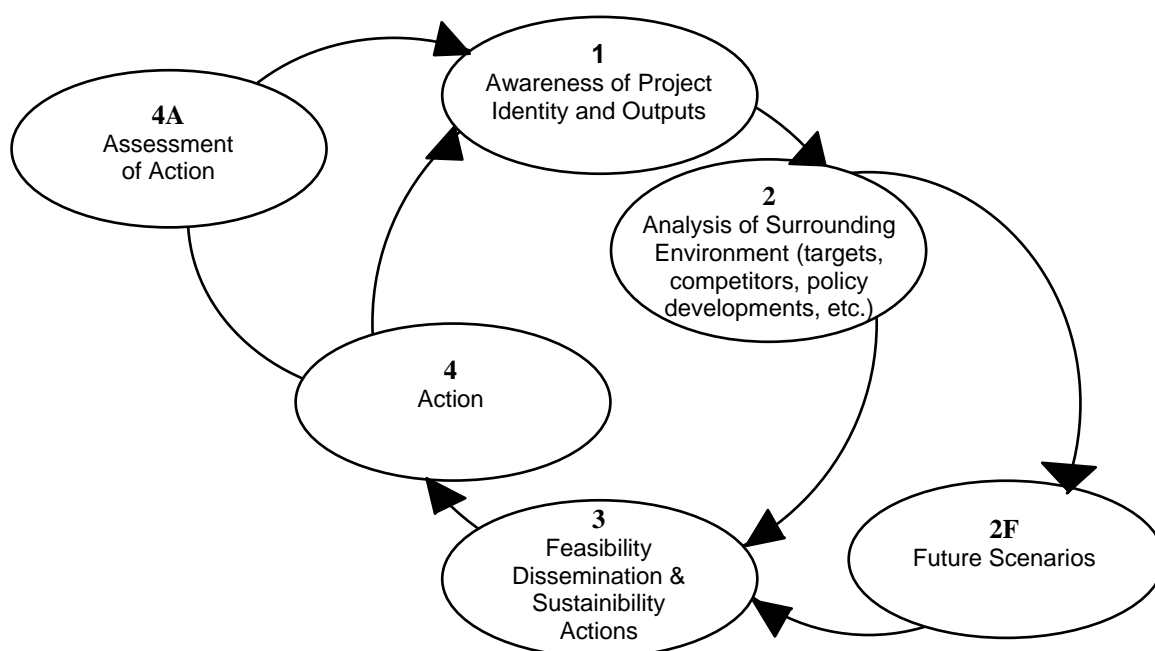


REVE – Framework and concept for the dissemination of project achievements

The following outline is largely based on the dissemination model developed in frames of the Socrates MINERVA SUSTAIN project - in which EDEN was also consortium partner - elaborated for the support of dissemination and sustainability of EU funded ODL projects.

1. The SUSTAIN implementation model



2. Definitions

Outputs: Dissemination results from a project, not necessarily of the entirety of a project but possibly of single outputs. The overall results of a project can thus be disseminated in part. The outputs are defined by the individual project circumstances. In each individual project they will vary in nature, in possible target groups and in terms of dissemination.

Dissemination: Dissemination is described generally as the range of actions which make project outputs available to persons who are not directly involved in a project. Availability of project results is understood to comprise a full range of elements from pure information up to training exercises or involvement in decision-making.

The **nature of the project outputs** to be developed, may be classified as follows:

- ◆ hard outputs in terms of “products” from projects (such as curricula, courses, books, open learning materials, databases etc.);
- ◆ know-how in terms of expertise (such as project management, university management, etc.);
- ◆ ideas for policy making.

During the project life-cycle several products are developed as **intermediate or supporting outputs**.

The “**potential**” for dissemination can be defined as a combination of three factors:

- ◆ intrinsic innovative value of the output;
- ◆ ease of dissemination;
- ◆ number of potential users.

Timeframes of dissemination: An important consideration is the differentiation of projects according to the phases of their life-cycle. Appropriate dissemination strategy can be designed from the beginning of the project, planning for dissemination actions related to the first intermediate results. Although dissemination can be started in any phase of the project life-cycle, having a dissemination plan from the beginning helps considerably the shared and effective distribution of effort over time to guarantee sustainability of outputs.

3. Target users and project stakeholders

When identifying target groups for dissemination a preliminary distinction should be made between “*target users*” - who are those who should make direct use of project outputs - and “*project stakeholders*” - who are those (local government, university rectorate and administrative staff, local companies, etc.) who, although not always directly involved in any project activity, share an interest in the success of the initiative.

Target users can be divided into the following categories:

- a. **learners**, who should be informed about new curricula, equipment, mobility opportunities available. Learners are at the same time targets for dissemination and for sustainability.
- b. **other parts of the university, school, training centre, research institute, company involved in the project**, including management levels; these could benefit from new equipment available, but also from the experience gained by running a transnational innovative project;
- c. **other universities, schools, training centres, research institutes, companies in the country**, which might benefit from both experience gained and specific outputs of projects developed in the same country.
- d. **other universities, schools, training centres, research institutes, companies in other countries**; this is a target of potential interest for institutions in the most advanced countries, particularly those which seek collaboration with other institutions.
- e. **policy makers** in national and regional governments and in industry, who can provide additional support and follow-up opportunities to successful projects which can show specific outputs of their work and potential benefits of future developments;
- g. **public opinion** which needs to be made aware of specific results in order to back up policy decisions for continued investment. This is obviously a target that cannot be addressed by individual projects, but rather at Programme level; however, it requires the mobilisation of projects if it is to be credible.

It is essential that the **primary target group** be identified as the most important beneficiary of the dissemination actions. The primary target group for each output is the category of users for which the output is designed and developed, hopefully on the basis of a needs analysis or an expressed demand. The primary group may be a ‘closed’ and known one (*e.g.* a specific

group of university students who have registered to follow a new curriculum; a group of academics teaching a specific topic). In other cases, the primary target group may be an 'open' one (e.g. students who wish to follow an innovative course; academics who need re-training).

The concept of **secondary target groups** is also important to define those categories who could use part or all of the products/services originally designed for another group, therefore adding value to both your dissemination and sustainability plans

4. Survey of dissemination actions to be applied

Extensive actions refer to infrastructural actions supporting dissemination, while **intensive actions** include those which may produce specific dissemination results, such as influence on university management or dissemination of good practice in project management.

The **possible list of activities** below offers a good basis to the efficient actions:

- ◆ **Conferences and Workshops;** they constitute the most traditional way to present results of innovative projects. If well organised, they can be a "warm" and interactive way to discuss results and possible future developments; their cost may be reduced to very little when organised within an institution.
- ◆ **Publications** (reports, newsletters, printed directories of outputs, collection of case studies, etc.); they are another traditional way of disseminating results, usually integrated with workshops/conferences in order to cope with their main disadvantage: they are "cold", not interactive ways of presenting results and can be ignored and forgotten if insufficient attention is attracted to the publication. The time required to prepare effective publications may be considerable.
- ◆ **Exhibitions;** they may be extremely effective for presenting certain kinds of "material" outputs and for establishing personal contacts. A "permanent" variant of the exhibitions are the "Programme Output Showcases" that can be organised at European or national level to attract the attention of target groups for the whole of "material" Programme outputs. Their cost can be very low if they are embedded in existing institutions, but they need to be known and attended by the relevant audience, and this requires some investment for promotion and local support.
- ◆ **Training Actions;** they can be intensive, spaced over time and eventually take the form of open and distance learning. Training is not often considered a dissemination measure, because it goes deeper in the transfer of know-how and experience than classical dissemination; however, it can be very appropriate when the "output" is immaterial or is a methodological tool of a degree of complexity. The big advantage of training and distance learning is that they can be contextualised to the specific needs and work environment of each user/learner and that they build relatively solid networks of people. The possible serious disadvantage of training actions is that they are time - and resource - consuming compared with other measures that can reach more people more quickly.
- ◆ **Public access databases of outputs, projects and partner institutions;** they are a necessary resource for a dissemination activity at programme level, but do not guarantee a large uptake from potential users if not accompanied by other measures (network animation, workshops, etc.).
- ◆ **Innovation Networks;** they are a relatively new form of dissemination, based on the constitution of medium-long term networks of people interested in a certain thematic area or horizontal policy. They usually integrate researchers, policy makers and

practitioners in order to reduce the gap between policy definition, research and implementation of innovative practice. Innovative networks can work in traditional ways, through periodic seminars, but are more and more based on continuing electronic communication. Their big advantage is that they may be well-targeted and inexpensive. Their relative disadvantage is that they need professional and continuous animation to be really effective.

- ◆ **Web sites**; due to the increasing importance of the Internet they are at the moment the most common dissemination tool and can guarantee a large visibility if promoted appropriately. Their advantages lie in the fact that they can contain a whole range of information and products and can be interactive and are therefore a 'complete' dissemination tool; their big disadvantage lies in the fact that they need updating and maintenance to be effective.

Embedding dissemination actions in existing initiatives may also be an efficient method. This approach requires a preliminary collection of information on all the events and actions, existing or scheduled, for which it would be possible to request time or space for presenting project objectives and outputs.

5. Assessment of dissemination and sustainability actions

Collection of evidence of intermediate results of dissemination can be a substantial support to project management in general and the management of Dissemination actions in particular.

Assessment of Dissemination actions encompasses four main issues:

- ◆ ***Target audience reached***
It is necessary to check whether target audiences have been reached by the dissemination actions, what kind of message they received, and if the message was exactly as foreseen. Finally, what is their perception and feedback?
- ◆ ***Actors' performances in the dissemination process***
We are concerned with all people who were directly involved in the dissemination and sustainability strategy, who played an operational role at different levels: from analysis to design, from implementation to collection of feedback.
- ◆ ***Direct outcome of dissemination measures***
The impact produced by dissemination measures should be assessed and the results achieved should be compared against those expected or foreseen when defining the whole strategy.
- ◆ ***Impact on sustainability factors***
The approach to sustainability has to be assessed. This can be done by either checking which of the planned indicators were actually relevant or by assessing which was the real impact of some specific indicators to which a particular sustainability potential had been attributed.

Efficiency refers to the relationship between results achieved and resources spent. When assessing dissemination actions it should be considered whether the ratio between the type /amount of resources utilised and the final results obtained is coherent. Effectiveness refers to the relation between expected results and results achieved. This comparison will indicate whether the final results are close, or not, to those foreseen.

6. EDEN as platform for European networking and dissemination activities

Introduction of EDEN

The European Distance Education Network (EDEN) as the largest and most comprehensive European network in open and distance learning serves as uniquely wide background for dissemination, to reach the largest number of relevant players in the field of open and distance learning.

“The aim of the association shall be to foster developments in distance education through the provision of a platform for co-operation and collaboration between institutions, networks and other agencies in this field throughout all the regions and nations of Europe”.
(The EDEN Constitution)

The dissemination potential offered through EDEN

EDEN has a wide membership, including 135 institutional members and 700+ individual members in its Network of Academics and Professionals (NAP). Members come from 46 countries, including all Europe but even from other continents. It is important to note the **strong multiplication potential of the membership**: out of the institutional members, 30 are national or European associations, networks or institutions, which can forward and multiply the information received to their members, i.e. the number of potential recipients is very large. There are over 310 institutions represented in the membership.

Partnership with international organisations include regular contacts with the European Commission, co-operation Agreement with UNESCO, special partnership with ICDE - the ODL world organisation, good working relations with the Council of Europe and associate membership in CRE.

Promotion of networking and co-operation by EDEN in distance education in Europe

EDEN has been the initiator and driving force of the “European ODL Liaison Committee” the co-operation forum of major European distance education networks and provides the Secretariat for the Liaison Committee.

Supporting professional development - the EDEN Conferences

EDEN Annual Conferences are since 1992, the main academic and professional European events in open and distance learning. They were held in 1992 – Krakow, 1993 – Berlin, 1994 – Tallinn, 1995 - Birmingham (with ICDE), 1996 – Poitiers, 1997 – Budapest, 1998 – Bologna, 1999 – Moscow, 2001 – Stockholm, 2002 – Granada, 2003 – Rhodes, 2004 – Budapest, 2005 - Helsinki

Open Classroom conferences are an EDEN initiative for school level and vocational ODL development since 1995. Such conferences were held in 1995 - Oslo (Distance Education and New Technologies in School Level Education and Training), 1997 – Crete (School Education in the Information Society), 1999 – Balatonfüred (Shifting Perspectives - The changing role and position of ODL in school level education) and The Fourth Open Classroom Conference held in November, 2000, Barcelona – at the Universidade Oberta de Catalunya, the fifth in 2003 in Copenhagen, and the sixth foreseen in October 2005 in Poitiers, at CNED – Eifad.

The First *EDEN Research Workshop* was held under the title: Research and Innovation in Open and Distance Learning in Prague, in March 2000. In 2002, in Hildesheim and in 2004 in Oldenburg were further workshops organised.