

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

“INTERnationalization at Home: Embedding Approaches and Structures to Foster Internationalization at Western BAlkans/ INTERBA”

Project reference No.: 610429-EPP-1-2019-1-AL-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP

(Deliverable 8.2)

April 2020

*Disclaimer: This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union.
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Abbreviations

IaH - Internalization at Home

HEI – Higher Education Institution

INTERBA – Project Title

UT – University of Tirana

UET – European University of Tirana

I. INTRODUCTION

INTERBA is an Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education project, led by University of Tirana, Albania. The consortium has 10 partners from Europe, and it is forecasted to last 3 years, with a total budget of 832,767 Eur. This partnership is established based on basis of quality assurance, education delivery and strict implantation of planned activities and deliverables.

The aim of the project is to strengthen international, intercultural & global dimension via Internalization at Home (IaH) implementation at partner HEIs in order to enhance the quality of education and make a meaningful contribution to the society.

The specific objectives of the project include:

- to formulate a coherent and detailed IaH concept that could be mainstreamed into the partner HEIs Roadmaps following on from their specific exigencies;
- to level up the scope and viability of IaH activities implemented in partner HEIs;
- to train expert pool capable of developing and integrating IaH into HEI environment;
- to launch an online platform as a tool for IaH implementation
- to establish/modernize the existing structure/entities responsible for IaH at HEIs.

Work Package 8 (Dissemination) key deliverables are:

- **D. 8.1:** Development of project Web site (including project visual identity – logo)
Due date 30.09.2020
- **D. 8.2:** Dissemination and Exploitation Strategy
Due date 30.03.2020
- **D. 8.3:** Publishing of two papers regarding project activities and results
Due date 31-10-2020, 27-03-2022
- **D. 8.4:** 4 dissemination events with relevant stakeholders (workshops, info days)
Due date 27-02-2020; 14-10-2020; 30-0-04-2021; 14-10-2021
- **D. 8.5:** Final International Project Conference
Due date 30-06-2022
- **D. 8.6:** Financial and institutional sustainability strategic plan
Due date 14-10-2020
- **D. 8.7:** Sustainable cooperation with labor market [exploitation]
Due date 14-10-2020
- **D. 8.8:** Partner network between all institutions involved in the project [exploitation]
Due date 31-07-2020

II. DISSEMINATION & COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

Objectives

The communication strategy of INTERBA – Internationalization at home / Embedding Approaches and Structures to Foster Internationalization at Western Balkans, aims to use effectively and efficiently several communication tools in order to achieve the objective of strengthening international, intercultural & global dimension at partner higher education institutions. Through this communication plan, we will disseminate the best practices of the project for further use in other regions. Moreover, we will ensure that all outputs and results of the project are transferred to all partners and disseminated in the most efficient way. The overall aim of the INTERBA communication strategy is to ensure common communication, consistent and efficient communication, to ensure the visibility of the project, and to disseminate the good practices and policies as well as active networking in order to reach the target audiences.

Specific objectives of the communication plan

1. To ensure open, clear and transparent communication among the project partners;
2. To raise awareness about the INTERBA project and the Erasmus+ programme, it's goals and objectives among a range of stakeholders;
3. To increase awareness of the target groups related to the internationalization of higher education institutions and the concept of IaH;
4. To communicate the project activities and results among its target groups and stakeholders at national and regional level, in order to achieve high impact;
5. To inform at an ongoing base about the project activities;
6. To foster the cooperation between academic institutions at national and regional level;
7. To inform regularly the national, regional and international stakeholders about project activities and outcomes;
8. To maintain communication between the INTERBA partners as well as between the members of online platform.

The communication strategy of the project is based on a few principles:

Innovative and forward-looking: new media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Youtube, etc.) provide many opportunities for communication both with the general public as well as with specific target groups and intermediate and final beneficiaries. The project will utilize new media as an integral part of the communication strategy, creating integration with traditional communication tools.

Simple: the project aims to transfer clear, consistent and understandable messages to its different audiences.

Cooperative: in order to make best use of the available resources, the project will try to involve the different partners as well as beneficiaries in the communication strategy as much as possible.

Interactive: the project will try to listen to and incorporate feedback from its target groups and beneficiaries in order to increase interest in its activities and achievements and fine-tune its messages.

Accountable: the communication plan itself will be monitored and evaluated according to the project activities plan and specifically to the relation between communication goal, target group/beneficiary, message and communication timing. Furthermore, the focus on communication strategy will change depending on the stage in the project implementation, reflecting the priorities relevant to that stage.

SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis help us in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the consortium and the opportunities and threats existing in the external environment when it comes to the communication of the project and its results. This is named a SWOT analysis.

Table 2.1 SWOT Analysis	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Established organizations in their respective communities; ▪ Established network with a variety of stakeholders; ▪ Established cooperation with a combination of media partners, predominantly in the digital media outlets; ▪ Budget for External expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited internal expertise for video and multimedia production;
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low cost new media, digital communications; ▪ Target groups well versed in the use of digital media for communication purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of attention by public / stakeholders.

Target groups and stakeholders

INTERBA is going to include a range of organizations and higher education institutions. Communicating the work of those involved in the project both internally and externally will be key to the success of the project and will require a genuine collaborative approach to ensure a common understanding. It is very essential that everyone involved in the project is aware of the dissemination activity and has the opportunity to benefit from the exposure of project activities and results.

The information generated by the project needs to be communicated to project participants (stakeholders) regularly and punctually, and this needs to be planned. Effective communication and dissemination can be achieved by taking into consideration the key audiences and making messages and information relevant to them.

The main target groups of the project are young citizens and professionals of the higher education system, in particular students of the university and especially those students who are willing to go on a mobility but face difficulties and challenges, as well as staff employed at the university (both academic and administrative) mainly from the International Relations Units and IT units within the university.

More specifically:

- **Consortium members** (internal target group)
- **Students of partner universities:** Students from all partner universities and also students from other higher education institutions are the indirect beneficiaries as they can benefit from the project's' results and recommendations provided in the end.
- **Academic and administrative staff in partner universities:** The dissemination of the project results will impact their work as they will be able to use the data and findings reported in the end of the project in order to give their contribution in the internationalization of their home university.
- **General Audience:** Civil society represented mainly by *school communities* (students and their families, teachers and other workers) but also, in general all citizens, and non-profit organizations related to higher education are considered in this indirect target group.
- **Local/national public authorities:** Among the most important stakeholders will be the local institutions that could adopt the recommendations of the project.

III. DISSEMINATION & COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES AND TOOLS IDENTIFIED

The project team of UET will coordinate all communication activities. There are two main communication aspects taken into consideration during the implementation of INTERBA.

External Communication:

Tools and activities not related to media: Flyers, roll-up banner, other promotional materials, organization of promotional events, participation and contribution of the project to external events may be included in this category. The following are outputs and deliverables related to this category: Project roll-up banner; E-newsletter, Project initial leaflets; Promotion events (info session, student challenge and the final conference); Publication of the final report in a book of proceeding; Other promotional material (training materials and posters).

Tools and activities related to media: This category includes activities planned to disseminate the project and reach the target groups through media channels such as social media, publication in journals or educational videos etc. The following are outputs and deliverables related to this category: Promotion on online social media through the social network channels; Online promotion through Post Boost (20.000 – 30.000 appearances per month); Promotion in the organization's website and other social media (Facebook and Instagram); Launching of the educational video on social media.

Internal Communication:

Project communication activities will be coordinated by the staff involved in this project with a professional in social media strategic planning. Regular communication with the stakeholders will be mainly by electronic means (e-mail, skype, zoom, video conference) and phone. During the implementation of the project, there will be project meetings and Steering Committee meetings. The project meetings are organized by the Lead Partner and the hosting partner. The project meetings will focus on:

- overview of project implementation and achievements
- progress status of WPs
- solving potential problems in implementation
- distribution of further tasks
- reporting issues
- other elements of importance for project implementation

E-mails: A list of emails will be provided, which includes the main contact persons for the project and will be kept updated by the project manager.

Regular Meetings: Frequent meetings will be organized during the project implementation process (monthly or weekly as necessary). Several meetings will also be organized on regular basis to share information about the progress of the project and its performance. These meetings will be organized at the end of each deliverable in order to measure the success achieved. On every meeting (online or face to face) there will be space to raise questions and comments related to the project implementation. Minutes with agreements, tasks and deadlines will be distributed afterwards.

Document sharing will be implemented to facilitate the exchange of project documents. With the help of Google Docs, all project partners can have full insight into what is involved in the project.

Bilateral Skype meetings with project partners on demand and on every issue of concern.

Basic elements for communication:

Project consortium will adapt a **project logo**, which will remain the same through the entire process of implementation. A strong visual identity is essential to a wide and effective dissemination of the project results. This is why a consistent and recognisable visual identity has been developed for INTERBA. It will be used across all products to guarantee a common look and feel and ensure consistency in the targets' mind.



A **website (digital media)** will be dedicated to the project; as well as other project partners' websites will be used as communication tool. According to the progress of the project, the content of the website will be continuously updated. The deliverable 8.1 along with several materials for promotion of project results and public awareness is foreseen to be completed in the first year of implementation. The website will be maintained by UET staff and will have two main parts, public where all information about the project will be available and one part for project partners only, where they can share other information for project management purpose valuable for project partners. The website will be developed in English. Electronic materials for dissemination activities will be created and distributed through the e-mail to the all relevant stakeholders. The project website will be connected to the on-line platform. The project information will also be disseminated through the social networks.

Website: <https://interbaproject.com/>

Social media channels such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Research Gate, YouTube will be used frequently as promotional tools in order to increase public awareness about the progress of the project. The project results will be constantly reflected in social media; as it is very important to reach a high level of followers in order to have real impact. The content will be generated by UET in collaboration with other partners. A Facebook page, Instagram account and a YouTube channel will be dedicated to the project.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/INTERBA/>

Instagram: <https://instagram.com/interbaproject?igshid=4aaswoar8076>

Another dissemination material will be the project's **leaflets and posters**. Hard and soft copies of leaflets will be designed by UET and will be used as a form of attractive tool to introduce the project, its objectives, target groups and progress in different countries. **Project roll-up banner** will be designed at the beginning of the implementation process, as a tool to enhance the visibility of the project. This roll up will be distributed to all the partners and everyone will be able to use it at different meetings, events, workshops, conferences as a background image. **Newsletters** will be published annually announcing and reporting about relevant achievements and events.

Infodays and workshops will be organized in the framework of the project. 4 dissemination events will be organised at each Partner HEIs with the main aim to disseminate project objectives, activities and results. Participants on these workshops will be academic staff, researchers, students, industry representatives. EU partners will also participate on these events with aim to share good practice from EU institutions. Printing materials about the project (brochures) will be distributed to all participants on these events.

Press releases and articles will be another form of media dissemination. Media dissemination will include the engagement of journals and magazines (for example Liberale newspaper) through the sending of press releases and the resulting articles that will be published, which will serve to present project progresses and milestones.

In order to ensure the consistency in the visibility of INTERBA, all project partners will use **standardized templates** during the project duration. These templates will be used for presentation at different meetings and events, as well as for reports or other project deliverables.

The **Erasmus+ Project Results Platform** which is the European Commission's database for the Erasmus+ Programme and successful projects. Results of INTERBA will also be accessed in this platform.

Programme Logo The European Union emblem (flag) must be used and the name of the European Union displayed in full. The name of the Erasmus+ programme can appear with the flag. The preferred option is to write "Co-funded by" or "With the support of", then "the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union" next to the EU flag. E.g. "Co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union" or "With the support of the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union".



Figure 1-2 Programme Logo

More details available [here](#).

INTERBA as a project co-funded by the Erasmus + Programme of the European Union, must be implemented in full compliance with the EU visibility rules and guidelines. All implementing partners must be aware that definitions and guidelines of the European Commission on Dissemination and Exploitation can be found here: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/programme-guide/annexes/annex-ii_en

Dissemination Reporting

UET and other partners will submit to the Lead Partner a Dissemination Report after each activity conducted on behalf of the project. The report will include a description of the activity and evidence such as photos, registration sheets, any promotional materials used. Also at the end of the report, a short description of the upcoming dissemination plans should be included. Additionally, a description about each activity will be published on INTERBA website.

IV. TIMELINE

Visibility and Communication Activities	Date
8.1: Project Web site	30.09.2020
8.2: Dissemination and Exploitation Strategy	30.03.2020
8.3: Two scientific papers' publication	31-10-2020, 27-03-2022
8.4: 4 dissemination events (workshops, info days)	29-06-2020; 14-10-2020; 30-04-2021; 14-10-2021
8.5: Final International Project Conference	30-06-2022
8.6: Financial and institutional sustainability strategic plan	14-10-2020
8.7: Sustainable cooperation with labor market [exploitation]	14-10-2020
8.8: Partner network between all institutions involved in the project [exploitation]	31-07-2020

V. FINANCIAL ASPECT FOR DISSEMINATION PURPOSE

Work Package	Specifications	Budget (Eur)
Dissemination & Exploitation	Website for the project	3800
Dissemination & Exploitation	National Info day logistic costs	1000
Dissemination & Exploitation	Printing and Publishing Materials	7000
Dissemination & Exploitation	Printing and Publishing Materials	2400
Dissemination & Exploitation	Publishing 1 scientific paper	2300

VI. EVENT PLANNING CHECKLIST

Before the event

- Tasks are allocated to all organizers
- Social media and website are updated before the event
- Speakers (and the moderator) are briefed
- All presentations are compiled and checked
- Check technical equipment

During the event

- A reception desk is available for registration
 - Registration sheets, distributed and filled by participants (evidence)
 - Photos are made during the event (evidence)
 - Name badges arranged in alphabetical order
 - Conference packs (if applicable) and promotional materials (if any)
- Conference room equipment is checked
- All activities comply with the publicity requirements (e.g. EU flag on display)

After the event

- Event documents and photos are uploaded to your website
- All social media are updated with results / photo of the event
- Conclusions made based on feedback forms and debriefing