Q-PLM

Quality Assurance for VET Providers Using Product Lifecycle Management

LdV/TOI

Project Nr° 538379-LLP-1-2013-AT-LEONARDO-LMP

WP 4: Exploitation of results

WP 4: Exploitation Strategy

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1. Introduction

The exploitation strategy constitutes the deliverable number 11 of the Work Package 4 (Exploitation and Sustainability) and has been written for the Transfer of Innovation project "Q- PLM– Quality Assurance for VET Providers using Product Lifecycle Management" (538379-LLP-1-2013-AT-LEONARDO_LMP) funded with the financial support of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission.

The main aim of the exploitation phase is that as many as possible VET providers, stakeholders and policy makers in VET as well as all relevant actors in the VET system are getting convinced to use the results (Q-PLM software and Q-PLM handbook) of the project and to operate an easy and efficient instrument to improve and assure quality in their VET offers.

The exploitation strategy ensures the sustainability of the project and its results after the end of the funding period and will provide recommendations and guidelines for the continuous use of the project's results also after the end of the project. It contains the description of guidelines for making the 2-years Q-PLM project outcomes sustainable and used in a long term target. It presents in detail the planned activities, the target groups, the impact and time frame in all work packages in order to guarantee the exploitation of the results during and after the project's lifetime in a medium perspective. The exploitation strategy forms also the basis for ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

The exploitation activities are described in the project proposal, discussed and developed in close cooperation with the whole project partnership and summarized by P1, the partner leading the work package about dissemination and exploitation.

A project and its results can only be successful when they are of sustainable value. For this reason it is necessary to implement an exploitation strategy and to start as early as possible to foster the exploitation of the project's aims and results the actual use of project outcomes is dependent upon successful exploitation activities. Therefore it is important to understand that a good exploitation strategy is the basis for successful exploitation of results. This document will mainly focus on the aspects of exploitation but also include general aspects of dissemination to provide a clear understanding of the exploitation and dissemination approach.

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2.   Exploitation of EU project results

It is crucially important that the activities for fostering exploitation of results start as early as possible, even before first results are available. Moreover exploitation can only be successful if planned in a strategic way, deeply analyzing the motivation of potential users as well as the channels to reach these users with the project outputs. The exploitation strategy will in detail focus on an identification of potential users (also in line with the stakeholder analysis performed in WP 3) and define a set of clear activities to be performed to reach potential users with the project outputs and satisfy their needs in quality assurance in VET.

Sustainability

In addition to the dissemination and exploitation strategies, the sustainability strategy for the project results has been developed in spring 2014. The sustainability strategy shows a long term perspective for the project outputs, how they are going to be exploited and how they will create long term impact on the target groups defined. The sustainability strategy analyses the different possibilities to maintain and update results and gives a clear picture of necessary activities are resources to ensure that the main project outputs are used in a long term perspective and the long term impact targets and indicators are met.

Exploitation

Exploitation includes two activities: mainstreaming and multiplication. Mainstreaming means the actual transfer of successful results to appropriate stakeholders and decision-makers. Multiplication concerns the process of convincing end-users to adopt or apply the results of the projects.

This strategy will be defined and carried out in close relation with the dissemination strategy and the activities by each partner. The exploitation strategy forms the basis for the maintenance and further development of the project outputs and will include measures to ensure that the benefits of the project will endure beyond the lifetime of the project. Such measures include that outputs are made available so that they become replicable and usable by others, and for this purpose they will be promoted through the different educational, professional and academic networks of which the partners are members.

In summary dissemination and exploitation, both strategies, aim to achieve the following objectives:

- To promote and raise awareness with regard to the project contents and developments
- To provide information on the quality, relevance and effectiveness of the results
- To successfully transfer the results to appropriate decision-makers in order to achieve their sustainable promotion and support
- To convince individual end-users to adopt and/or apply the results, also after the project and support by the project partnership has ended

Even if exploitation takes place after the project's lifetime, when all project results exist as final products, it is necessary to plan exploitation activities from the start. The basis for successful exploitation is a well-planned and implemented dissemination strategy at different levels. Furthermore, the identification of stakeholders was carried out in the first month of the project, in January 2014 when the research and investigation phases were started (e.g. needs analysis, questionnaires …).

It is of crucial importance to involve stakeholders or possible end-users as soon as possible in the project process. On the one hand they can be more easily convinced of the project outcomes when they have the chance to follow the development from an early time on, but on the other hand also project consortia can benefit by including suggestions or recommendations from the stakeholder side in the development process.

The following two key aspects are very important for a successful exploitation of EU project results:

- Producing relevant results of good quality to satisfy the demands of providers, policy-makers and ultimately society more generally.
- Ensuring that results reach the right target audiences in a format and within time, that provides greatest benefit.

3. Key factors of successful exploitation of EU project results

Successful exploitation of project results in terms of sustainable use and permanent further development of results and outputs, especially after the funding for the development and pilot implementation of the outputs has ended, is very dependent upon a number of key factors and criteria, which should be presented at this stage as a basis for the development of the project outputs.

The following key factors can be considered to be relevant for the successful exploitation of EU project results:

a) **Output quality:** To achieve a high degree of exploitational use, the outputs produced need to be of a very high quality. It is important to pay attention to the output quality during the entire project development, and therefore it is always advisable to introduce procedures and responsibilities for quality management in project processes in order to guarantee high quality final output. Outputs must be up to date and appealing to the customers otherwise exploitation cannot be expected.

b) **Adaptability of outputs to country and organization specific circumstances:** It is an important precondition that the results and outputs of the project are adaptable to a high degree in relation to the circumstances of different countries and VET institutions. This is particularly important as the developed PLM software and handbook should be relevant to different types of VET organizations.

c) **Clear definition of advantages for users:** A high degree of use, mainly dependent on the capacity of the project and the partnership, to clearly show the advantages of using the instruments and outputs for the final target group. For this reason all partner institutions should always try to make the advantages of the project and its results transparent and evident, in relation to all events and possibilities. In particular the project website and the dissemination materials should represent what the added value of the output is and what's its use for the potential customers.

d) **Early identification of stakeholders and potential users:** It is vital that relevant stakeholders and potential users (customers) of the project results are clearly identified and defined very early in the project's life. It is not advisable to change user groups during the project process.

Identified stakeholders should be contacted and kept informed throughout the whole project process so as to ensure the sustainable use of results after the project ends.

4.   Background, objectives and aims of the Q-PLM project

A vast number of factors and variables are influencing services and products on the vocational education and training (VET) market. Product lifecycle management is a conceptual approach which takes a product throughout its entire lifetime into consideration. Each product on the economic market has a certain product lifecycle - so do VET products. Product lifecycle management can be an appropriate tool for the measurement of indicators of a VET product and the management of its lifetime. There is a high demand for a coherent and practical instrument for the monitoring of lifecycles of VET products, with consideration of several variables influencing VET offers, at VET provider level.

4.1 Project outputs

The main aim of the Q-PLM project is the development of an IT-based tool for an integrated product lifecycle management for VET providers.

The Q-PLM project delivers the following main outputs:

- Analysis of existing PLM (Product Lifecycle Management) software
- Research of variables influencing the product lifecycle of a VET offer
- Identification of indicators for variables for product lifecycles in VET
- Handbook for Active Product Lifecycle Management for VET providers
- Software product for Active Product Lifecycle Management for VET providers
- Testing phase for the software
- Final conference event in Austria in June 2015

4.2 Q-PLM partnership

The Q-PLM partnership consists of the following 8 European partners:

	P1	AUSTRIA	Berufsförderungsinstitut Steiermark, www.bfi-stmk.at
	P2	GERMANY	INIT Developments, Ltd, www.init-developments.eu
	P3	BELGIUM	Syntra West vzw, www.syntrawest.be
	P4	SPAIN	Fondo Formación Euskadi, www.ffeuskadi.net
	P5	FINLAND	WinNova, www.winnova.fi
	P6	IRELAND	City of Cork Vocational Education Committee, www.corkvec.ie
	P7	SLOVENIA	Gospodarska zbornica Slovenije, www.gzs.si
	P8	ROMANIA	Universitatea Ştefan cel Mare din Suceava , www.usv.ro

Analyses show clearly that VET providers are in need of easy-to-use, flexible and reliable quality assurance methods. The Q-PLM project will analyse the background of Product Lifecycle Management from other sectors, identify relevant variables impacting on the VET offer's lifecycle and, based on this, develop the beta version of an IT based instrument (software) for product lifecycle management for VET providers as well as a handbook for product lifecycle management.

4.3 The project objectives

The Q-PLM project centrally focuses on the development of an easy and flexible to use quality assurance method for VET providers in the European lifelong learning arena. VET providers, socials partners, labour market authorities, and experts in the VET field will be co-operating within this project to develop software and a handbook for VET providers to apply product lifecycle management as basis of quality assurance of their VET offers and services.

The project will develop an IT based tool for integrated product lifecycle which is:

a) **Flexible** to be adapted to national, regional, and organisational backgrounds and situations (e.g. organisational quality cultures and systems, legal backgrounds, etc.)

b) **Comprehensive and scientifically valid** in the background (taking into account all relevant indicators and variables, analysis of their impact on VET offers together with a profound strategy for actions in product lifecycle phases)

c) **Easy to use for VET providers** (easy and quick input of quality data, interfaces to existing data resources in the organisation, clear and feasible presentation of results together with clear actions for lifecycle management for the single VET offer / service)

d) **Indicator based** (the lifecycle of a VET offer is influenced by a number of variables, the tool will reflect the most crucial ones and give room for adaptation to national, regional and additional local and organisational variables)

e) **Weighted and balanced** (different variables have a different weight in their impact on the lifecycle of a VET offer. The tool developed must allow for a full reflection of these weights)

f) **IT based** (VET providers in many cases already have quality information and data in electronic format, are processing data in electronic format. Out of this reason an IT based tool can create interfaces to existing quality data in the organisation and will allow for a quick and efficient product lifecycle management procedure on VET provider level).

4.4 Target Groups and beneficiaries

The main target group of the Q-PLM project and its results are: VET providers from the IVET and CVET sector will receive an easy to use and flexible IT based instrument as well as a handbook for managing their VET offers and improving their quality on the market. Policy makers, social partners, labour market authorities and adult education providers, who create a significant impact with their decisions and policies on the offers established by VET providers, are part of the target group as well. All target groups are directly represented in the project partnership, significant impact beyond the consortium.

5. Exploitation in the Q-PLM project

The exploitation strategy of the Q-PLM project follows general guidelines of exploitation, as explained above, as well as the facts provided in the project proposal.

This final strategy was developed with the support of all project partners. Templates to identify exploitation channels of each partner were distributed and used as the basis for the development of this Q-PLM exploitation strategy. The exploitation of Q-PLM consists of individual national exploitation plans that can be enlarged and adjusted by each partner at any time. The annex at the end of this strategy shows the template for the exploitation research on partner level. Exploitation results from every partner are also annexed to this strategy in a separate document.

The activities of the Q-PLM project have already been predetermined in the application and in the description of the work packages of the project. The project's progress is permanently controlled by P1 and P2. The results of Q-PLM are very well defined and embedded in a realistic timetable; hence it is easy for all partners to implement their exploitation activities.

1) Why exploit the project's results?
- To ensure the sustainability of the project and its results after the end of the funding period
- To provide recommendations and guidelines for the continuous use of the project's results, also after finalizing the project
- To promote the outputs (Q-PLM Software and Handbook) to a large number of persons
- To increase the impact of the project by extending it to multipliers
- To support and enhance the image of the own organization

2) What to exploit?
- The deliverables
- The European partnership
- The benefits for the target groups, for VET providers, for stakeholders

3) Who will benefit from the project's outputs?
- End-users: European VET providers, training institutes, VET colleges, universities, universities of applied sciences, schools

- Organizations and platforms, as well as social partners that can help to reach other VET organizations
- Organizations that can enhance the impact of the project in other ways

4) Who will do it?

The whole project partnership is responsible for their national exploitation plans, including the involvement of stakeholders. The partner organizations do have excellent networks and contacts and rich experiences in the field of vocational education and training. The WP leader, bfi Steiermark, is responsible for the overall exploitation and will guide and coordinate the exploitation activities.

5) When will it be done?

The exploitation strategy ensures the sustainability of the project and its results after the end of the funding period and will provide recommendations and guidelines for the continuous use of the project's results. It is crucially important, that the activities for fostering exploitation of results start as early as possible, even before first results are available.

6) How will it be done?

The project proposal already gives specific instruments to be used for exploitation activities such as project website and Facebook page, meeting and conferences, etc. Furthermore, the project includes specific activities targeted to raise awareness and to involve and engage the target group and stakeholders such as the feedback panels. To facilitate the dissemination in the project, additional instruments are produced: posters and leaflets. Each partner also presented individual instruments in the national exploitation plans that show great promise for the implementation of the exploitation phase.

7) How will it be evaluated?

A very useful way of evaluating the exploitation activities is the documentation of all activities by each partner. This documentation may be in terms of participant's lists, presentations, agendas, meeting minutes, pictures, copies of documents such as emails, articles or newsletters. The documentation should be based on the use of quantitative and qualitative indicators.

5.1 Instruments of exploitation in the Q-PLM project

Some specific instruments are already defined in the project proposal as well as in the dissemination report. These instruments are available and all partners are expected to use them. Additionally the individual national exploitation plans for the partners include further instruments that will be used to exploit the project outcomes.

5.2 Outputs and instruments of the Q-PLM project used for exploitation

The following tools, instruments and outputs of the Q-PLM project can be used to disseminate the project and the project's results to the stakeholders, in order the guarantee a sustainable use of the of project's outcomes:

Exploitation Instruments	
Date	**Outputs / instruments / tools to be used to promote the sustainable use of the project**
12/13	Facebook page
12/13	Q-PLM Website
03/14	Q-PLM Flyers
03/14	Q-PLM Posters
05/14 – 08/15	Q-PLM Newsletter 1-4
11/14 - 09/15	Dissemination at relevant conferences and workshops
06/15	Final dissemination conference in Graz/Austria
03/14 – 09/15	National feedback panels
08/15	Q-PLM software for active product lifecycle management for VET providers
08/15	Q-PLM handbook for active product lifecycle management for VET providers

5.3 Additional instruments for the exploitation of Q-PLM

- Registration of the project at ADAM portal for Leonardo da Vinci projects
- Registration of the Q-PLM project at E.N.T.E.R. in order to use all network services to support dissemination at European level

5.4 Exploitation activities in Q-PLM project

The exploitation strategy of the Q-PLM project bases on the project's dissemination strategy which was developed by the external dissemination partner E.N.T.E.R. in January 2014. Exploitation and dissemination cannot be separated strictly; therefore the basics of this exploitation strategy are included also in the dissemination strategy.

In the Q-PLM project the WP of exploitation includes specific activities and outcomes. Further instruments, such as a detailed stakeholder analysis and the sustainability strategy including an agreement on intellectual property rights (IPR), will be developed within this WP later on.

The Q-PLM project foresees the following exploitation outputs and activities:

Website

The Q-PLM website (www.q-plm.eu) was developed at the initial phase of the project to promote the project online and to inform the target groups and the general public about the project, its aims, outputs, news and progress. It contains information about the project, the partnership, the development of the project, the entire project's outcomes, etc.

The site is available in all partners' languages and ensures the sustainability of the project. The site will be online even after the end of the funding period of the project.

Online Strategy: Facebook, ADAM, E.N.T.E.R.

The online strategy outlines the Q-PLM outputs and summarizes the main virtual activities of Q-PLM which are: project website, Facebook profile, registration of Q-PLM at ADAM and E.N.T.E.R. databases to create awareness of the project and its results. P1 (bfi Steiermark) will maintain the update of the webpage, the Facebook page and the ADAM platform and whenever results, outputs and exploitation results are available.

Final conference event

An international final conference will be held in Graz / Austria in June 2015 with the aim to present the final project results and get in direct contact with potential users to give the kick off for sustainable use and exploitation of the project results after the end of the project duration. One main aim is to show and demonstrate the results of Q-PLM to stakeholders, experts, target groups, European VET providers and future users of the Q-PLM software. Representatives of the target groups and main stakeholders will be present at the final conference. The Q-PLM partnership will present the main project's outputs: the Q-PLM software and the handbook. One of the objectives for this international conference will be the creation of awareness about the project within the general public, the increasing of the project's impacts, the dissemination of the project's result and the guarantee of the sustainable use to the developed deliverables.

Conferences and workshops

Presentation of the project outcomes in the conferences and workshops of relevant networks and platforms (EQAVET, or also events of national reference points for quality in VET in the partner countries etc.)

Dissemination and exploitation panels

Panel workshops will be organized amongst the partnership during the lifetime of the project. The first panels started in March 2014 with the aim to investigate stakeholders about the indicators for the PLM software. Further panels will follow the upcoming months and especially in the second half of the project with the aim to get feedback to the use and usage of the PLM software and to possible updates.

Intellectual Property Rights

The Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) are a valuable tool to the partnership and ensure the proper use of the Q-PLM software and handbook after the project has come to an end. The IPR document will involve all partners and create sustainability for the project in national and international contexts.

5.5   Summary of the exploitation activities of each partner in the Q-PLM project

As mentioned above, templates to identify the exploitation channels of each partner were distributed in the first half of the project and were integrated in this Q-PLM exploitation strategy. These templates will be constantly updated during the project's lifetime and will include all **activities foreseen by the partners in the field of exploitation, as:**

Face-to-face activities	P1, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8
Internet based activities	P1, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8
Paper based activities	P1, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8
Workshops	P1, P3, P5, P6, P8
Feedback panels	P1, P3, P4, P5, P6, P8
Description of other exploitation activities:	P1, AT: Continuous and sustainable dissemination activities amongst the Austrian VET providers and stakeholders of bfi Steiermark. Training lessons for the use of the PLM software at bfi Steiermark. P5, FI: Possible conferences or seminars. If there are e.g. stands, where projects can perform their outcomes, we could make presentations of the Q-PLM software and the handbook.

Use of exploitation instruments: partners were asked within the exploitation questionnaire about the usability of the project's outputs / instruments / tools for the promotion of a sustainable use of the project:

Q-PLM Webpage	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6
Q-PLM Facebook page	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6
Q-PLM Flyers	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6
Q-PLM Posters	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6
Q-PLM Newsletter 1-4	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6
Dissemination at relevant conferences and workshops	P1, P2, P3, P5, P6
National feedback panels	P1, P3, P4, P5, P6
Final dissemination conference in Graz/Austria	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6
Q-PLM software for active product lifecycle management for VET providers	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6
Q-PLM handbook for active product lifecycle management for VET providers	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6
Other, please desribe:	P1, AT: Exploitation via newsletters and webpage of bfi Steiermark, as well as the use of bfi Steiermark's Facebook page. P3, BE: Mouth-to-mouth promotion and advertising to project partners and colleagues of the broad VET field in our working. Events and workshops for other purposes but related to the topic of Q management e.g. audits, Q management events, etc. P5, FI: Finnish National Board of education has a best practice site. We can make a

	description of the projects outcomes there. (Q-PLM software and /the handbook)
	P7, SI: Business Magazine "Glas gospodarstva" E-newsletter "Poslovni tednik" E-news CCIS Facebook page (Slovene/English) CCIS web page P8, RO: Local and regional feedback panels

Partners were asked within the exploitation questionnaire about the target groups and stakeholders for a future sustainable use and exploitation of the project's results (the Q-PLM software and the Q-PLM handbook):

P1, AT:

Users of the Q-PLM software are in general:

Austrian VET providers at all levels (professional schools, VET training centers, universities of applied sciences, universities, postgraduate universities...)
Product developers in VET
The size of VET providers doesn't matter: the PLM software can be used by freelancers, single persons as well as small, middle and large enterprises.
The Austrian stakeholders are defined in the Austrian stakeholder analysis; this will be the main target group for the sustainable use of the Q-PLM outputs.

P3, BE:

VET providers of any kind, being large or small organizations.
All formal and informal learning environments (not-for-profit, health care and other sectors; profit: competence centers, sectorial organizations, labor organizations organizing training, etc.) that require a good quality management system of their trainings.

P4, ES:

All kind of VET providers
Business Organizations, Trade Unions, Chambers of Commerce, Sectorial Organizations, and other organizations receiving Training Plans
Vocational and Educational Training Centers from de Educational System, that develop formal training actions
Vocational and Educational Training Integrated Centers, that develops formal training actions and continuous training
Training Organizations (SME, non-governmental organizations,...) registered in the competent administrations as training provider
Also Q-PLM software and the Q-PLM handbook can be transferred to other training organizations or educational institutions (schools, adult training centers, universities...)
Educational Decision Makers
Educational Department from the Basque Government
Regional Association of VET providers from formal education

P5, FI:

Potential users are e.g. persons who are responsible for the education products in different fields. In WinNova there are on one hand young education managers in qualification level and on the other hand teachers responsible for qualification modules, adult education managers in qualification level, teachers responsible for qualification modules, managers responsible of short courses, head of the departments, the developing department and quality control team.
Among other Finnish VET education providers similar target groups.

P6, IE:

The initial target group is the Further Education and Training colleges under the jurisdiction of the Cork Education and Training Board. Amongst these colleges are the largest and third largest Further Education Colleges in Ireland. We also hope to extend usage to the apprenticeship training centers also under the jurisdiction of the Cork Education and Training Board. Once the product has been established in these centers we plan to promote the Q-PLM software and Handbook to the other Education and Training Boards in the country but in particular to those who have a significant role in the provision of Further Education and Training. If this strategy was successful it would mean that all state run Further Education and Training facilities in the country would have the opportunity to work with and benefit from the Q-PLM products.

P7, SI:

Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (CPI)

Secondary Vocational and Technical Schools

Private educational institutions

Councils of the Republic of Slovenia for Higher Education,

Councils of the Republic of Slovenia for education of Adults

Councils of the Public Fund for the development of Human resources and Awarding of Grants

Area Boards for Vocational Training Standards

Public

P8, RO:

Inside the organization:

-Members of project staff, as promoters of project results;

-Staff of the Faculty of Economics and Public Administration - 80 persons, teaching staff, directly involved in educational services; Part of the staff is also delivering VET activities;

-Staff of Faculty for Education Sciences, Department for Adult Education and Teacher Education;

- Department for Academic Quality Control of the University;

- Partner universities from Romania and abroad;

- Members of academic staff from other institutions and VET providers in Romania;

- Students of the HRM Study field.

Outside the organization:

-Local stakeholders;

-Regional VET providers;

-Regional VET providers;

-VET regional coordination institutions (Local Agency for Employment);

- Educators and VET Trainers, VET providers, VET ToT;

- VET providers at national level;

-Local VET beneficiaries and local and national VET Providers.

Partners were asked within the exploitation questionnaire about the possible future and sustainable use of the project's results (the Q-PLM software and Q-PLM handbook):

In general all partners confirmed that on the fact that the idea of the project is very interesting and the final product will be very useful for VET providers due to enable the possibility to monitor the lifetime of products on the VET market.

For the Austrian promoter, bfi Steiermark (P1), there is no concern about the possible future use of the project's results. In Austria there is a wide range of educational services with more than 5000 training providers on the Austrian VET market. This sector is very heterogeneous with a lot of individual organizations and a certain lack of transparency due to the inequality of different VET institutions. The education sector is determined by numerous public and private education providers, commercially oriented organizations and associations of non-profit adult education. PLM is not known and used at all on the Austrian VET market, neither at the bfi Steiermark, nor amongst the Austrian VET providers in general.

Active Product Lifecycle Management including the use of suitable PLM software is a tool to monitor and to control the product portfolio of an educational institution. It can be recommended not only for reasons of quality assurance, but also for the facilitating of the product development, for more transparency in the strategic business areas and last but not least for the maintenance of the competitiveness of VET providers. PLM - Software systems help companies to facilitate the control of product life cycles and to manage the wide range of product data in an efficient way to coordinate all actors involved and logistical chains and reconcile the requirements of the product range with the budget. Optimally coordinated processes across multiple locations allow for quick response to changes in demand in the market. Thus, the right product, at the right time, is brought to market with the right price.

Syntra West (BE) confirmes that the tool and the handbook should and will be useful for VET providers large and small, who want to focus actively on quality management based on life cycles throughout their activities. The tool will be available as a stand-alone as well as complementary concept, that can be used by VET providers not disposing of a digital system and other using a digital software package already and adding this tool to it. The tool will stimulate and enhance quality management thinking throughout the organization and on each level of the organization, as it will be used by and effect all staff of the

organization only by using the tool intensively, more opportunities and possibilities will come to mind, that can then be elaborated further on in future projects with future and today's stakeholders. The tool is definitely needed and will certainly be practical and useful as it is meant and will be developed in this stage, but it should be clear that this tool is a basis for continuous development and improvement.

The partners from WinNova (Finland) confirm that there are many potential users for the Q-PLM software and also Q-PLM handbook in Finland. Potential users are e.g. persons who are responsible for the education in different fields, especially in the field of VET. The main use rises straight at the end of the project and directly after the project when the PLM software and handbook will be ready for use.

The Cork Education and Training Board (P6, IE) has a very positive attitude towards a possible exploitative use of the project. This Organisation responsible for the running of a large number of secondary schools, Further Education and Training colleges, apprenticeship training facilities and community based education providers. A large number of these institutions (excluding the secondary schools) come under the funding jurisdiction of the state agency SOLAS. SOLAS sets clear parameters as to which courses can be funded based on the market demand for the course, course viability, employer needs etc. There is a clear link between the criteria set out by SOLAS and the work being undertaken within the Q-PLM project. While the Cork Education and Training Board is responsible for the running of the Further Education colleges, each individual college has a degree of autonomy in the design and creation of proposals for new courses. The use of the Q-PLM software would help the individual colleges to focus on the indicators relevant to their proposed and existing courses and would lead to a clear pathway of planning when looking ahead to the creation of future academic planning. It would also give the colleges a mechanism to report findings related to course lifecycles to the Education and Training Board. In order to advance this use of the Q-PLM Handbook and Software they have already engaged one of the Further Education colleges within the Education and Training Board to take a lead role in the project development. And have been keeping the other colleges within the Organisation informed of project developments. At a national level the Cork Education and Training Board is one of 16 boards operating in Ireland. If we can demonstrate the successful application of the Q-PLM product within the own organizations this opens the door for the distribution of the software to the other Education and Training Boards within the country.

The Universitatea Ştefan cel Mare din Suceava (P8, RO) supposes that the project results - mainly the Q-PLM software and Q-PLM handbook will change the perspective of academic staff regarding the

importance of PLM components in assuring good educational services. The Q-PLM specific approach will be used internally in the USV, especially in the Faculty of Economics and Public Administration, to improve the process of developing and implementing new study programs and to improve the educational process. The project results will be presented to the Department for Quality in Education of USV, and will be discussed the possibility to transfer the project knowledge to the internal quality methodology of the USV. PLM results will be disseminated among the USV stakeholders - VET providers, Chamber of Commerce and Industry Suceava, Local Agency for VET. Q-PLM brings a new approach to the training process and for this reason the stakeholders will have interest to implement the recommended software and guidebook.

Within the exploitation questionnaire partners were also asked about a **specification of the target groups and stakeholders** for a future sustainable use and exploitation of the project's results (the Q-PLM software and the Q-PLM handbook): In general all partners confirmed that there are many potential users for the Q-PLM software and also the Q-PLM handbook.

Some hundred European target groups and stakeholders who will guarantee a sustainable exploitation of the project could be identified within the exploitation questionnaire. The main target groups and stakeholders proposed by the partnership for the exploitative use of the project are the following:

- European networks for the quality assurance in VET, like the EQARF (The European Quality Assurance Reference Framework)

- European VET- providers at all levels (professional schools, VET training centres, universities of applied sciences, universities, postgraduate universities,…)

- European project managers

- VET providers participating in European projects

- National Agencies

- National boards of education and training

- VET providers at all levels: local, regional, national, European

- Local, regional, national, European stakeholders

- Management staff in VET organizations

- Head of departments in VET organizations

- Head of training centers, schools, universities

- Product developers for VET programmes

- Competence centres in VET

- Marketing managers in the VET sector

- Members of the national feedback panels

- Members and stakeholders of the partner organizations

- Staff in the partner organizations

- Academics and researchers

- Trainers and teachers

- Associations, associated partners of all partner organizations

- Chambers of Commerce and Industry

- Managers at companies

- Institutes for Vocational Education and Training

- Councils of Education

- Public bodies

- Secondary schools

- Governments

6 Quality Assurance and the sustainable use of the project

To guarantee good quality, to achieve the best possible results and to promote a sustainable use of the project's outputs it is suggested to use different tools to measure the impact of the activities carried out. There are two main types of quality indicators, quantitative and qualitative data.

6.1 Quantitative data

- number of enquiries about a product
- number of orders for the Q-PLM software DVD
- number of brochures, DVDs etc. distributed
- number of visitors to a website
- number of users of the Q-PLM software
- number of visitors attending the panels, the conferences, workshops and the final conference event
- amount of press coverage (number of articles and items on radio or TV)
- size of audience reached through national dissemination activities

The national dissemination plans already include information about quantitative data. Furthermore, it should be an objective of the partnership to try to enlarge the activities implemented, to reach as many stakeholders as possible and to promote the project's outputs in the largest possible way in order to guarantee a very sustainable use of the project even after the end of the funding period.

6.2 Qualitative data

As already described in the dissemination strategy: qualitative data is quite specific and not so easy to implement. For evaluation and quality assurance it might be useful to include questions and feedbacks in regard to further and sustainable use of the project's outputs in general.

Qualitative indicators are useful

- to obtain detailed, subjective feedback about the Q-PLM software and Q-PLM handbook
- to give a general feeling of responses
- to offer specific ideas about what has been successful, how to do things differently next time or for new ideas in future projects

7. Recommendations of exploitation in the Q-PLM project

According to the next work packages and development of results, we suggest the following recommendations to the project consortium to support exploitation. These are suggestions that should be taken into account during and after the project process:

- ➲ Active promotion of the Q-PLM outputs amongst the partnership and its existing and future stakeholders

- ➲ Project dissemination material to be used by all partners to promote and raise awareness not only during the project but also after the end of the funding period

- ➲ Use of the corporate identity of Q-PLM dissemination material and Q-PLM products

- ➲ Presentation of Q-PLM at other conferences/seminars/project fairs/events etc.

- ➲ Connecting with other European projects working in the same thematic or related fields as well as with project teams in other funding programmes

- ➲ Discussion within partnership about the exploitation and sustainability with the focus on the quality of the project outputs. The sustainable exploitation of a EU project can only be guaranteed if the project outputs are:

  - of a very good quality
  - ready to use
  - easy to implement
  - have clear advantages for the users

- ➲ Continuous communication within the project partnership, also after the end of the funding period

- ➲ Continuous enlargement of the project partnership

- ➲ Continuations and updates of the Q-PLM website and Facebook page 2 years after the end of the funding period maintaining of the project's results

- ➲ Connecting with other European projects working in the same thematic field

- ➲ Establishment of contacts with national agencies for VET

- ➲ Continuation on thematic networking, dissemination and exploitation on regional and national level

- ➲ Contacts and events with VET institution to have workshops and contributions about the project results

➲ Collection of feedback about the sustainability of the Q-PLM software and handbook

➲ Please contact Carina Bachner and Karin Wiedner, bfi Steiermark, in case of questions or any kind of further use of the Q-PLM project's results

7 Summary and conclusion

Project results can only be of sustainable value and use if the dissemination and exploitation of them was well planned and implemented at different levels. The strategy aims to support all activities in the fields of exploitation for the further use by presenting general aspects as well as specific information to be used by each project partner according to the national exploitation plans.

In general, the best and maximum use of a European project can only be successful through close cooperation between all partners. Not only the communication but also the individual use of national dissemination channels, contacts and networks have great influence on the sustainable exploitation of a project. The partners of the Q-PLM project have excellent networks and contacts to all potential groups of stakeholders in the partner countries. All project partners and stakeholders are encouraged to take up, promote and implement the findings and recommendations to begin the process of promoting in the largest possible way the Q-PLM outputs and to begin to influence policy makers.

At this stage of the project, in May 2014, I'm convinced that the project's results will be of a very good quality, the project will attract the interest of other European partners during and after the lifetime, and the results will be further used and developed in the partner countries and maybe in other European projects.

Karin Wiedner, bfi Steiermark, Graz / Austria, May 2014

9. Annex: Reporting template

Q-PLM

LdV/TOI

Project Nr° 538379-LLP-1-2013-AT-LEONARDO-LMP

WP 4: Exploitation and sustainability

Exploitation Strategy
Research report on partner level

Organisation data

Name of Organisation	
Type of the Organisation (Vocational training center, university, Chamber, …)	
Size of the organization (staff)	
City	
Country	
Provided by	
Place / Date	

The exploitation strategy constitutes the deliverable number 11 of the work package 4 (Exploitation and Sustainability). It ensures the sustainability of the project and it's results after the end of the funding period and will provide recommendations and guidelines for the continuous use of the project's results also after the end of the project.

We would like to ask you, dear project partner, to describe the activities you plan in your country within your target groups to guarantee the exploitation of the projects results during and after the project's lifetime in a medium perspective. The exploitation strategy forms also the basis for ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

I would like to ask you to complete the following questionnaire and to send it back to karin.wiedner@bfi-stmk.at not later than the 15th of April 2014.

Many thanks for your cooperation and your support ☺

What do you think about the future and sustainable use of the project's results (the Q-PLM software and Q-PLM handbook? Is it possible – at this stage of the project – to think about future plans and future possible further uses of the project's outputs?

Exploitation instruments: which outputs / instruments / tools could you use to promote the sustainable use of the project? (please tick: ✓)

Q-PLM webpage	✓
Q-PLM Facebook page	✓
Q-PLM Flyers	✓
Q-PLM Posters	
Q-PLM Newsletter 1-4	
Dissemination at relevant conferences and workshops	
National feedback panels	
Final dissemination conference in Graz/Austria	
Q-PLM software for active product lifecycle management for VET providers	
Q-PLM handbook for active product lifecycle management for VET providers	
Other, please describe:	

Which kind of exploitation activities could you provide in your country (please tick: ✓)

Face-to-face activities	✔
Internet based activities	✔
Paper based activities	✔
Workshops	
Feedback panels	
Other, please desribe:	

Who are the target groups and stakeholders for a future sustainable use and exploitation of the project's results (the Q-PLM software and the Q-PLM handbook), please specify and describe:

National exploitation plan

Who are the target groups and stakeholders for a future sustainable use and exploitation of the project's results (the Q-PLM software and the Q-PLM handbook), please specify and describe.

Activity	Date	Size / numbers of Organisations, persons reached (approximately)	Level: L: local R: regional N: national E: European	Target group	Feedback	Documentation abailable, please describe