

**Strengthening Educational Capacities by Building Competences
and Cooperation in the Field of Noise and Vibration Engineering
S E N V I B E**

Internal Communication Plan

Guidelines for internal project communication

Activity 9.4

26/11/2018

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1. Objectives of the Communication Plan

The objective of this document is to provide general communication guidelines and assure sound and smooth communication between the consortium members and between the Coordinator and Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) throughout the project lifecycle. Communication Plan is produced to ensure efficiency of the project implementation with the aim to alleviate any occurring communication issues.

Guided by the result-driven management, the SENVIBE Consortium commits to fulfilling the obligations defined by the Grant Agreement (GA) and Partnership Agreements. A solid communication management approach is needed to diminish unforeseen issues in project implementation hence clear and timely communication has a large influence on the project's overall success.

The aim of this document is to ensure that all project partners clearly understand the tasks and work to be completed and are aware of the fact that the methods used to communicate are just as important as the information being communicated. The proposed communication means are adjusted to the needs of the project implementation and broken down in several important sections.

The communication coming out of the project conveys significant messages on multiple levels. The Communication Plan is a draft and all inputs from project partners are expected in order to improve its content. Hence, the Communication Plan shall be adopted by the consortium prior to being put to use.

2. Key Messages

Actively managed messages and information between the consortium members emanating from the project are of extreme importance.

What type of information will be communicated by the Coordinator to project partners?

Project management is a highly responsible and demanding role. During SENVIBE project implementation, the Project Management Team will act as the main accountable body in charge of keeping the entire consortium in touch with foreseen activities. Information communicated by the Coordinator to project partners on the one hand depend on the ongoing activities being implemented and foreseen by the activity plan, while on the other hand they depend on the new circumstances. The entire SENVIBE communication should be considered a tangible project deliverable itself.

The following information shall be communicated by the Coordinator to all consortium partners:

- Information regarding the Grant Agreement and Partnership Agreements;
- "Guidelines for the Use of the Grant" for CBHE projects
- Important announcements;
- Information concerning planning of activities in a timely fashion (travel arrangements, training/conference preparation/input/feedback);
- Sending out Minutes after consortium meetings/workshops/trainings;
- Updates, deadlines and other reminders;
- Follow up on project activities and project outputs/deliverables;
- Information concerning budget expenditures;
- Important information from EACEA;
- Any other relevant information relating to slight or significant alterations within the project.

What type of information will be communicated by the project partners to the Coordinator?

Keeping an open two-way communication channel between the project partners and the Coordinator is crucial for successful implementation. Communication should be considered as a motivating and powerful tool. Responding to the Coordinator's e-mails without delays and in a minimal time frame is of great importance and acknowledges that all partners are devotedly involved in project implementation.

The following information should be communicated by the project partners to the Coordinator:

- Information pertinent to the status of implementation of activities within each partners' home institution;
- Information that requires support or input from the Coordinator regarding certain activities;
- Information relevant to all partners pertinent to newly occurring situations;
- Information that signals any delays in implementation for unexpected reasons;
- Enquiries and required support related to administrative or financial project management;
- Enquiries related to financial and narrative report delivery;
- Feedback and inputs on project Minutes when necessary;
- Questions regarding activities that demand certain changes;
- Suggestions to improve certain activities, organize/implement new activities that would provide an added value to the project, etc. (all within the allocated budgets of the project);
- Other significant information for a successful implementation of the project.

Transparency in communication among partners of the consortium

Transparency in communication is crucial for maintaining the trust among the consortium partners. Accomplishments of all SENVIBE project outcomes and deliverables heavily rely on clear and open exchange among partners. Hence, SENVIBE embraces transparency in communication as vital to healthy project implementation environment.

The unique project email address is established by the Coordinator and all partners are kindly requested to use it as a central contact point:

senvibe@uns.ac.rs

The Coordinator sends all priority and vital information to all partners simultaneously.

Project partners are requested to use REPLY TO ALL option if the information is related to the consortium as a whole.

The project will have its web site

www.senvibe.uns.ac.rs

which will also be a supporting information platform since the partners will have admin access to certain interactive sessions/Intranet (document upload, downloadable material, etc.).

Links to SENVIBE social media presentations will be clearly displayed and provided (SENVIBE You Tube Channel, Twitter, Facebook).

As the project moves along and a large number of stakeholders from Serbia becomes involved in the No&Vib Hub, an archive/contact database of all institutions will be created.

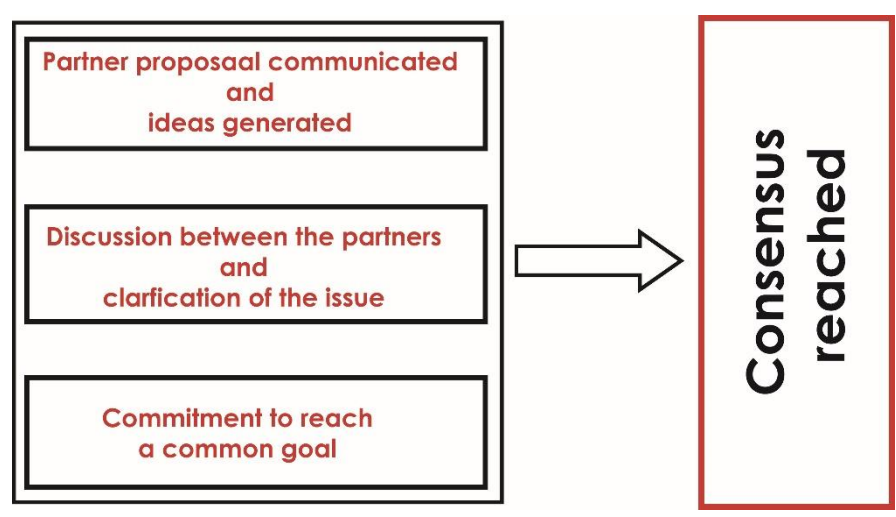
The platform will be optimized for use on desktops and mobile phones.

SENVIBE Dropbox is also created by the Coordinator. It will be used primarily for teaching and learning material created or exchanged, i.e. for sending associated files and for joint work on these files. A link to it will be sent to the partner contact persons or to the persons authorized by the contact persons to access the Dropbox.

Decision making steps

Reaching consensus in decision making processes is crucial. All ideas, suggestions or concerns are taken into consideration prior to making a decision and partners are invited to openly state their opinion.

How will the decisions be made?



In extreme cases when and if the consensus cannot be reached for various and fully justified reasons, the final decision making role is given to the Coordinator who is obliged to respect the recommendations by the EACEA and work in the best interest of all the parties involved. Every final decision of this kind must be discussed and approved by the EACEA.

Required ad hoc alterations in project implementation (Coordinator - EACEA)

At times, project implementation requires that certain changes take place. While some changes may only call for the approval of the Coordinator, others could require that the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), is contacted for approval. It will be up to the Coordinator to decide which approach to take.

Alterations during project implementation (pertaining to new circumstance unspecified in the project application) could cover various issues: change of equipment specifications, change of event hosting country, change of Staff engaged in the project or a partner taking over the lead of WP instead of the foreseen partner. The decision can and will be implemented only after reaching a full consensus between the Coordinator and partners that the alteration is justifiable and accepted.

Partners are discouraged from directly contacting the EACEA Project Manager.

It is the Coordinator's obligation and role to communicate changes and updates of project implementation to EACEA.

All changes within the project are recorded and incorporated in the narrative report to EACEA.

IMPORTANT: All partners are strongly encouraged to regularly consult "Guidelines for the Use of the Grant" for CBHE projects selected in 2017, which is available online: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eaceasite/files/guidelines_for_the_use_of_the_grant_2017_cbhe_v_ii_-_09_january_2018_0.pdf

The purpose of these Guidelines is to help the Consortium in managing and running the project efficiently. It provides instructions on the implementation of the activities and on how to handle the financial side of project. Moreover, it clarifies matters arising from the Grant Agreement and its annexes. Therefore, SENViBE partners are kindly invited to read this document in detail.

3. Communication Channel

Tables with all project main contacts per partner for efficient and effective communication purposes

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Use of e-mail, land-line telephone, mobile phone (or apps. such as Viber, WhatsApp, etc.), conference call, Skype, SENVIBE web platform, and face-to-face communication

EU funded projects allow thousands of people to work in a virtual environment and experience the sense of a global team. Remote team communication has become an indispensable tool in everyday life. Face-to-face communication is still highly appreciated but SENVIBE implementation will considerably rely on virtual means of communication due to manifold reasons: cost-effectiveness, speed, etc. As for the actual meetings in person, the consortium will meet twice a year on average.

Effective communication is done via email, mobile phone, Skype meetings and SENVIBE platform. Each consortium partner is free to decide what means of communication to use to contact the Coordinator or other partners. In case of choosing Skype, partners are kindly asked to set the timing well in advance.

It is important to regularly check the email address provided to the Coordinator as the main contact address in SENVIBE related implementation.

All partners are kindly asked to give SENVIBE due priority when needed and respond to SENVIBE related emails promptly and at their earliest convenience.

The Coordinator holds the responsibility to swiftly reply to any partner email or phone call.

4. Communications Plan Implementation

When the information will be distributed (a determined timeframe prior to joint meetings, trainings, workshops, info days, etc.)

Although the project WORKPLAN provides a comprehensive timeline of foreseen meetings, trainings and other activities that occur in a form of an event or gathering of more people, but also the due dates of the abovementioned activities, slight changes are always possible. Planning of the events should always be discussed at least three months prior to the event, and it is the responsibility of the Coordinator to keep track of the timeline. The Coordinator shall distribute information pertinent to an event and initiate the planning process amongst the consortium.

How meetings will be conducted

All consortium meetings will have a Provisional Agenda created **minimum 1 month** prior to the meeting (the earlier, the better). The first draft of the Agenda will be created by the project partner hosting the event, then checked by the Coordinator and other crucial actors in the process for further feedback. The final meeting Agenda will be sent out to all partners **no later than 5 days prior to the meeting**.

The meetings will be opened by the Coordinator and welcoming words of the host institution.

Establish a standard template for meeting Agenda, ppt presentations, meeting Minutes and WP to-do list

Project identity is very important. In order to build a recognizable, comprehensive, yet creative project identity, the visual aspect of this matter is crucial. A standardized template for SENVIBE Agenda, ppt presentations, and meeting Minutes will be designed and used throughout the project implementation. Partners of the consortium will be obligated to use the ppt template for presentation purposes during SENVIBE implementation. This is seen as significant for the achievement of a greater visibility impact.

Well communicated budget allocations

The project budget is a very important document. The Grant Agreement signed between the Coordinator and EACEA holds the University of Novi Sad responsible for sound financial management. In compliance with the GA and the signed Partnership Agreements, the Coordinator shall make further budget distributions to all partners in the consortium.

It is crucial that partners keep track of the allocated funds at all times and notify the Coordinator (in form of an internal report) of all expenditures and project balance.

Besides the electronic version of the budget, all partners of the consortium are strongly encouraged to have a hard copy of the budget documents (comes in handy during the meetings/Skype meetings that potentially include financial matters).

Implementation progress and expectations

The implementation progress will be monitored by the Coordinator on the overall level. Subsequently and in parallel, the quality of the implementation progress, processes and outcome will be monitored by WP7 (Lead Institution id EDUCONS University).

During SENVIBE Preparation phase, the Serbian and EU partners will jointly write guidelines with clear instructions on how to conduct the quality control policy, mechanisms of reporting and ways to write the necessary reports. This will ensure that all partners follow the same criteria.

At the institutional and national level: Monitoring visits of the Coordinator to partner country institutions will be conducted in order to identify specific problems or delays and ensure the adequate project outcomes.

At the national level: Meetings of the Steering Committee will be provided and reports on the quality, impact and benefits that the project generates.

At the International level: EU partner evaluation will ensure the quality of the project. During their visits to the partner country institution, they will evaluate all activities on the project done up to that moment. Their reports will give an insight on possible solutions for unexpected problems and it will be presented to all partners.

Feedback at these three monitoring levels will ensure a sound implementation progress and will be discussed, implemented and reported as part of the outcomes of the project.

In order to meet the needs related to quality control processes, the following activities will be imperative:

- 1) Fluent communication between University staff and University administration on project implementation progress;
- 2) Fluent communication within non-HEI (non-academic) partners;
- 3) Steering Committee and Advisory Board members will provide additional value through evaluation of project activities and results;
- 4) Erasmus+ National Office(s) in WB will be regularly informed about the project progress;
- 5) Reports defined in the Partnership Agreement, developed by each partner of the consortium.

N.B. All crucial reporting dates and deadlines shall be stated in the Partnership Agreement.

Conflict resolution

SENVIBE Consortium relies on amicable conflict resolution. Unexpected issues will be handled promptly. In case of any disputes within the Consortium, the partners shall make the effort to reach an agreeable solution to the benefit of all and in the spirit of good cooperation.

Conflict resolution will be based on the facts drawn from the previous written communication among the partners. Disputes should be communicated in writing and addressed to the project Coordinator and the project Steering Committee, whose duty is to mediate in order to resolve the conflict. With this in mind, it is crucial to point out that communication among partners should be transparent and channeled exclusively through the official email address of the project (senvibe@uns.ac.rs).

The Coordinator keeps the right to decide whether to inform the EACEA about the conflict and/or ask for its mediation.

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