Handbook

Dissemination strategies for
Leonardo da Vinci pilot projects

Information, theory and practical tips

March 2001
(Translated and revised 2003)

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This publication is part of a series handbooks for pilot project leaders of Leonardo da Vinci projects. In these series are the following titles available:


This publication was made possible thanks to financing from the European Commission, Directorate General Education.
Foreword

I am delighted to have been asked to introduce this publication, “Dissemination strategies for Leonardo da Vinci pilot projects”. It contains information, advice and practical tips on disseminating project results for leaders of Leonardo da Vinci projects.

Dissemination is important because project results are more useful and achieve a greater impact if they are distributed to a broad audience of professionals, policymakers and decision-makers in a systematic and targeted way. In the Dutch Member State Report on the results of the first five years of the Leonardo da Vinci programme (1995-1999), we noted that all the projects had been successful in their immediate environments but that their impact beyond this had been limited. It is not easy, as a project leader, to make an impact at regional, national, sectoral or European level, but one of their tasks, and that of their transnational partnerships, is to disseminate results and products to relevant users and actors, in particular those working at the interface between vocational training and work.

A handbook of this kind can help here. How can you draw up a dissemination plan that fits in with the theme and character of the project, the culture and specific situation of the countries collaborating in the project? For whom are the results important and how can they be highlighted? Questions about which this publication provides some information and ideas, most of which come from the practical experience of Leonardo project leaders. We are pleased to see so many good examples of pro-active, creative and innovative dissemination strategies.

The Netherlands Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is closely involved with the Leonardo da Vinci programme. My experience is that European cooperation as part of a Leonardo project broadens the horizons of teachers, company trainers, students and the other people involved and contributes to innovation and quality in education and greater relevance to the labour market. I believe that this publication offers Leonardo project leaders an opportunity to disseminate their results, new insights and interesting education products to a broader audience and bring them to the right political forums and direct users.

The Ministry always welcomes project results that can lead to the further development of education policy in the Netherlands and Europe. After all, good policy is always a mixture of results and ideas driven by practical experience and general principles established in a broader context.

Dr Hans Reiff
Ministry of Education, Culture and Science
IB (international policy) directorate
Chairman of the National Leonardo Committee
Let others learn from your experiences

Over recent years, vocational education has been gaining an ever greater profile. People are becoming ever more aware that good vocational education is important for the individual student and future employee and that it is the key to the economic development of our country.

The social partners have always been closely involved in this area, because of the importance of coordination between the worlds of education and work. Recently, we have been trying to get vocational education properly onto the political agenda. And we have succeeded. We believe that following the vocational stream must be seen as a valid alternative to general secondary education.

Internationally, too, vocational education is in the spotlight. In the spring of 2000, at the European summit in Lisbon, the ambition that, in ten years’ time, the European Union should have developed into the most powerful economic region in the world was expressed.

Good vocational education and training for those already in employment are part of this.

The CNV Bedrijvenbond (Christian National Trade Union) believes, however, that the quality of vocational education can be improved only if the government provides extra funding. There has been too much skimping over recent years. But it is mainly up to the vocational education establishments themselves to achieve the required quality improvement.

European money helps us to achieve this modernisation and internationalisation of education. That’s a good thing. So we stand full square behind the Leonardo da Vinci programme, which is achieving good results. However, recent experience has shown that these good results often travel no further than the school or establishment in question. They are not being used enough by all the lecturers and policymakers involved at national level. That is a crying shame.

Lack of dissemination of project results undermines quality in vocational education. Something we don’t want. Let others learn from your experiences! After all, a great deal is expected of vocational education over the coming years.

Rijk Roelofse
Vocational education and training policy worker
CNV (Christian National Trade Union)
Member of the National Leonardo Committee
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Introduction

The Dutch National Leonardo da Vinci Agency is pleased to present “Dissemination strategies for Leonardo da Vinci pilot projects”. It provides (future) project leaders with information, practical tips and assistance for the dissemination of project results and products.

Leonardo da Vinci is the European action programme to promote modernisation and international cooperation in vocational education. We also call the programme ‘the European laboratory for modernising vocational education’. It supports projects working towards better coordination between education and industry and projects creating new content and methodologies. It promotes exchanges and placements for students, lecturers and young working or unemployed people and helps vocational education and training to prepare young people, job-seekers and those in employment for the changes they can expect in the short or long term in their work or profession. The second phase of the programme (2000-2006) has the following types of project: mobility projects, pilot projects, language projects, transnational networks and research studies. All these projects have a common goal: to develop and disseminate products.

Communicating the project results: what did the work involve, with whom, what were the results and for whom are they relevant?

The aim of the dissemination is to lend greater impact and significance to the results of the innovative education projects and to bring them to the attention of a broader audience, outside the immediate project group. This audience includes professionals, policymakers, decision-makers, users, developers, researchers, modernisers and regional, national, sectoral and European authorities.

This handbook gives Leonardo project leaders suggestions on how to create successful dissemination strategies: what has to be disseminated, to which target group, via which channels and when? It deals with the conceptual framework, explained and illustrated using practical examples from Dutch Leonardo projects, practical tips and a format for establishing a dissemination plan for one’s own project. The dissemination of project results must be an integral part of every Leonardo da Vinci project and is therefore eligible for funding. As early as the project application and budget stages, the project leader should provide information about dissemination activities and how they are to be funded.

This book focuses on pilot projects, but it certainly offers information and advice of relevance to other types of Leonardo project, too. The recommendations made in the book are not compulsory but solely for guidance. We hope that they are informative and give project leaders ideas for active and relevant dissemination strategies. The project leader draws up the dissemination plan himself, together with the transnational group of partners, depending on the character and theme of the project, the expertise of the partners and the countries taking part.
Between them, the Leonardo project leaders have amassed a wealth of experience and expertise; we have seen many good and effective dissemination practices. Spreading this knowledge and experience seems to us to be a good example of dissemination. Thinking about strategies applied, learning from each other and building on each other’s successes can contribute to more international ‘good practice’ and the modernisation of education in a European context.

We would like to thank the project leaders for their critical examination of the practical descriptions\(^1\).

We would also like to thank the authors, Toos Feijen and Theo Reubsaet of REVICE. As researchers, they have years of international experience in European joint venture projects behind them and wrote a European handbook for evaluation and dissemination strategies for Comenius 2-projects for the European Commission’s Education and Culture DG. We were delighted to be able to use their knowledge and advice.

Every publication is a snapshot of a particular moment, and new practical experience is being gained all the time. Share it with us, bring us new ideas. We would like to invite project leaders and other readers to share with us their experiences of disseminating project results. What did you do to optimise the spin-off and impact of your Leonardo project? The Dutch National Agency would like to include your experiences in future publications.

Leonardo da Vinci National Agency, the Netherlands
March 2001

\(^1\) See description of the procedure in chapter 1.
A conceptual framework for dissemination

Dissemination is about spreading a message (the object of dissemination) to groups of people or organisations (the target groups) via one or more channels in order to achieve a specific impact (effect of the dissemination). A dissemination strategy must be set out for this.

The initiative for dissemination in Leonardo da Vinci projects is taken by the project leader and the project partners. This handbook provides a conceptual framework comprising the following elements to support them in systematically designing a good dissemination strategy:

1. Planning dissemination, whereby attention is paid not only to the timetabling but also the context in which the dissemination takes place, the structure of the activities to be performed, the responsibilities of the project leader and partners and the costs;
2. The object of the dissemination, describing the nature of the results and the products of Leonardo projects;
3. The target groups for the dissemination activities. We have drawn a distinction between target groups at micro-, meso- and macro-levels;
4. The dissemination channels, whereby, once again, a distinction is drawn between those suitable for target groups at micro-, meso- and macro-level respectively;
5. The effects of dissemination which are best if particular obstacles are avoided or bypassed;
6. The evaluation of dissemination, in order to learn from experience.

The order of chapters in this handbook is identical to that of the elements in this conceptual framework.

We have used many publications and other written sources related to the Leonardo programme for the practical interpretation of this conceptual framework focusing on Leonardo da Vinci pilot projects, e.g. Leonardo da Vinci in vogelvlucht (Leonardo da Vinci in a nutshell), Leonardo da Vinci in praktijk (Leonardo da Vinci in practice), the series Reflectie op Leonardo da Vinci-projecten (Reflections on Leonardo da Vinci projects, in five parts), five evaluation and exploitation studies of Leonardo projects, project compendia, project descriptions in interim and final reports, various existing theoretical and practical dissemination handbooks and Leonardo documents from the European Commission. Two discussion meetings were also held with the National Agency. We selected and described the practical examples in consultation with the National Agency and the project leaders of the pilot projects.
Figure 1: Conceptual framework handbook dissemination

Planning of dissemination (when?)

- dissemination during/after projects, object of dissemination, context, choice of partner, global approach, target groups, dissemination channels, division of responsibility, timetable, costs, commercialising, multiplier effects, effects/results, barriers, evaluation

Means for detail planning

Subject of dissemination (what?)

- training modules, innovative educational contents, innovative educational methods, models/instruments, new qualifications/occupation contents, qualification comparisons, network planning, cooperation modalities between various actors, international cooperation processes, policy ideas in regard to parts of the educational system

Target groups for dissemination (who?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Micro</th>
<th>Meso</th>
<th>Macro</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>project partners</td>
<td>teachers/external education personnel</td>
<td>policy makers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other Leonardo projects</td>
<td>national training instruments</td>
<td>ministries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>own organization</td>
<td>educational umbrella organization</td>
<td>social partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other educational institutes</td>
<td>professional associations</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>companies</td>
<td>sector organisations</td>
<td>Cedefop/ETF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students</td>
<td>Chambers of Commerce</td>
<td>European social partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>workers</td>
<td>employment agencies/tem agencies</td>
<td>European branch organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unemployed</td>
<td>sectoral trade unions</td>
<td>European professional associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>regional employers’ organizations</td>
<td>NA Leonardo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(intermediary)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dissemination channels (how?)

- micro: personal contacts, intranet/internet, meetings, etc.
- meso: local/regional media (newspaper/radio/tv), (direct) mailing, courses, etc.
- macro: conferences, publications, internet, etc.

Effects of dissemination, including dissemination barriers

Evaluation of dissemination strategies
The importance of dissemination

Leonardo da Vinci is a European Union action programme intended to improve vocational education and training in Europe. It funds, inter alia, international pilot projects for developing innovative vocational training courses. These projects result in innovative education and training products for vocational education – not only initial vocational education, but also in-service training and vocational training for unemployed people.

All Leonardo projects share certain features:

• **The European dimension.** The end products of each pilot project are developed in an international context; each international partner contributes to the project result with its own expertise and activities.

• **Cooperation between education and industry.** Partners in Leonardo projects represent either education and training organisations or industry (associations).

• **The dissemination** of these innovative training products. Dissemination is an essential part of every Leonardo project.

Disseminating results and products means looking for maximum spin-off, so that as many potential users as possible can/could benefit from the results of the projects.

For the European Commission and the thirty participating countries, proper dissemination of the Leonardo project results lends the programme the maximum chance of success. For the target groups, it helps them to be able to benefit from innovation developed elsewhere, rather than investing a great deal of time and effort in their own innovation projects. It is attractive to project partners and their organisations to be able to have an impact on a wider scale and enhance their external profile by disseminating their results.

Being convinced of the importance of dissemination is the vital first step towards achieving wider impact. But this conviction on its own is not enough. Project leaders and partners must also be aware of the best ways to disseminate their project results. This handbook has been written to help them do just this.
The importance of distribution in practice

Project: ENTRANCE
Coordinator: Ministry of Justice. Participating countries: FIN, EL, D, UK, NL.
Aim of project: helping ex-prisoners to reintegrate into working life. Instruments have been developed for young offenders to identify training needs. Training programmes and learning tools (such as a CD Rom about a week in the life of an ex-prisoner) have also been developed to deal with the identified needs.

Not only in the Netherlands but all over Europe the number of young offenders is on the increase and they run the risk of ending up and staying marginalised. For this reason, it is very important to set up a good social reintegration programme for this target group. The philosophy behind this project is that reintegration should not take place after detention but during the final phase of imprisonment. This ensures a gradual changeover to employment programmes appropriate for the persons concerned. Career choice advice and suitable training programmes are the ingredients to help young people to find a job and a useful and constructive role in society.

The target groups for this project are: trainers and instructors, prison officers and of course young ex-delinquents. The great attraction of this project is that it is coordinated by the Ministry of Justice. This is an excellent way of channelling training products to prisons, not only in the Netherlands but also in other countries. This certainly applies to countries such as Finland where the Ministry of Justice is also part of the project group.

The distribution channels which were used to make the products known to a wider audience were: national meetings/conferences for prison officers, a European conference, newsletters that brought project partners and target groups up to date on the latest project developments and, last but not least, a training programme for prison officers to teach them how to work with the developed products.
Planning dissemination

Some Leonardo project groups have so far seen the dissemination of project results as mainly a task to be performed at the end of the project. This almost inevitably lessens its impact.

In addition to the end results, each project has important interim results. If these can be disseminated well among particular target groups, the latter may be able to exert an influence to make the end products better and easier to use.

Dissemination to the other project partners during the project can also be important. As there is generally a division of labour, the risk that not every project partner has a good overview of the entirety of the work is very real. Keeping an overview of the whole project is vital for project partners when they (have to) talk about the project in particular contexts.

An idea of how the project partners want to disseminate the project activities and results should be included as early as the project proposal stage. Dissemination must be on the agenda of the first meeting between the project partners, so that the ideas can be given concrete form in a dissemination plan.

Points for attention when drawing up such a plan are:

• **What** is being disseminated? *Results and products.* Think of training programmes, tools, methodologies and didactic guidelines, etc. See chapter 4.

• **The context** of dissemination, taking national characteristics into account. Leonardo project partners must think carefully about the context in which they operate, not only as a collective but also as individuals in their daily work. Each project partner should adapt the dissemination strategy to his or her own context. Opportunities must be optimally identified and used, e.g. organisations in which the partners work, the professional groups and networks to which they belong, the political clout they have or could acquire, the available infrastructure, sources they can use and the influence they can bring to bear in vocational education.

**Tip 1** *Don’t forget national characteristics!*  
In a Leonardo project there is always an international partnership producing results: a product, new insights or a model. But dissemination is also influenced by national aspects, so a partnership must have a general dissemination strategy for the overall group and specific strategies for each country. For example, projects need to be disseminated differently in Germany, Spain or Poland than in the Netherlands. Project partners must be encouraged and supported when they draw up dissemination plans at national level. Many project leaders do not give it enough thought. It happens too often that a Dutch main project partner develops a totally Dutch-oriented dissemination plan without thinking enough about how to adapt it to other national contexts.

**Tip 2** *Reflect the issue-led context of the project!*  
One of the conditions for Leonardo pilot projects is that they must be issue-led, rather than supply-led. In other words, projects must be undertaken because someone points out an issue that needs addressing. This is
the context in which the project results must be disseminated, the benchmark against which the product must be measured. Does the product really deal with the context and the issue that has been brought up?

- The choice of partners. Before the project starts you can approach potential project partners who can make a significant contribution to effective dissemination, for example because they have a good strategic position or specific expertise (e.g. knowledge of website-development or conference organisation).

**Tip 3** Choose the project partners who, you believe, will give you the best chance of success!

The partnership plays a very important role in the issue-led context of Leonardo projects. The advice to project leaders is to search for partners with an interest in the products to be developed. Think, for example, of the social partners or sector organisations that want to take part in a project because they are looking for a solution to a particular problem.

There are examples of projects involving partners that have not played an important role in the project itself but have been actively involved in the dissemination at the end, for example in the third year. Dissemination professionals can play a role in a normal pilot project, too, but they are indispensable in a project that is exclusively dissemination-oriented. A well worked-out dissemination project was recently refused because, in the opinion of the evaluators, the project team had not included any dissemination professionals (e.g. publishers and/or marketing experts) in the partnership.

- Fleshing out the approach. How should the dissemination process look? Should it be clearly defined and planned down to the smallest detail? Or should it be a process that identifies creative dissemination ideas at particular moments and then fleshes them out later on, once agreement about the best options has been reached by the project partners?

- The target groups. Which target groups do you wish to reach with the dissemination? See chapter 5.

- Dissemination channels. Which are most suitable for the relevant target groups? See chapter 6.

- Division of responsibilities. Is dissemination a task for which a whole group is responsible or should it be delegated to a specially formed subgroup? Who is responsible for what and what is the role of the project leader?

- The timetable. When do specific activities take place? In your scheduling, take into account the necessary preparatory activities, difficulties that may occur, the point at which to bring in experts for particular activities and times of the year which are difficult for dissemination, such as holidays and periods when your target groups are very busy.

- Costs. How much money has been earmarked for dissemination in the project proposal? How can this money be best invested, what would provide the highest yield or make the greatest impact (think about your target groups and dissemination channels)? What direct or indirect revenue can be expected from the various dissemination options? What are the cost/benefit ratios for these options?

- Selling the project results. Are the project results such that they could possibly be offered for sale? How can you ensure that this does not lead to unnecessary losses?
If it is decided to pursue this path, you should consult the European Commission, which can generally provide help. After all, in most cases commercial dissemination of education products is not very lucrative.

**Tip 4** Evaluate whether or not the project results can be disseminated commercially!

A small percentage of Leonardo projects create products that have the potential to be marketed commercially. If a project group decides to take this path, it is sensible to contact the European Commission, which will, in most cases, be prepared to waive its right to the royalties in exchange for also doing something with the product (e.g. including it in compendia, demonstrating it at conferences, etc.) and as long as the commercialisation does not form an obstacle to dissemination (for example if the product is sold at such a high price that only a minority can afford it). In short, the Commission is not normally a problem. However, problems may well arise if the project partners have different interests: for instance, some commercial partners want to make a profit from the products, whilst others in the partnership (e.g. the social partners) want to distribute it free-of-charge. This naturally leads to conflicts, and it is here that projects have run aground in the past.

Another aspect to be taken into account is copyright. This issue must be settled at the outset, preferably in the contracts between the partners, because otherwise everyone can run away with the products. Sometimes all the project partners share ownership and therefore also the copyright. However, there are other situations where the copyright belongs to two or three organisations who came up with the ideas.

- **The multiplier effect.** As it costs a great deal of time and effort to reach a large number of people in the target groups directly, think about possible multiplier effects. These can be achieved by approaching intermediaries or groups that may be able in turn to influence other organisations and persons for whom the project results could have added value.

- **The effects/results.** What does the project group want to achieve, in quantitative and qualitative terms, with its dissemination activities? You must set this out in concrete, measurable terms. See chapter 7.

- **Obstacles to dissemination.** See chapter 7.

- **Evaluating the dissemination strategies.** See chapter 8.

Once project groups have developed a suitable dissemination strategy for their specific project, they should use the project phase to work out more detailed plans to implement this strategy in practice. To this end, we have included a resource in this handbook: a matrix, with the dissemination level (micro-, meso-, macro-) on the X axis and a number of aspects/questions to be fleshed out in more detail for each level on the Y axis. By using this matrix (see Annex 1), you can be sure that dissemination will be given the position it deserves in the project.
‘Distribution planning’ in practice

Project: Developing the ECCEAMST training network through improved communication
Aim of project: to encourage communication between science and industry and to improve the existing training programmes in the sector. The existing methods for identifying training needs, training modules and other training tools are offered via an internet server and a website (MEAT-NET). A pan-European training needs analysis is carried out for the various training levels. MEAT-NET also facilitates access to the results of research projects and to relevant scientific databases.

ECCEAMST, which has brought all the key players together in MEAT-NET, has given concrete shape to planning distribution activities by means of its Leonardo project group. MEAT-NET has introduced a solid structure for the management, monitoring, evaluation and distribution of the network. Steering committees and working parties have been set up for this purpose including a distribution working party which has developed activities right from the start of the project. Distribution is carried out by the existing network of ECCEAMST partners. Every partner has received promotional material to distribute within their own network. In addition, the partners have given demonstrations about MEAT-NET at national and international events in their own countries. ECCEAMST has also distributed its project in various ways including at training fairs and conferences.

The two major advantages of ECCEAMST are that the network is well organised (with one central contact point per country or region) and that it has managed to involve everyone who has something of importance to announce in and for the sector. After the pilot project, ECCEAMST will carry out a multiplier project to extend its network to middle and eastern Europe: ‘MEAT-NET goes east’.

The target groups targeted by MEAT-NET are: students/pupils in initial vocational training, vocational training centres, instructors/trainers, planners, managers and employees. The distribution channels chosen for the project are except for MEAT-NET itself: the ECCEAMST- newsletter, a MEAT-NET brochure, demonstrations, workshops, conferences and distribution seminars.
What to disseminate

The first and most important question for a project group drawing up a dissemination strategy is “What are we disseminating? What is the object of the dissemination?” This is the core of the dissemination process. Project groups must pay specific attention to this issue, not just in the initial stages but throughout the project.

The most common ‘dissemination objects’ in Leonardo projects are shown in Figure 2 below. We have also provided a brief explanation for each cluster.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Modules</th>
<th>Innovative Teaching Contents</th>
<th>Innovative Teaching Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Models/instruments</td>
<td>New qualifications/occupational contents</td>
<td>Qualifications comparisons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network planning</td>
<td>Cooperation modalities between various actors</td>
<td>International cooperation processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy ideas in regard to parts of the educational system</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2: What to disseminate**

**Training modules, innovative teaching contents, innovative teaching methods**

In some cases, there may even be training programmes. For instance, in one Leonardo project, a basic training programme for veterinary assistants was created. Partners in three countries contributed to this, and they plan to introduce this new training programme in other countries, as well. To this end, contact must be sought with professional associations of veterinarians and veterinary assistants and academic associations in the relevant countries. In this case, a training programme and an assessment of the comparability of training programmes are being disseminated.

Leonardo projects must be innovative. This aspect is interpreted broadly, and may take the form of new teaching material, new applications for scientific knowledge, specific products geared to new target groups or new teaching methods.

In the development of training modules, the Leonardo programme supports, in particular, their innovative aspect. This may be an innovative way of developing a module or a new theme for a particular training sector (e.g. an environmentally friendly agriculture module, currently being distributed around Europe).

The starting point for every Leonardo pilot project is a practical problem for which no solution has yet been found and for which a new solution must be thought up. So improving vocational education via Leonardo da Vinci is not a supply-led but rather an issue-led process.
MODELS/TOOLS
Many Leonardo projects have developed models or tools, including models to predict or
determine training needs, tools for evaluating vocational education and/or models for
preparing training plans. One interesting example is the market scan for the metal sector,
a tool for rapidly identifying trends in the sector and passing on the information to the
education system so that it can respond in good time.

NEW QUALIFICATIONS/JOB CONTENTS, COMPARABILITY OF QUALIFICATIONS
Projects relating to new qualifications/job contents are often concerned with issues such
as core qualifications, sustainable agriculture, geographical information systems, quality
assurance or environmental management. The COLO project is a good example of
‘qualification comparison’. It is concerned with setting up structures and methodologies
for exchanging and interpreting information on qualifications and the training courses that
led to them.

SETTING UP NETWORKS, COOPERATION ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN VARIOUS ACTORS,
INTERNATIONAL JOINT VENTURES
In principle, Leonardo projects concentrate on concrete products. These products are
very varied and may include educational tools, courses, handbooks, modules, training for
trainers, self-training guidance, texts about particular themes, reports based on research
projects and so on. In every case, there is a tangible product.
However, Leonardo also includes projects on disseminating knowledge and setting up
networks. Networks can be sectoral, but also thematic and cross-sectoral. They are in fact
tools for dissemination, for giving projects an impact that reaches beyond those directly
involved.
An interesting example is a project with partners from four countries working on a
cooperation model for many different actors in the area of education and industry. The
product of this kind of project could be a practical handbook for groups of actors wishing
to cooperate better.

POLICY IDEAS RELATING TO ASPECTS OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM
The core of Leonardo projects is to try to exert an influence on the education system of
one or more countries. This is no easy task, and, in many cases, there can be little or
nothing to show for it. Changes to education systems are subject to complicated policy-
making processes with many parties (such as government ministries, the social partners
and umbrella organisations) playing an important role and the final result being
determined by political discussions and lobbying. The most that can be expected of
Leonardo products is that they are disseminated with the aim of their being incorporated
in elements of the vocational education system (this includes organisations not involved in
the project). A less ambitious option is to focus on dissemination via the transfer of ideas
or philosophies to target groups that can make use of them in their work.

A good example of an attempt to influence a situation is the following:
Various research projects have been performed under the Dutch Leonardo programme.
The National Agency has described the results, insights and findings of five of these in a
single publication, which clearly shows that the regional training centres have to move
from being merely providers of education to become real centres of knowledge, relevant
to their region and beyond. The National Agency brought the publication and the separate
study reports to the ministry’s attention in the context of its mission to support the
dissemination of policy ideas with regard to parts of the education system.
**Tip 5** When it comes to dissemination, think in terms of experiences, not just products!

Experiences are often not given the exposure they warrant in the documentation of Leonardo projects. We often see partners who, having performed a project, come to the conclusion that, although their product was nice enough, their most important achievement was the fact of having worked together, learning from each other’s systems and methods and experiencing what it means to do something in a European context. Results such as these should not be forgotten in the official reports. They are often not taken into account, even though they form an important element of countless projects.

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### ‘Subject of distribution’ in practice

**Project:** The development of European professional qualification for training veterinary assistants  
**Coordinator:** AOC Groenhorst College. Participating countries: UK, F, NL.  
**Aim of project:** Promoting the importance of veterinary assistants training in the field and engaging the necessary support. Moreover, the idea is to allow the training programme to link up with the profession and to harmonise training programmes resulting in a European qualification.

The subject of distribution concerns the final attainment levels and the content of the basic training package for veterinary assistants jointly developed by the partners. These are laid down in the so-called Eurosyllabus. The syllabus has been adapted to legislation and to the system of vocational training in the participating countries.

For the development of a European professional qualification, the network has drawn up a basic training plan ‘Veterinary Nurse Training’ (VETNNET), based on existing educational material. The curriculum and the level have also been determined. The Eurosyllabus should be regarded as a basic training package. Additional requirements and programmes have been developed for the higher levels.

VETNNET was started in three countries. At a later stage, five countries joined the project without having recourse to Leonardo subsidies. Eleven institutes from eight countries took part in the final conference which were all very interested in the developed product. A multiplier project was started in 1999 in which two new partners (Ireland and Romania) were involved. These countries do not yet have any training programmes for veterinary assistants and are keen to develop them.

The target groups targeted by VETNNET for distribution were: developers, trainers and managers of training programmes, professional federations for vets and veterinary assistants, employees and students.

Project meetings, distribution conferences, publication in national and international magazines, a website (www.vetnnet.com) and newsletters that appear twice a year are used as distribution channels. VETNNET itself, the network of all sorts of organisations in Europe which are interested in veterinary assistants training courses, is regarded as the best means to distribute the products concerned. This network is well known in the field and will remain active in the future.
It is very important to have a good idea of the target group(s) to be reached so that the results of the Leonardo projects can be disseminated properly and successfully. Project coordinators must bear these groups in mind when they design products and choose dissemination channels.

In this context, projects must take account of the following aspects:

• the interest that the target groups have (or could have) in the project results;
• the kind of contribution they (could) make to further disseminating what has been developed;
• the level at which they can process the information (are they experts or laymen?);
• the way they are normally approached by groups wanting their attention (will you use the same approach or deliberately choose an alternative?); specific hurdles which could obstruct the dissemination and impact;
• the language used in the products and materials (the national languages of the project partners or other languages for internationally operating target groups).

The following issues are important for choosing the right dissemination channel:

• How large is the (potential) target group, how many people can you approach?
• How interested is the target group in the project results? (If they are motivated to learn about the material developed, it will be easier to transmit the information than if they are not particularly interested.)
• What are the dissemination channels through which these target groups are generally approached?
• Are the target groups often faced with information overload?
• What are the technical facilities available to these target groups (Internet facilities, modern computer equipment (hard and software), access to newspapers, time and facilities for attending conferences, exhibitions and suchlike)?
• What are the main obstacles to transmitting information to the target group(s)?
• How can these be circumvented?

Various target groups are relevant to Leonardo projects. They can be categorised in three levels: micro-, meso- and macro-level.
**Micro-level**

The first target group for dissemination at micro-level is the project partners themselves. It could be said that the project partners want to achieve a result together, which they then disseminate to people and groups outside the project group. This is true, strictly speaking, but in reality problems arise. First of all, it is doubtful that, when the project starts, each partner knows exactly what the project is about. Secondly, the levels, roles and involvement of the partners at different stages of the project can vary widely. Proper dissemination of interim and final project results is therefore essential within the group itself, e.g. in internal newsletters or regular project meetings. If all the project partners are up-to-date with the ins and outs of the project, they can contribute optimally to the dissemination activities.

A second, rather neglected target group for dissemination is the organisation itself from which those working on the project are recruited. The organisation itself is relevant in two ways: firstly to create a good support basis for what is being developed, and secondly to lend the process of dissemination to other organisations a firmer basis. The project partners can disseminate the project results in their own organisation through their daily contacts with colleagues, students and - not to be underestimated - the management of the organisation.
Other target groups for micro-level dissemination include companies and other educational establishments that can be involved in the project, for example in the role of information providers, or that can profit from the project results. Where company trainers and educational establishments are not taking part in the project, you can try to approach them via the networks in which they operate (e.g. professional associations), at regional or national conferences for training managers or staff, via trade journals for education and (corporate) training, the education inspectorate, education umbrella organisations and/or via the National Agency.

Dissemination to other Leonardo projects works best via National Agency publications, conferences and training meetings (see chapter 8). It can be instructive to know about products prepared by other projects and beneficial to look at experiences gained elsewhere. In practice, a certain amount of interaction takes place between Leonardo projects, which those involved find useful, especially where the projects have something in common, for example the same theme.

Another target group at micro-level, which can be further differentiated into more specific subgroups, is that of the end users of vocational education innovation products: students, workers and the unemployed.

**Meso-level**

The following target groups are relevant for the dissemination of the results of Leonardo projects at meso-level:

- Lecturers/teaching staff in vocational education. Even if they do not work in the field covered by the Leonardo project, they may well be interested in the project products and/or the philosophy behind them. Vocational education lecturers with a closer link to the field covered by the project are implicitly targeted at micro-level: see ‘other education establishments’.

- National training authorities and education umbrella organisations, such as the HBO-Raad (higher vocational education council) and the Bve Raad (vocational and adult education council).

- Employment offices/temporary employment agencies. Employment offices can be placed at either micro- or meso-level. There are Leonardo projects concerned expressly with developing tools for employment offices – for them, employment offices are a micro-level target group. Other Leonardo projects are concerned with subjects such as intake procedures, assessment tools and the recognition of skills acquired; matters that are interesting and relevant to employment offices. For this kind of project, employment offices are a target group at meso-level.

- Professional associations, which can play an important role in vocational education, for example in the delivery of job profiles, monitoring education quality and the quality of graduates. These associations probably play a more important role in higher vocational education than in intermediate vocational education.

- Sector organisations, whereby a distinction can be made between organisations within the sector on which the Leonardo project focuses and other sector organisations that may be interested in adapting for their own context products developed elsewhere.

- Regional employer organisations. The national employer organisations (VNO-NCW and MKB Nederland) are represented at macro-level. Regional SMEs and SME institutes are represented at meso-level, at least for the majority of Leonardo projects.

- Sectoral trade unions. The same applies to trade unions. The central trade union is at macro-level, whilst the sectoral unions, if not involved directly in a project, are at meso-level.
• Chambers of commerce. There are Leonardo projects where the chambers of commerce are involved directly, not as main contractors but as partners. Organisations such as these are often involved in projects as ‘dissemination partners’. Where this is not the case, they should be seen as a target group at meso-level.

**MACRO-LEVEL**

A distinction has to be drawn at this level between national and European target groups. National target groups include the Ministries of Education, Agriculture, Social Affairs & Employment and Economic Affairs, the social partners and a category known as ‘other policy makers’.

European target groups include the relevant target groups at macro-level: the European Commission, Cedefop, the ETF (European Training Foundation), the European social partners, European professional associations and interested parties in other European countries.

The National Agency has a separate position. In practice, this Agency acts as an intermediary between the target groups at micro-, meso- and macro-level, in order to bring interesting developments to the attention of policymakers, amongst other things.

**DISSEMINATION TO POLICY MAKERS**

If the results of a Leonardo project can clearly improve (elements of) the vocational training system or if new educational concepts have been developed which could lead to a fundamental shift in the positions of vocational education policymakers, it may be interesting for a project group to contact and influence responsible policymakers (officials, managers and maybe even politicians). Policymakers can be approached directly or indirectly, e.g. via organisations at meso-level or via the National Agency.

Before approaching policymakers, the project group needs to think about the following issues:

• What is the aim and added value of approaching policymakers directly?

• Which are the best policymakers to contact?

• Is face-to-face contact desirable, or is another approach preferable?

• Can intensive lobbying activities increase the chances of acquiring political influence or could this approach even be counterproductive?

• Can the chances of acquiring political influence be increased by bringing in one or more other parties and, if so, which are most suitable (e.g. employer organisations, unions, education umbrella organisations, professional associations, other politicians and/or the National Agency)?

• Could one or more parties in the field make an additional contribution in order to increase the likelihood of achieving the desired impact, and how could these parties be activated?

• What other possibilities are there if the approaches described here do not achieve the desired effect?

Exerting influence on policymakers is no easy task, as they are faced with many different questions, demands and wishes from a wide range of interest groups. This means that a project group hoping to achieve a real impact with its results must develop a well supported dissemination plan tailored to the policymakers in question.

If a project group wishes to inform just some of the relevant policymakers about the project results, a simpler dissemination approach may suffice (e.g. newsletters, the Internet or an article in a journal).
Tip 6  
**Think long and hard about the approach to take before you set about disseminating your results!**

There are two different approaches you can take for your dissemination, or indeed you can deliberately opt for a combination of the two. If a project has yielded a particular product, the project group can, in principle disseminate it in other countries. There are, for example, groups that say: “We have developed something interesting in three countries; it would be nice to disseminate it in all the other EU countries too”. This calls for a specific approach. A second option is to disseminate a product developed for a particular sector in other sectors. The metal monitor is a typical example. This tool could be sold throughout Europe, but the focus could also be on its transfer to sectors such as the chemicals, electronics or building industries. This requires a different dissemination approach than would be required for dissemination to other countries.

Tip 7  
**For your own project, determine your target groups at micro, meso and/or macro-level!**

When determining target groups for dissemination, make a distinction between three levels: firstly the ‘inner circle’ (i.e. your own world), secondly your immediate environment (e.g. a sector of industry or education umbrella organisation) and thirdly the world of policy-making at national and European level. Project groups must decide which target groups at which level are important. Target groups cannot be categorised in absolute terms. For example, schools will be at micro-level for projects specifically targeting them, but may be at meso-level for other projects. Three levels can be determined for every project, but the position of specific target groups within these levels may vary between projects.

Tip 8  
**Don’t limit your dissemination to your inner circle, but try to reach a higher level too!**

A project group may receive a grant to set up a course, but project leaders must bear in mind that the Leonardo programme has higher ambitions, i.e. to improve vocational education in the Member States of the European Union. That is why it is important for project leaders and partners to disseminate the results of their projects to another level above micro-level, i.e. to organisations at meso- and macro-level.

Tip 9  
**Try to exploit the meso-level so as to achieve the best chance of making an impact at macro-level!**

There are projects in which organisations such as chambers of commerce, sector organisations or professional associations take part as dissemination partners. They do not take part in developing a product, but do play a role in disseminating the finished product. The National Agency is also responsible for acting as an intermediary vis-à-vis the various levels. Like organisations at meso-level, the National Agency can communicate the results of Leonardo projects to policymakers. It should be emphasised again that making an impact at national or European policy level is no easy task and, for most Leonardo projects, an over-ambitious aim. Nevertheless, all those involved must assume that every single Leonardo project has some connection with what is happening at policy level.

Tip 10  
**Bring in foreign partners in order to disseminate the results in the partner countries!**

Dutch project leaders should also encourage their foreign partners to disseminate the project results. In other words, dissemination should not be considered a purely national matter for which the project leader is solely responsible, but should be seen as an international matter involving activities in the partner countries and, if possible, in a broader European context too. Ideally, an overall dissemination plan and individual plans for each country should be drawn up.
‘Target groups for distribution’ in practice I

Project: Market scanner
Coordinator SOM. Participating countries: DK, D, P, UK, NL.
Aim of project: developing and distributing a monitoring system (a market scanner) in the metal-working sector in order to interpret social and technological changes which influence the position of staff at middle and lower levels. This information should serve to forecast the future training requirements of companies and to intervene well in advance.

The market scanner, which is managed by the metal-sector training organisation as the contracting party, is aimed at a large range of target groups. First of all, the sector itself. As the market scanner has been developed in an explicit international context, it can easily be distributed within the sector itself in the Netherlands and in other participating countries. In addition, it is useful to distribute the international market scanner to other sectors only capable of detecting trends at a national level.

The market scanner not only highlights new trends but translates them into new courses, training objectives or other knowledge-transfer methods. With these renewed training possibilities, other target groups have come to light such as planners of training courses, instructors, young people in initial vocational training and employers and employees for whom having the right qualifications in a work context is important. A final target group is the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science which had to monitor the content and the timely renewal of the qualification structure.

The market scanner has had considerable impact on the Netherlands, mainly due to the fact that the SOM, the regional vocational training body for the metal industry, has played an important role. The SOM maintains close contact with all the relevant players such as employers, employees and educational institutions. Moreover, the SOM must ensure that vocational training is adapted to new developments in the market.

Those distribution channels used to reach the above-mentioned target groups were: folders, articles in international professional magazines, personal contacts, workshops, conferences, telecommunication (a website) and a promotional campaign. To reach an even wider audience, the SOM has used an additional multiplier project, the market scanner II, in which initiatives have been extended to six new countries (B, FIN, I, IS, HU en LV). The second objective of the multiplier is to set up a European-wide network of experts and organisations in the metal industry to exchange information about present and future trends.
‘Target groups for distribution’ in practice II

Project title: Life Long Mentoring of Women (MELLOW)
Coordinator: The regional organisation for women in higher technical education and positions (VHTO). Participating countries: A, D, IRL, UK, NL.
Aim of project: MELLOW is an acronym for Life Long Mentoring of Women. The MELLOW project attempts to interest young girls and women in becoming engineers and offers support to young female engineers by means of a mentor system. Three activities are carried out to support this project. Pupils in intermediate and advanced secondary education can spend a day with a female engineer to gain a more realistic idea of her work. Students in higher technical education are matched to a coach (an experienced female engineer) to help them go from education to work. Lastly, female engineers who are starting their career are given the possibility of being coached by experienced engineers in developing their careers. Those engineers fulfilling the role of coach are given a two-day training course.
The VHTO has managed to get three new countries on board under the multiplier project - EL, E and FIN.

The target groups covered by MELLOW are: young girls and women who want to get to know about technical positions or who are already working in this field. Other target groups are also informed through distribution activities such as potential mentors, instructors, companies, secondary schools, advanced educational institutes and universities. The project has attracted a lot of attention from various sides. The European Commission was also very enthusiastic. The mentor programme for life-long career support using role models is an excellent and very practical programme to give women access to technical professions where they are often not accepted. More than 125 girls and women have had a successful try out under the project. It is not only for this target group that the mentor programme has been an effective tool. Many other groups can take advantage of it such as ethnic minorities and disabled people.

Various distribution channels have been used for the VHTO project such as newsletters, pamphlets, articles, the internet, personal contacts, networks, press releases, radio interviews, events, presentations and workshops. These have all contributed to connect the partnership with the target groups concerned.

As there was a lot of interest in this project, lectures were given by a wide variety of organisations and players such as ministries (in the Netherlands), regional managers (Austria) and Chambers of Commerce. The project was also presented at a Leonardo da Vinci conference in Finland. Recently the partnership was invited to present the mentor model in Europe as a suitable tool for ethnic minorities.
‘Target groups for distribution’ in practice III

Project: A Network of National Reference Structures for Vocational Qualifications (NETREF)

Coordinator: COLO. Participating countries: D, UK, FIN, GR, B, F, NL, in a multiplier project contributed to by A, E, I, IRL and L.

Aim of the project: enhancing transparency of qualifications, by means of a new decentralised approach as a necessary condition for international mobility.

A “national structure for diploma recognition” has been set up in those member states taking part in the project. These structures have been designed for the project and a first step taken to implement them. The national structures are mutually linked and form an international network. Via this network, information about diplomas and related vocational training courses and vocational educational systems can be exchanged efficiently and effectively. A method has been developed in the project for this exchange of information and for the interpretation of such data.

Participating in the national structures for diploma recognition, which can differ considerably, are for instance training institutes, adult education, sector representatives and the government. Their task is to provide information on request about vocational training and to interpret diplomas from other countries.

Those who will profit from the results are migrant workers and companies where they work or want to work. Other target groups are educational and training institutes, sector-based organisations, the government and the European Commission. If NETREF wants to translate the results of the project into practice, it will need political support. In order to get this support, the network set up a steering committee at the end of 1996 consisting of political representatives of all the participating countries. This steering committee, also regarded as a target group, has agreed to provide support in distributing project results by using its national and international networks. The members of this steering committee have emphasised that the final report should not only be submitted to the Commission but should lead to practical results at national level.

Every partner in the NETREF project is involved in certifying, accrediting and/or developing professional qualifications at national level. Their status and position enable them to distribute project results within the national systems.

The most important distribution channel for this project is the network itself. Other channels used are promotional material (pamphlets, English-language brochures [200 copies], English-language newsletters [1,000 copies], an English-language article [300 copies] and posters), websites, news groups, an exhibition at international educational fairs and transnational and national conferences.
Many different channels are suitable for disseminating the project results. In principle, the possibilities are almost infinite. The most obvious ones for Leonardo projects are the following:

1. Small-scale interpersonal contacts with extensive interaction opportunities (from ‘personal contacts’ to ‘telephone’).
2. Information transfer on a somewhat larger scale using more traditional media (from ‘billboards/posters’ to ‘sheets/slides’). With these channels, there is little or no opportunity for interaction.
3. More traditional events such as conferences and trade fairs, with extensive scope for interaction.
4. Information transfer using the new media (intranet, Internet, audio/video-conferencing, videos and CD ROMs).
5. Information transfer using the mass media (newspapers, radio, television).

The dissemination channels shown above can be grouped into five general categories.
The mass media, able to reach a very wide audience, are used least by Leonardo projects and are often fairly difficult for project groups to access. There are various hurdles to be surmounted before these media will take you seriously. However, it is good to remember that the mass media operate not only nationally and internationally but also regionally and locally. Projects can explore the potential offered by regional and local media, which are far easier than the national media to access.

The Internet is becoming an ever more popular channel for disseminating Leonardo projects: it is relatively easy to use, it can have a very wide reach and is also relatively cheap. However, the impact of this medium with and on the target groups is sometimes over-estimated. A project group wishing to use the Internet for dissemination purposes, e.g. with a website, must think in advance about the reach of this medium among the target group(s). It must also think about how up-to-date the site should be kept and what this means in terms of the time and money invested in creating and maintaining it. In addition to the Internet, videos and CD ROMs are also popular dissemination channels for Leonardo projects, not as a replacement for but rather as a welcome compliment to more traditional media such as books, reports, articles and so on.

Small-scale interpersonal contacts are vital for every project, for the dissemination as well. Every project leader and partner should bear in mind that dissemination means more than simply transmitting information. It is also very important to share experiences, communicate results, encourage reactions and propose new and improved ways of working. After all, you cannot talk of a real impact until the target group’s way of doing things has been changed. Dissemination in this broader definition calls for a multilateral exchange of information and discussion that allows both the senders and receivers of information to learn from each other by altering their ways of thinking and acting in line with the information received.

For Leonardo project groups, this means that an interactive exchange of information must be guaranteed, whatever dissemination channels are chosen.

To decide which dissemination channels are most suitable, the following aspects should be considered:

- What is being disseminated? The result or the product of a project (see chapter 4).
- The context of the dissemination (see chapter 2).
- The target group(s) to be reached with information on the result or the product.
- Additional activities to draw the target group’s attention.
- The reach, in terms of breadth and depth, of the dissemination channels.
- The attractiveness of the dissemination channels for the target group(s).
- The need for external experts, e.g. to make a good video or organise a symposium.
- The cost of the dissemination channels.
- The returns that can be expected.

It is vital for a solid, well-founded link to be created between the target group(s) at micro-, meso- and macro-level and the dissemination channels.
Dissemination channels at micro-, meso- and macro-level

It is obvious that the dissemination channels for the micro-level are smaller, in terms of reach, than channels at the other levels. The following channels are particularly relevant for micro-level dissemination (not an exhaustive list):

Level 1: Micro-level

The picture is somewhat different for the meso-level. Channels such as local/regional media, direct mailing, courses, articles, networks of experts, conferences/workshops and product fairs/information fairs are just some of the possibilities here. The project group does not necessarily have to organise its own conferences. It can ‘hitch a ride’ at other organisations’ conferences by sending a guest speaker, presenting a paper, running a workshop, etc.

Level 2: Meso-level

The dissemination channels suitable for the macro-level include personal contacts (for lobbying), above all conferences/workshops, publications, the Internet, the press, newsletters, videos and CD ROMs, PR material and product fairs/information fairs.
At macro-level, it is important to present the information in an accessible and concise way. There is little point sending reports; enclose an A4 sheet summarising the main information! Ministers and policymakers generally do not read long reports, preferring summaries and concise views and ideas, especially in today’s world of flexible policy and the rapid processing of up-to-date information.

Tip 11  **Try, as far as possible, to use a mixture of dissemination channels!**
Concentrating on just one dissemination channel is often much less productive than using several simultaneously. Sometimes, this is not properly thought through. In one Leonardo project which has now ended, for instance, the Internet was the sole dissemination channel used, allegedly because this was supposed to achieve maximum reach: “Anyone can download files, so we achieved maximum dissemination”. In fact, the level of dissemination was minimal. It may well be the case that many people can access it, but how do they know that this information is available in the first place? Unless people are drawn to the website via another channel, it will be little visited.

Tip 12  **Disseminate actively, not just passively!**
Dissemination channels can be divided, roughly speaking, into passive and active ones. A newspaper story, an article, a report and/or brochure are all passive dissemination channels. You send messages out but have little or no control over what the recipient does with them. Courses, training, meetings and personal contacts are active channels and provide a much stronger focus on your target groups. You can therefore expect more from them. You don’t just go to make a presentation or lead a course without wanting to achieve a particular effect. Even though passive channels can have an impact, too, the active ones are more suitable.

Tip 13  **Gear your message (in terms of type of message, language, lay-out, etc.) to the target groups and the dissemination channels you are using!**
To achieve the maximum possible dissemination effect, try to remove all unnecessary obstacles. This means, first and foremost, using the correct language and presenting your information in a way that is geared to the target groups. For example, academic reports may be of interest to other academics but of little or no interest to those working in the field or policymakers. Reports are often left unread because they are not accessible enough. Bear in mind too that information from a particular culture may be interpreted differently by people in another cultural context.
Tip 14

Don’t make your budget for the separate dissemination channels so tight that you run into financial difficulties!

The costs of documentation or printing are often underestimated in the budgets for Leonardo projects. On the other hand, projects also have a tendency to earmark a lot of money for conferences, workshops and seminars, which they then dig into time and again. The consequence of this may be that they run into difficulties towards the end, so that there is not enough money available to properly conclude the project. When you report to Brussels, they cut their contribution because you have not realised all your plans. In other words, it is important to pay serious attention to budgeting - in the area of dissemination, too.

'Distribution channels' in practice I

Project: Competence Based Training in the European Process Industry (COMBAT)
Coordinator: Technologie Centrum Limburg [Technology Centre Limburg]. Participating countries: B, DK, IRL, I, P, FIN, UK, NL.
Aim of project: COMBAT is a project in which twelve training centres, expertise centres and companies from eight European countries work together. The aim of this project is to develop a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) Toolkit. This toolkit includes instruments to analyse abilities and training needs for assessment at the work place, to determine training plans, to develop training materials and for on-the-job training courses. The COMBAT model consists of seven steps: investigating the company profile, function analysis, knowledge/skills/attitude analysis, assessment, development training, participation in training courses and evaluation.

To inform the target groups about the developed products, use was made of a mixture of distribution channels such as personal contacts, networks of project partners, newsletters and brochures, meetings where other European projects were presented, a website and a successful closing conference.

The website proved to be the most important distribution channel. Efforts were made so that as soon as an internet user asked for information about 'Training Needs Analysis', the COMBAT site was the first to appear. A project brochure for the whole COMBAT project was also distributed widely. This brochure expressly points to the website for any additional information. The website where all the products aimed at the partners are accessible also contains an experimental site where users can practice using the new products. For partners and companies which are not used to using the internet, a CD Rom is also available.

The closing conference took place at the end of 1999 in Elsloo Castle with 50 participants. During the conference, much attention was paid to the products developed under the COMBAT project. The products were exhibited in a separate part of the conference hall. Enough time was allotted in the conference programme for an exchange of views. Networking was used to the full. This meeting was made additionally attractive by the mixture of people from various European countries, companies, governments and educational establishments.

The target groups aimed at by COMBAT were vocational training authorities, training organisations, instructors, managers and employees working in the processing industry. Project results and experiences were discussed with the project leadership of another Leonardo project which goes by the name of 'MUSK'. This exchange of information in this case was highly appreciated by both parties.
‘Distribution channels’ in practices II

Project: Creating a network in phytopharmacology
Coordinator: University of Amsterdam/AMC pharmacology. Participating countries: B, DK, D, EL, E, F, I, A, P, FIN, S, UK, NL.

Aim of project: Phytopharmacology refers to the production and use of plant-based medicines. The European phytomedicine market accounts for around 5% of the total pharmaceutical market. This market is fast increasing in most European countries. Around 50% of phytomedicines are sold over the counter and the rest is on prescription only. There are around 60 small and medium-sized enterprises active in the fifteen EU Member States employing from five to 450 people in promoting, producing and distributing phytomedicines.

The aim of this project called ‘A network in phytopharmacology’ is to develop training courses in the field of phytopharmacology geared to the needs of the industry. A first step in this direction is to draw up an inventory of ‘good practices’. At the same time, a platform has been set up to involve employers in designing business-oriented training courses. Employers can say what skills are needed and what sort of training courses should be organised.

A multiplier project was started in 1999 thanks to the phytopharmacology network with the participation of HU, I, UK and NL. The aim of this multiplier project is to set up resource centres for training and transfer of scientific knowledge of phytopharmacology with the view to enhance the quality, safety and efficiency of this sector of the pharmaceutical industry which is not available in the usual training courses. By means of research and advanced, needs-oriented training programmes, the process from plant cultivation to supply of the right medicines with the right dosage can be considerably improved. There are four resource centres in Europe in Amsterdam, London, Milan and Budapest. These are extremely effective distribution channels. These resource centres have in principle the same task, i.e. the distribution of course material and other output originating from the Leonardo ‘A network in phytopharmacology’. Furthermore, the partners (HU, I, UK and NL) have the task to set up a strong network between companies, training and research institutions (using, among others, an intranet) in those regions for which they are responsible - Hungary for Hungary, the East European countries and Austria, Italy for Italy, France, Portugal, Spain and Greece, England for the UK and the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands for the Benelux and Germany. In every region, at least two workshops for employers, employees, instructors, students and prescribers of phytopharmaceutical products have been set up where one day is set aside for exchange of information and another day for a brief training course on one of the aspects of phytopharmacology. In addition, the regional coordinator keeps the Phyto Phar Net website up to date and adds relevant regional information to it.

At the end of the project, the resource centres will draw up a business plan in which they explain how they intend to continue carrying out their activities in conformity with the market.

The direct target groups of the ‘Resource Centres for Training and Knowledge Transfer of Phytopharmaceutics in Europe’ multiplier project are the SMEs and the employers in the phytopharmaceutic industry. Indirectly this project contributes to better phytomedicines for patients, stimulation of research and closer cooperation between the universities and the SMEs. Other European organisations have also shown an interest in this project. One of the reasons for this is the fact that phytomedicines are of crucial importance to the majority of people in Third World countries. A successful project would have a positive impact on phytotherapy in these countries.
Dissemination effects and obstacles

Whenever a project group disseminates the results of its project, a certain effect will always occur. Dissemination without effect seems hardly possible. However, the extent of this effect can vary widely. It is sensible and instructive to evaluate the dissemination strategy applied and the activities undertaken. Effects can be measured either quantitatively or qualitatively.

**Quantitative**
A quantitative evaluation could, for instance, record the number of target groups reached by the dissemination. The premise could therefore be: the more target groups reached, the better the dissemination. You could also focus on the number of people in the target groups that have been able to familiarise themselves with the project results. These figures can be found via the dissemination channels. It is relatively easy to find out how many people attended a meeting or conference, how many have received books/manuals, CD ROMs and/or videos (whether or not on a commercial basis) and so on. Here, too, the premise could be: the more people confronted with the project results, the better the dissemination.

However, situations can be imagined where these premises do not hold true, for instance if a project group disseminates widely but pays little or no attention to quality. Actively try to influence the actions and opinions of your target groups.

**Qualitative**
As Leonardo projects are mainly concerned with developing new training modules, teaching content, methods and/or qualifications, the results can be measured in a more qualitative way by finding out the number of teachers and/or instructors using these new approaches or products in their daily work. You can then work out how many students/workers or unemployed people are reached by these teachers or instructors.

A qualitative parameter can also be more subjective. Leonardo project partners can estimate for themselves how much impact they have really had on their target groups via their dissemination channels. For example, a five-point scale can be used: very strong impact, strong impact, some impact, little impact, no impact.

Of course, a project group can also distribute a short questionnaire over the project results and products to the members of its target groups, including the end users. They should state, on a scale running from ‘very much’ to ‘very little’, the extent to which the new results/products have the potential to or have already changed their behaviour and opinions.

One difficulty with measuring the effects of Leonardo projects relates to their time-span and issue-led nature. Each Leonardo project is expected to take a problem situation, a practical issue, as its starting point. Then, at the end of the project, the issue of whether the problem has been solved is investigated: if the project results provide an answer, can the products developed be used in practice? It often turns out that many problem situations simply cannot be solved in such a relatively short period of time, although the...
project may be able to come up with an answer to the problem or issue which is then disseminated to a broader audience at the end of the project.

What does not happen is that, some years later, people look to gauge what has really changed. Only then can the real impact of dissemination be seen. It would be interesting to find out what has happened to the developed products some years after the end of Leonardo projects. Are they gathering dust or still being used? It has been seen that Leonardo project products are often used as a stepping stone to further developments and are then given another name.

**The impact of Leonardo projects**

Leonardo projects generally have a real impact at micro-level, in the first level of target groups. They may also succeed at the second level, but often find it difficult at macro-level. The question “Has vocational education been changed as a result of one (or more) Leonardo project(s)?” - which is, in fact, the aim of the programme - can be almost impossible to answer clearly.

Policy changes often result from a combination of developments and initiatives, which means that it is difficult or impossible to trace the particular contribution of a specific initiative. So policymakers cannot say that a particular change of policy in vocational or higher education was the result of the Leonardo programme or a Leonardo project.

Disseminating project results in a way that really has an impact on the target group(s) is no easy task. Various obstacles can stand in the way of a transfer of ideas from one group to another. Some examples of possible obstacles are shown below. Project partners should consider possible dissemination obstacles in advance in order to ensure that they do not adversely affect the results of the dissemination.

Possible obstacles to dissemination include:

- Poor quality project results;
- Project results that are of interest only to a small target group;
- Not enough money to use more attractive dissemination channels;
- Not enough expertise in the project group to disseminate the project results professionally;
- Lack of agreement about copyright and intellectual property rights;
- The project is not anchored firmly enough in the project partners’ own organisation;
- Activities for the international Leonardo project are neglected when the participating organisations’ core task has to be given priority;
- The project is finished, and immediately there is new work to be done;
- Competitive relations between relevant groups and actors in the field, protecting one’s own interests;
- The agendas of the target group(s) are too full;
- Other innovations have been recently introduced;
- Opposition to change from within the target groups, e.g. because of existing power structures;
- Absence of networks or insufficient access to relevant networks in the field in question;
- Existing national vocational training structures;
- National legislation runs contrary to the new initiatives.

In practice, the main obstacles to effective dissemination are usually lack of money, protecting one’s own interests and lack of access to the relevant networks.
Project proposals include a dissemination budget, so lack of money does not need to be a problem, but, in this respect, theory and practice often differ. Developing the product may prove more difficult than expected, some phases take longer than planned, more money is invested in the products themselves and, by the time the project is drawing to a close, there is too little money available, so people cut corners on the dissemination. Protecting one’s own interests and competitive factors also play a role in the world of education. If an organisation has developed something good, they may jealously guard it rather than disseminating it widely, which is the whole point of Leonardo projects. Things are rather different in higher education, where projects centre more often on very specialist fields where competition is much less of an issue.

**Tip 15** State clear, measurable and achievable project goals! Only then can pronouncements about expected and desired dissemination effects be made.

It is, of course, important to be clear about the effects of the dissemination. The first priority is to state measurable, achievable project objectives. If you cannot do this (or you can do it only to a limited extent) it will be very difficult to describe the dissemination effects you are trying to achieve. The clearer the project objectives, the easier it is to formulate dissemination objectives.

**Tip 16** Make sure they are realistic. Don’t promise the Earth!

Sometimes, a project led by a regional training centre has an objective such as “We want to have an impact on every other regional training centre via our project results.” It would be better to say “We are limiting ourselves to 10 of the 43 regional training centres and will be organising a conference for them”. Why try to approach all 43 at the same time?

Another example concerns a product developed for the building sector which the project wants to introduce into all the other sectors. Why not limit yourself to, say, the metal or the electrical engineering sectors? Good models often sell themselves. If you establish your product well in several places, word will soon get around. Spread your dissemination efforts too thinly, and you may not yield very good results.

**Tip 17** Make your product as attractive as possible for the target group! It will then be far easier to market.

A project group planning to spend a great deal of time on dissemination should stop and think about whether it would be better to spend some of that time on improving the product. After all, however you look at it, a good product is much easier to disseminate than a bad one.

**Tip 18** Use the support of the National Agency and the European Commission to achieve maximum publicity!

A good tip for project leaders is to contact the National Agency and look at what you can do together in order to achieve wider dissemination. The National Agency and the European Commission can help out (see chapter 8). For example, the Agency organises regular product fairs and information fairs. Project leaders can present their projects, products and their own organisation at these events and meet policymakers from many different places (European Commission, government ministries, social partners, sectoral organisations, etc.).
‘Effects of distribution’ in practice

Project: Accreditation of Prior Experience and Learning (Multi Apel)
Coordinator: Noorderpoort College. Participating countries: EL, F, IRL, P, RO, NL.
Aim of project: The aim of the Multi Apel project (Apel in NL: Recognition of achieved competences or EVC) is to recognise and provide certification for those competences achieved earlier or elsewhere in several countries and sectors. Based on experiences in the Netherlands, France, Ireland and Greece, the partnership has come up with a common model for Apel. On the basis of this model, procedures and instruments such as portfolios have been developed for use within the care and electrotechnical sectors. The portfolio contains details of partial qualifications and final attainment levels of the training courses. The candidates indicate in the portfolio which partial qualifications and final attainment levels they think they master. They then try to find evidence for the competences described. The portfolio is judged by one or two independent adjudicators. On the basis of the experience described and the collected proof, competences are recognised and certified. In the next phase, candidates can follow individual courses to complete non-recognised, partial qualifications.

Two pilot studies will be done using the common model, one in the care sector and the other in the electrotechnical sector.

As there is a lot of interest at both national and European level for a good system to identify and recognise the results of informal learning, the project partners expect that this project (including variants such as the Coberco Dairy Foods/STOAS project ‘Accreditation of Achieved Competences’) will have the desired effect. In order to achieve this, the partnership has decided to distribute information on a wider scale.

Newsletters, 300 copies in Dutch and 200 in English, have been written to keep those interested informed of the status of the project. For APEL in the care sector, the regional training body of the sector, OVDB, has had 3,000 brochures and 20,000 pamphlets printed. These have been distributed amongst colleagues, potential candidates, care institutions and regional training centres. One edition of the OVDB’s newsletter, which has a circulation of 20,000, is entirely devoted to EVC. Recognition of achieved competences in the care sector is crucial for the reintegration of women as qualified professionals.

In the electrotechnical sector, EVC is a means of tackling the shortage of qualified personnel. The regional training body VEV has devoted one of the editions of its in-house publication with a circulation of 9,000 to this subject. Outside collaborators of the VEV are trained to promote EVC within companies. In addition, the results are distributed in a number of relevant networks (including a ROC network, various APEL platforms, COLO and Cedefop), in eight conferences, in articles, via personal contacts and with the help of a website. Furthermore, the pilot phase still has to show if the competences of around 40 candidates have actually been recognised.

The target groups targeted by APEL are training institutes, educational establishments, job centres, companies and institutions, the employed and the unemployed, certification and accreditation bodies and policy makers in the field of vocational training. Most of those involved are very interested in project results even though the project is not yet completed.
‘Distribution barriers’ in practice

Project: European Graphic/Media Education Module production Support System (EGEMS)
Coordinator: GOC. Participating countries: B, DK, UK, NL.
Aim of project: The EGEMS project is aimed at stimulating the continuous adaptation of competences to meet the needs of employees and companies. In the first instance, this concerns the exchange of teaching methods and discussions about the question which components are obligatory and which didactic principles are being used. The second part of the project consists of the joint development of new teaching methods (modules or themes) and the setting up of an electronic database for ‘open and distance learning’.

In the EGEMS project, clear barriers have to be breached especially within the partner group and within its own organisation. The deep conceptual reflection on didactics and methodology appears to be very difficult for some countries. Every partner tried to place the thematic aspect in its own context which gave rise to several problems. In the various project meetings, it was clear that discussions about educational aspects were far from easy. National ideas, feelings, cultural, political and principal tasks played a major role. National qualification structures and such also point to enormous differences.

Another problem was the involvement of the group’s own organisation. When the project management group came to a mutual understanding about diversity, which indicated that their view had become more European-wide, the project group then had the task to acquire support and scope within its own organisation. This also proved to be problematic. For most people in these organisations it is not customary to think internationally. These learning processes can be helped by the Leonardo project.

What was a great success in the EGEMS project was being geared to the social partners. Another example of success was that the project led to better cooperation between the social partners internationally.

The target groups that EGEMS aimed at were the social partners, schools and training organisations, instructors/trainers, students, companies, employers and publishers working within the EGIN network (European Graphic/Media Industry Network).

The channels used to approach these target groups were the EGIN network, newsletters, reports, presentations and an international EGIN meeting with about seventy representatives of training organisations, research institutions, universities and national and international social partners.
Evaluation of dissemination strategies

Proper planning of dissemination is essential to achieve maximum impact. It is equally important to be able to describe what has actually happened in this area. After all, projects are answerable to the organisations providing grants. Properly evaluating your dissemination strategy provides an insight into the impact achieved. For the project partners, the benefit of evaluating their dissemination strategy is that they can then make improvements to it. Other Leonardo projects can also draw valuable lessons from your experiences.

Dissemination strategies and activities can be evaluated during and after the project. The ‘tool for the detailed planning of dissemination’ can be used for evaluation during the project (see Annex 1, page 41).

The following issues are relevant to the post-project evaluation:

- What was the objective of the dissemination, what results/products were disseminated (training modules, models/tools, process knowledge, policy ideas, etc.)?
- Was the issue of dissemination considered seriously and in-depth at the beginning of the project?
- How was it planned, and was there a properly elaborated plan (think about the context, the structure of the plan, the process, the responsibilities of the project leader and the project partners in their own country, the timetable, the costs and the intended multiplier effects)?
- What were the target groups (project partners, other Leonardo projects, own organisation, other educational establishments, companies, students, employed people, unemployed people, teachers/trainers, professional groups, sectoral organisations, education umbrella organisations, chambers of commerce, employment offices and agencies, sectoral trade unions, regional employer organisations, the social partners, policymakers, ministries, the European Commission, Cedefop, the ETF and other European organisations)?
- At what level did the dissemination take place: local, regional, sectoral, national, international, European?
- Which dissemination channels were chosen (consider personal contacts, intranet/Internet, meetings, local/regional media (press/radio/TV), direct mailing, courses, conferences, product fairs, information fairs and publications)?
- What did you do to create a good link between the dissemination channels and the target groups?
- Did the dissemination activities go to plan?
- If not, why not, and what additional or other measures were taken instead?
- What were the effects of the dissemination (consider the changes made and the number of people approached)?
- What are the main obstacles to disseminating the project results?
- Did the project have a clear impact on vocational education and, if so, what?
• Has the project had an impact on the national, sectoral, regional or local vocational education system?
• If so, what sort of an impact? If not, why not?
• Can you list any measures that can lead to the achievement of optimum impact for a Leonardo project?

If potential future Leonardo project leaders take on board all the proposals in this handbook as regards dissemination, they should be able to design, implement and evaluate dissemination strategies geared to the context of their projects.

Project groups that have already started their projects can use this handbook for evaluation purposes or to critically review and, if necessary, improve the dissemination plans that they have already drawn up in their project proposals.

‘Evaluation of distribution strategies’ in practice

Project: Euro Afro Hair
Coordinator: Regional College Zaanstreek-Waterland. Participating countries: FIN, P, UK, NL.
Aim of project: to develop an international Afro hairdressing training module with a view to making it part of the hairdressing training course. A study carried out showed that in all the EU countries, except for the UK, dressing Afro hair takes places in the semi-illegal sphere. The staff, often coming from the ethnic groups concerned, has a similar low status. The idea of the Afro hair project is to create a training course with a certificate that recognises this specialisation.

The target groups of the Afro hair project are representatives of SMEs (hairdressing salons), apprentices and youngsters in initial vocational training. The regional vocational training body for hairdressers (KOC), newsletters, e-mail, presentations and an international conference were the distribution channels which were used by the project group. The coordinator, together with the social partners, (ANKO, FNV Hairdressers Association) consulted the CIC and FET, the European platforms of the social partners, about recognition of the programme which had been developed. This recognition will have to be regulated in every country separately.

The Afro hair project has been judged to be relevant and successful, so successful that the partners were even interviewed on Dutch television. The project was highlighted in the Veronica programme Life Style showing the Leonardo logo. This is, of course, excellent public relations. The project was also written about in the daily paper, the Volkskrant, where an article appeared in March 2000. The Afro hairdressing module has been included in the qualification structure and is currently being given in nearly all hairdressing training programmes. Of great importance was the direct involvement in the project of the regional body for vocational training for hairdressers. This body showed it was capable of distributing the module to all its hairdressing training programmes. Another important factor was a good example of a requested project. There is clearly a need for Afro hairdressing modules which meant that people were prepared to include this module in the normal training programme.
The role of the National Agency and the European Commission

Although the responsibility for disseminating the project results is on the partnership performing the project, the National Agencies and the European Commission also play a role in disseminating and transferring results. The national and European Leonardo committees, where ministries and the social partners discuss the programme policy, set great store by dissemination, and the effect and impact of Leonardo projects are promoted and monitored closely. The National Agency and the European Commission/Education and Culture DG organise content-based seminars, project days and product fairs and publish material on the programme. It goes without saying that they use information from the projects and give project leaders the opportunity to present their innovative knowledge and products in this context.

The National Agency

The Dutch National Agency places a high priority on dissemination. Both at project and programme level, the Agency works to support the dissemination of results, to send results to the correct political fora and to optimise their impact.

At project level, the Agency helps and supports dissemination-activities undertaken by Leonardo projects and project leaders. Dissemination is discussed during the annual monitoring visits to each project, with the Agency offering project leaders information, advice and support, attending project meetings and (closing) conferences and disseminating project results to relevant parties.

At programme level, the Dutch National Agency undertakes a range of activities to disseminate the results of Dutch Leonardo da Vinci projects to a wide regional, national, sectoral and European audience:

• the Leonardo Newsletter: a platform for exchanging views and information on projects and the programme;
• the Website (www.leonardo-davinci.nl): information on projects and their results, news about the latest developments and publicity for national and European (dissemination) activities;
• publications and products: e.g. the series Reflectie op Nederlandse Leonardo-projecten (Reflections on Dutch Leonardo projects), containing an analysis and summary of project results, the series Leonardo da Vinci in praktijk (LdV in practice), on practical experiences of European-level cooperation, the Member State Report on the results of five years of Leonardo da Vinci in the Netherlands, the series Handleidingen voor project leaders (Handbooks for project leaders) with information and advice on the coordination of European projects, an annual Compendium of Dutch Leonardo projects, the video Stage in het buitenland: je bent gek als je niet gaat (Placements abroad - you’d be mad to miss out!), which documents the experiences of five students during a placement abroad (see bibliography);
• Training programme for project leaders: every year, the Agency organises training days on project management in a European context for (new) Leonardo project leaders;
• Meetings: thematic seminars, sectoral network days, product fairs, information fairs at national level and impact meetings with ministries and social partners in the National Leonardo Committee;
• Publications about the results of the programme in relevant media and professional and sectoral journals.

The Agency collaborates with and contributes to the European Commission’s and other National Agencies’ European dissemination activities: European thematic seminars, partner search contact seminars, information days and European project and product fairs.

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION / EDUCATION AND CULTURE DG

DG EAC takes its role in the identification, promotion and dissemination of project results seriously. The report on the European evaluation of the first phase of Leonardo da Vinci (1995-1999) came to the conclusion that the programme had a fundamental weakness in this phase - not in terms of what had been developed (a wealth of interesting and innovative products, insights and new knowledge), but rather in how the results were demonstrated, disseminated, implemented, learnt from and built on and the targeting of the correct users and political players.

The Commission’s Education and Culture DG is developing an active dissemination policy and dissemination activities (conferences, seminars, product fairs, thematic databases, compendia, information and contact days and publications) for the second phase of the Leonardo da Vinci programme (2000-2006). All these dissemination activities are performed in collaboration with the National Agencies, the Leonardo project leaders and national, regional, sectoral and European actors at operative, policy and decision-making levels.
Aids for the detailed planning of dissemination

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Country abbreviations

A  Austria
B  Belgium
BG Bulgaria
CY Cyprus
CZ Czech Republic
D  Germany
DK Denmark
E  Spain
EE Estonia
EL Greece
F  France
FIN Finland
FL Liechtenstein
HU Hungary
I  Italy
IRL Ireland
IS Iceland
L  Luxembourg
LT Lithuania
LV Latvia
MT Malta
N  Norway
NL Netherlands
P  Portugal
PL Poland
RO Romania
S  Sweden
SI Slovenia
SK Slovakia
UK United Kingdom
Bibliography


The National Agency has published the following works on the results of the Leonardo da Vinci programme in the Netherlands (2000-2003):


Dutch version: *Stage in het buitenland: ‘Je bent gek als je niet gaat’*


Five publications have appeared in the ‘Reflectie op Nederlandse Leonardo da Vinci-projecten’ (Reflecting on Dutch Leonardo da Vinci projects) series:


A series of four handbooks for pilot project leaders of Leonardo da Vinci projects:


More European documents and publications on the Leonardo da Vinci programme can be found on the following sites:

The Dutch National Agency: [http://www.leonardodavinci.nl](http://www.leonardodavinci.nl)


Cedefop: [http://www.cedefop.gr](http://www.cedefop.gr)