



COMMUNICATION PLAN EDU-SMES: CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT AND CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION WITH SMES



Document Change Control

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Abbreviations

Term	Definition
HEI	Higher Education Institution
CBA	Cross-border assignment
CB	Central Baltic
SME	Small and Medium Size Enterprise

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1. Introduction

This document lays down the Communications Plan for the EDU-SMEs project for the period 1.01.2016 - 28.02.2017.

The project EDU-SMEs aims at developing a better match between the competencies of graduates and the needs of companies in the Central Baltic region. It is financed by the Interreg CB Programme under Programme's Priority 4: *Skilled and socially inclusive region*, and addresses the key challenges related to the Specific Priority Objective for the need of *More aligned vocational education and training programmes in the Central Baltic region*. Thus the project's overall goal is to develop the means for aligning partner institutions' curricula in business management and entrepreneurship.

In practice it means that new knowledge and pedagogical approaches will be integrated in the existing curricula and students will gain new competencies, especially in the field of internationalisation of small and medium-sized companies (SMEs). The main project activities are aimed at supporting the integration of classroom learning and practice in the workplace through means of strengthening the cooperation between vocational education training institutions and SMEs through cross-border real-life assignments. The project also supports individual SMEs in their internationalisation through cross-border activities that link SMEs with faculty and students in their target markets. The activities include a jointly developed and delivered e-learning course on internationalization of SMEs.

Good communication ensures that all partners involved in the project are on the same page about the status of project activities, and are aware of the importance and the purpose for communicating the benefits of the project to its target groups and the general public. This document thus supports the implementation of the project activities and acts as a guide for disseminating the information about the project, its objectives, implementation activities, the benefits and the outputs of the project to the project target groups and the general public.

2. Communication objectives

The key communication objectives for the EDU-SMEs project are:

1. Internally: to inform all project partners about the current status and developments of the project implementation and possible changes at all times; to support the implementation process of the project
2. Externally:
 - 2.1 to engage target groups in project activities; and to communicate the benefits, the outputs and the impact of the EDU-SMEs project to the project target groups and general public
 - 2.2 to communicate the benefits of the EU funding for the project to general public

3. Communication purpose and target audience

This section identifies the audiences targeted in this Communication Plan, and the purpose of communicating with each audience.

Project partners are treated as a target group for the overall purpose of communication activities. Project-specific target groups are outlined in Table 1.

The very minimum of the expected communication results is to reach a number of the project-specific target groups as stated in the project application and illustrated in the table below:

Table 1. Project target groups

Target group	Specific target group categories	Target value
Sectoral agency	Employers' and employees' unions, regional development centres, chambers of commerce	20
Higher education and research	Universities of applied sciences in the CB countries, with professional education orientation in business management and entrepreneurship	40
Education/training centre and school	Vocational upper secondary schools, adult training centres, further education providers with practical business training	20
SME	SMEs that have left or are still present in business incubators in the CB region, partner HEIs' alumni who have established companies	200
Business support organisation	Foundations, non-profit, public and private institutions, which directly or indirectly support the development of entrepreneurship and internationalisation of SMEs	20

The EDU-SMEs project communication purpose is two-fold:

1. Project-specific communication
2. The joint message of the benefit of the EU funding

For the purpose of the project-specific communication, a number of activities are planned in order to disseminate the information about the project - its objectives, development of products, events and final outputs - and to reach the main project target groups.

Table 2 outlines the types of communication activities, their purpose, target audiences, frequency, method of delivery and a responsible communicator.

Table 2. Communication work plan for the period 01.01.2016 - 28.02.2017

Communication type	Communication purpose	Target audience	Frequency	Delivery method	Communicator
Kick off meeting	Launching the project, introducing the project team, reviewing project objectives and agreeing on project time-line activities	Project partners	1	Partners meet in Hanasaari, Finland	Arcada
Bi-monthly project status reports	Reporting the status of the project activities	Project partners	6	Sent by e-mail and uploaded on the project website	Arcada
Project management team meetings	Updating on the current project status and agreeing on further implementation activities	Project partners	As required	Organised at one of the participating partner's location or as a web conference	Arcada
Minutes of meetings	Informing about the main content of the meeting	Project partners	As required	Sent by e-mail and uploaded on the project website	Arcada
Project website a) Members' area	Storing and providing access to all project and meeting materials	project partners	As required	Documents are to be uploaded to the internal area of the website	Arcada
b) Public area	Providing updates about project implementation activities, such as events, development of the products etc.	Public area: target groups mentioned in table 1, as well as general public	Bi-monthly	Updates are to be published as freely accessible news items	VBII and Arcada with input from all partners

Interreg CB Programme: Join Secretariat's website	Public outreach and EU funding benefits	General public	As required	News about the project	VBII and Arcada
Partner websites and available social media channels	Providing updates about project implementation activities, such as events, development of the products etc.	Target groups mentioned in table 1, as well as general public	As required	Updates are to be published as freely accessible news items	All partners
Press releases	Producing regular news items about the project and its activities and events, as well as final outputs	Target groups mentioned in table 1, as well as general public	Bi-monthly	Disseminated via project website and existing partner institutions' channels	All partners
Teacher training seminar	Disseminating the current status of the project and planning of activities	Teachers participating in the project and project partners	1	Project management team and teachers meet in Valmiera, Latvia	ViA and VBII
Seminar for SMEs	Communication dissemination, target group engagement and external public outreach	SMEs, Business Support Organisations	1	SMEs meet in Riga, Latvia; livestreaming on the project website	VBII and Arcada
Project brochures	Communication dissemination	Target groups mentioned in table 1, as well as general public	As required	At events, by email, post and other possible means	VBII with input from all partners
Visual Identity Guidelines	Supporting the communications plan and activities	Project partners	1	The document is uploaded to the internal area of the project website	VBII

4. Visual identity guidelines

For the purpose of conveying the joint message of the benefit of EU funding, the legal requirements for publicity and communication as laid out in the Interreg CB Programme Guide for Project Communication, as well as EU Regulation (EC) No 1303/2013 and the Programme Manual of the Central Baltic Programme 2014-2020, are to be observed by all project partners throughout the duration of the project.

Visual Identity Guidelines have been developed in order to support this Communication Plan, so that coherence in communication activities can be assured throughout the duration of the project by all partners.

The Visual Identity Guidelines can be found in Attachment 1.

5. Communication message and delivery

The section outlines the key, but by no means complete, examples of contents for different communication channels.

Table 3. Communication channels and messages

Channel of communication	Content
Project meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ EU flag ○ Agendas ○ Minutes of meeting ○ Project schedule/time-line of activities ○ Registration and participant lists
Project related and external events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ EU flag ○ Project flyer ○ Project poster ○ Power point presentations ○ Other project promotional material
Project website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Press releases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Launch of the project ● Progress on curricula development ● Launch of e-learning course ● First agreements with companies ● Project results ○ Current project status updates ○ Information about past and upcoming events
Partner institution websites and available social media channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ News and press releases about the project ○ Project related events
Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project materials ○ News items for further dissemination ○ Invitations to meetings and events

6. Responsibilities for implementation

Responsibilities for implementing the activities outlined in the Communication Work Plan fall under responsible communicator indicated in Table 2.

All project partners are equally responsible for reaching the target groups indicated in Table 1.

Project communications manager is responsible for the overall coordination and follow up of the activities so that the latter has been implemented in the way foreseen in the Communication Plan.

7. Monitoring

For the purpose of monitoring the results of communication activities and for keeping a record of a number of project target groups reached, short reports of communication results will be provided by all project partners during the regular management team meetings.

The final report of communication results will be included in the final project report to the Central Baltic Programme.

Registration and participant lists are to be collected as proof of evidence for reaching the project target groups.

The problem with communication is the illusion that it has been accomplished.

—George Bernard Shaw