STEP4All Newsletter

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Edition 3

Overview on the project progress

October13

Step4All: the second project meeting in Athens

On 8th-9th July all Step4All project partners met in Athens for the second meeting planned after the kick-off in February this year.

The goal of the meeting was to get a direct and shared overview on the analysis conducted at a national level on the state of the art of the access to EU funds, as well as planning and deciding the content of the three guides that constitute the main project's output. The Step4all consortium counts nine country partners (Italy, Greece, Lithuania, Bulgaria, The Netherlands, Portugal, Turkey, Slovakia, Hungary), so the geographical coverage was guaranteed.

The first day-session focused on the presentation of the Regional reports that every partner had issued according to the content agreed, so that a parallel comparison could be delivered, underlying similarities and differences among the countries represented. The regional reports tackled the following aspects:

- *Access to European Funds* – a desk research encompassing all available reliable figures about how each country involved Country makes use of EU funds (focusing on Direct funds only)
- *Initiatives Bridging the EU Project Management Training Gap* – known initiatives aimed at training and enhancing competencies in the field of EU project management
- *Access to Information on EU Calls for Proposals and Call for Tenders* – Online and offline resources conceived to help discovering EU funding opportunities
- *Preliminary Findings of the Survey* – the field research conducted through an online questionnaire on Survey Monkey addressed to EU project managers (from throughout Europe) gave the possibility to ask directly what are the main difficulties / competencies / mistakes / education and experience backgrounds featuring an EU project manager profile.

Each partner took the floor to present the Regional report resulting from both the desk and field researches conducted. All the documents presented were made available on the Step4All project website http://www.step4all.eu/ or can be easily downloaded HERE !

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The STEP4All project is a Multilateral Partnership co-funded by the European Commission within the Leonardo da Vinci.

Lifelong Learning Programme

The Leonardo da Vinci sector programme links policy to practice in the field of vocational education and training. One of its main aim is to facilitate the development of innovative practices in the field of vocational education and training other than at tertiary level, and their transfer, including from one participating country to others.

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Step4all consortium meeting in Athens, July 2013

Further to this, Step4All Coordinator Eurocrea Merchant, delivered a comprehensive presentation where all the questionnaires received via Survey Monkey were gathered in order to obtain an European overview. The presentation of the EU Regional report is available here.

These were the main findings on a total number of 308 participants that took part to the survey:

- ✓ The majority of EU project managers (39,4%) has from 4 to 9 years of experience
- ✓ The most common (in terms of applications submitted) EU Programme is the Lifelong Learning Programme (78%)
- ✓ The Internet is the most common resource to gather information on EU funds, followed by personal contacts and National Agencies
- ✓ Huge administrative burdens characterize EU project managers working experience the most
- ✓ Good English command and communication skills are the most important requirements EU project managers should have but…what about financial skills? Check it on www.step4all.eu!

On the second day of the meeting partners discussed over the content of the three short guides, thus taking into account the results provided by the Regional reports. Partners grouped and assigned each other the chapters and the tasks to be delivered by the next project meeting taking place in November in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

the three guides will be available in all project languages: EN, IT, SK, SP, TU, HU, GR, DU, BG, PT, LT:

- ❖ SHORT GUIDE 1

The European Union: history, institutions, functioning

- ❖ SHORT GUIDE 2

Principal Programmes managed by the European Commission

- ❖ SHORT GUIDE 3

How to Apply for and how to manage successful European Projects

The empathy map – how to identify our target group needs and characteristics

As one may suspect, methodology deals with empathy – the ability to stand in other person's shoes and see from other person's point of view. The problem is that people naturally tend to think others are just like they are – with the same attitudes, habits and even language skills. The truth is everyone is different and understanding each other is a real challenge.

Empathy map was developed by Dave Gray at XPLANE (USA). It helps us understanding the selected target groups – their environment, behaviour, concerns, and aspirations. Most important this playful and creative methodology helps the whole team gaining the very same understanding of the target group as everybody participates.

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Supporting Training on European Projects for All

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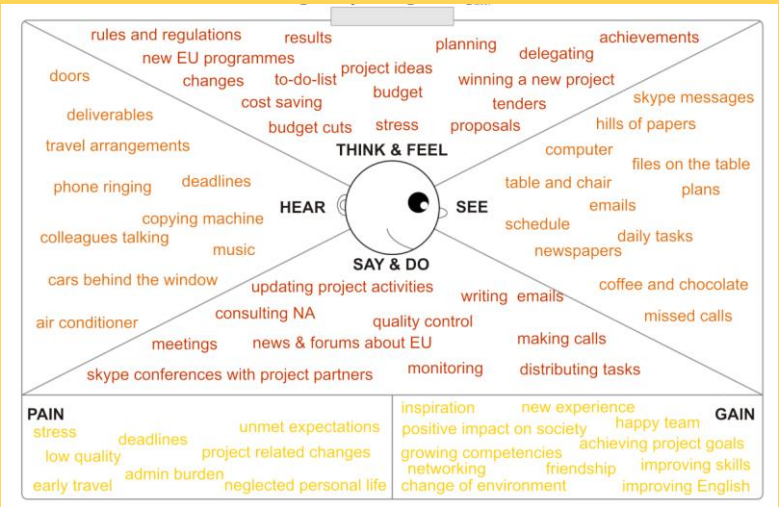
How it works? Very simple! Divide a page in six categories: (1) think and feel, (2) see, (3) say and do, (4) hear, (5) pain, and (6) gain and then think – with someone else maybe, through a brainstorming approach – how an average day of that person looks like: start with imaginary person's age, family status, hobbies, living and working environment, people around, disappointments and challenges, obstacles and achievements. Try to be that other person and note what he or she thinks, feels, sees, says, does and hears on a regular day. What are this person's problems (pain) and winnings (gain)? When implementing a number of EU projects, one almost certainly deals with a number of different target groups. Failing to correspond to the needs of the target group and to deliver the right product, will disrupt the whole project. The image below depicts the step4all partners' attempts to define the target group of the project, namely EU project designers and managers.



Project results……..……..and next steps!

Regional Reports
As basis for the production of the short guides, each partner conducted an investigation in its own country/region and produced a Regional Report (in English and in its own national language), available on the project's website.

Best practices
The best practice selected and presented in the regional reports and during the meetings will be collected in a final document that will be published on project website.

STEP4All.eu website
Online interface containing reports, short guides, project results, best practices.

Workshop 3: Amsterdam, Netherlands – 11st-12nd, Nov 2013
Workshop activities:

- Final agreement on Work-groups division
- Work-group's activities: definition of methodology, final selection of contents, elaboration of training plan, section of support materials, development of practical exercises
- Filling in evaluation sheets

Workshop 4: Budapest, Hungary – May 2014
Workshop activities:

- Evaluation session: testing of short guides with the participation of students/trainees
- Debate and proposal for improvement
- Final adaptation of short guides

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STEP4All Consortium

Eurocrea Merchant Srl
ITALY

Besides offering management consulting and advisoring, Eurocrea Merchant is also involved in providing training courses and in EU-Project management. Part of the team is constantly involved in searching the best funding opportunities offered by the EU Commission, and in designing and managing projects for themselves or for Italian SMEs.

AVACA TECHNOLOGIES
GREECE

Avaca Technologies S.A. is an independent software development house and IT integrator that provides consulting, informatics and engineering services. AT is a fast growing company which currently employees 17 persons and has developed a significant list of clients across many industries and market sectors.

HDI Consulting
HUNGARY

HDI Consulting is a consulting company, which gained expertise in the project development in the framework of EU funded development programmes, preparation of projects and tenders for submissions, professional help during the project implementation, preparation of call for tenders for development agencies, strategic planning, evaluation, monitoring.

SPIS Regional Development Agency
SLOVAKIA

Spiš Regional Development Agency, is a non-profit organisation supported by Ministry of Construction and Regional Development of the Slovak Republic that acts in the concept of integrated network of RDAs, and is focused on boosting economic development in the region via institutional cooperation and support to investments.

AssociaçãoTemáticaPositiva
PORTUGAL

Tematica Positiva promotes social cohesion and competitiveness in socio-economic sectors with the aim to link the needs of the population to the economy. Since the territories in question have favorable characteristics in different areas the training of local human capital becomes of key importance.

Stichting Business Development Friesland
THE NETHERLANDS

Business Development Friesland is a not-for-profit foundation positioned within the triangle of SMEs, knowledge institutes (VETs and Univ. of Applied Science) and governmental bodies, which initiates and participates in projects aimed at knowledge transfer and development. BDF provides training and support to start-up companies, SMEs and other organisations.

European Leadership Institute, Ltd
LITHUANIA

European Leadership Institute is an international training company that develops programmes, organises and delivers seminars and courses, internal trainings, and conducts research seeking to become a corporate partner that meets today's challenges of labour market and personal effectiveness.

KocaeliEU Project Coordination Center
TURKEY

Kocaeli EU Project Coordination Center was founded under responsibility of Governorship of Kocaeli and provides consultancy services and information in order to accelerate Turkey's accession and enable Kocaeli fully to get benefit from EU education programs, within the frame of LLP, FP7, central finance & contracts unit.

Bulgarian Construction Chamber (BCC)
BULGARIA

BCC is the Bulgarian representative federation of Construction industry, representing 2285 SMEs company-members, and 7 associated specialised member-federations. It is involved in Social dialogue, collective agreement, supporting to the VET system development, national legal framework, EQF, lists of Construction professions, partners network of sectorial training institutions.

Lifelong Learning Programme

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