

Internationalizing Master Programmes in Agriculture via English Medium Instruction (IMPROvE _AGRO)»



DISSEMINATION STRATEGY

CBHE_561775-EPP-1-2015-1-DE-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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1. INTRODUCTION

IMPROVe-AGRO is an EU funded project under Key Action 2: ‘Capacity-Building in the Field of Higher Education’ of the Erasmus+ Programme. The project is aiming at strengthening regional cooperation in the area of educating specialists for Agriculture and Forestry via internationalizing Master programmes and development of inter-institutional partnership. The project will integrate the efforts of universities and companies in Germany, Greece, UK, Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia.

The goal of the project is: to contribute to modernization and to increase the quality and availability of higher education in Kazakhstan, Mongolia and Russia via internationalizing Master programmes in Agriculture and Forestry, by bringing them to the EU quality standards, introducing English Medium Instruction (EMI) and blended

To that end, the following **specific objectives** are set:

1. Contribute to development of a new model for internationalising Master programmes in the area of Agriculture and Forestry, based on English Medium Instruction (EMI) and blended learning delivery.
2. Enhance teaching capacities at the PC HEIs via staff development and modernization of teaching resources, using a multidisciplinary approach.
3. Design a trans-institutional e-platform for master students to improve access to teaching/learning resources internationally.
4. Create potential for internationalization via increasing international academic mobility.

EU PARTNERS OF THE IMPROVe_AGRO PROJECT:

Freiburg University of Education, Germany

Aston University, Birmingham, UK

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

NON-EU PARTNERS:

- Tyumen State University, RF (Coordinator for the PC-s)
- Altai State Agricultural University, Barnaul, RF
- Krasnoyarsk State Agrarian University, RF
- Kazakh National Agrarian University, Almaty, Kazakhstan (Coordinator for Kazakhstan)
- S. Toraighyrov Pavlodar State University, Kazakhstan
- Mongolian University of Life Sciences, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
- National University of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
- LLC “Centre for Molecular and Cellular Bioengineering”, Tyumen, RF
- Tobolsk Complex Scientific Station, Tobolsk, RF)

IMPROVe _AGRO dissemination strategy aims at creating awareness among various stakeholder groups on the project of its progress and results. This is a long-term programme of actions devoted to internationalising Master programmes in the area of Agriculture and Forestry based on English Medium Instruction (EMI) and blended learning delivery.

Strategic decisions in relation to internationalization of Master programmes in A&F are to be made in the following areas:

- Focus-setting of developing/modernising modules, including methodology, language, and subject areas;
- Involvement of personnel to be trained in the EU;
- Development of the organization of staff training courses in partner countries;
- Quality management of course development and delivery;
- Development of the project product dissemination – new and modernized MA courses;
- Organization of networking with target groups, *e.g.* other project partners, universities, agriculture players;

A website based on target audience approach and featuring surveying and communication tools, including social media, will be established and promoted.

Details of established contacts will be stored in the project internal data base and used for the courses promotion and collecting feedback, to update the dissemination strategy and ensure that the results of the project are appropriate and applicable to the stakeholders.

At the consortium PC universities the learning environment will be promoted through their web pages and through open-door days; professionals in Agriculture and Forestry will be addressed through channels of national services of the PC-s. Universities outside the consortium will be informed on the project developments through established communication channels of consortium members. Business stakeholders in Kazakhstan, Mongolia and Russia, and will be addressed through the non-academic members of the consortium and corporate partners of the HEI-s.

Dissemination will be organized in three stages:

- a) **Early in the project**, dissemination will ensure that the project is addressing the needs of its target groups and is creating awareness and understanding of the project activities.
- b) **During the project**, dissemination will focus on the feedback from stakeholders on the quality of project implementation and its products.
- c) **At the end and after the project**, dissemination is intended to publicize more generally the lessons learned, project's outputs and outcomes (both products and processes).

*Dissemination scheme of the EU good practices in delivering Master courses
via EMI in the Partner Countries*

Good practices in introducing courses in Agriculture and Forestry in the Project Countries

Dissimination forms

Verbal

Visual

Publications on
Project outcomes

Types of Activities

Conferences

Seminars

Workshops

Exhibitions
Master-classes

Guidelines
Newsletters
Summaries, booklets

Training of staff in the relevant areas of Agriculture and Forestry

2. DISSEMINATION STRATEGY

The dissemination of the project will be differentiated according to the target groups addressed, and according to the types of outcome being disseminated.

2.1. THE SCOPE OF THE DISSEMINATION STRATEGY

The proposed dissemination strategy builds on four basic public relations principles:

- **Be visible:** stay proactive; promote your objectives through media and community involvement; build positive relationships with opinion makers.
- **Be informed:** keep abreast of community issues, read papers, watch news. Take into account national and community policy making in the relevant area. Research the issue on the Internet.
- **Be consistent:** stay connected; right actions at the right place.
- **Be constructive:** be part of the solution; build personal relationships.

2.2. THE OBJECTIVES OF THE DISSEMINATION STRATEGY

Dissemination must be an integral part of the project activities as it will enable the consortium to reach the target groups, get them actively involved, interested and motivated in order to:

- Get satisfactory results
- Get the TGs interested to foster the project results
- Get the feedback

2.3. IDENTIFICATION OF OPPORTUNITIES AND TARGET GROUPS

Careful mapping of specific opportunities and tasks has to be made in order to support dissemination activities to be performed during the IMPROVe_AGRO project. Therefore, a list has been made of relevant areas for obtaining contacts and opportunities for collaboration, as well as of the key target groups for dissemination and post project end sustainability related activities.

Two types of target groups will be distinguished:

1) Direct Beneficiaries:

- university students who want to obtain up-to-date knowledge, to improve get new skills and competencies through innovative training via EMI.
- university academic staff who are willing to increase their competence in the EU methodologies and EMI approaches.
- professionals in Agriculture and Forestry, members of the consortium

2) End users:

- Agriculture and Forestry business and administration stakeholders consortium universities that want to commercialise the developed adaptive integrated learning environment.
- universities outside the consortium
- public bodies

Dissemination actions can be categorized in 4 levels:

- 1. Dissemination for awareness:** we wish people to be aware of the work of our project. This may be useful for those target audiences that do not require a detailed knowledge of our work but it is helpful for them to be aware of our activities and outcomes. Creating such an awareness of our project's work will help the 'word of mouth' type dissemination and help us build an identity and profile within our academic, professional and research community.
- 2. Dissemination for understanding:** there will be a number of groups / audience that the consortium needs to target directly with dissemination. These groups do not need detailed knowledge, but they can benefit from what the IMPROVe_AGRO project has to offer their involvement in the project may significantly improve its results.
- 3. Dissemination for support:** the project's success lies in the support the consortium can get from the key audience and other stakeholders. Even if it delivers excellent results, if it does not get the support from participants of the academic process, professional community and/or authorities that can

use the interactive master courses, then all of the efforts will fall into void. It is important that people we want to eventually use our project’s results must be involved from the beginning, supporting our activities.

4. **Dissemination for action:** ‘Action’ refers to a change of practice resulting from the adoption of results offered by the IMPROVe_AGRO project. Targeted audience for this type of dissemination are groups/audience that is in a position to ‘influence’ and ‘bring about change’ within their organisations. These are the groups/audience that will need to be equipped with the right skills, knowledge and understanding of the work in order to achieve real change.

In each country a stakeholder network will be set up including stakeholders from the target groups listed above. Every partner will create a local stakeholder network which will be expanded as the project proceeds. A database will be created which will include the information provided. The database will be regularly updated by the partners to ensure that it is an on-going process attracting new community members. It will start from the beginning of the project and new organizations will be added as the project continues.

Purpose	Activity	Target Audience / groups	Methods
<i>for awareness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Launching and regular updating of the project website – Project products development and implementation – PR campaigns aimed at promoting sustainable A&F management services via training courses in EMI – Development and distribution of promotional materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agriculture and Forestry actors (farmers, agronomists, cattle breeders, managers of A&F businesses, etc.) - Municipal and state authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – News – Written case studies – Open communication – Online publications

<i>for understanding</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular announcements at workshops, seminars, and conferences - PowerPoint presentations at appropriate round tables and conferences on national and European level - News releases sent to journalists from the media - Links to other projects/initiatives on national and EU level - Info days or bilateral meetings with representatives of IMPROVe_AGRO target groups - Project news distributed through e-mail and regular mail - Articles published in online portals and search engines - Publications in specialised academic newsletters - Regular postings in social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participants of the academic process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – BSc students – PhD students – MSc students – Teaching staff at the universities in the profile – Research staff at partner universities and institutions beyond the consortium - Non-governmental organizations - professional associations in the field Agriculture and Forestry - Municipalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – PowerPoint presentations – Reports – Articles – Radio and TV interviews – Networking – Social media publications
<i>for support</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Iterative testing of project outputs – Bilateral meetings with stakeholders and policy makers – Focus groups and/or panel sessions with target group representatives and other potential beneficiaries – Advisory group members’ involvement in networking with stakeholders – Meetings with regional community organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A&F professionals - Municipal and state authorities - Participants of the academic process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – BSc students – PhD students – MSc students – Teaching staff at the universities under the profile – Research staff at the partner universities and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Questionnaires – Open interviews – Personal invitations – Face to face communication – Memoranda of understanding – Joint dissemination events

<i>for action</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Promotion and exploitation of the IMPROvE_AGRO products among the partners countries and involvement of non-participating countries – Dissemination of IMPROvE_AGRO results among stakeholders and gatekeepers 	<p>the institutions of similar profile beyond the consortium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-governmental organizations - professional associations in the field of A&F - Municipalities - Politicians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Liaison closely with key stakeholders – E-mail shots – Networking – Signed cooperation agreements
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2.4. DEFINITION OF INSTRUMENTS AND MEDIA

Dissemination activities will be performed through various instruments and media. These will be carefully selected for facilitating collaboration among involved parties, i.e. bi-directional flow of knowledge, promoting the project and its results in a uni-directional informative manner, providing targeted or generic information and allowing the provision of feedback and suggestions / requirements raised by target groups such as A&F professionals, academic community and various stakeholders. **The main instruments and media** which will be used fall within the following areas:

- **Events;**
- **Publications ;**
- **E-Media;**
- **Social Media.**

Events refer to both collaboration and dissemination and include participation in, or organization of:

- Bilateral meetings;
- Presentations at conferences;
- Workshops for the key stakeholders;
- Exhibitions;

- Training events;
- Networking sessions;
- Specialized events.

Publications refer to both electronic and printed media. They include:

- Press releases;
- Short articles published on the Internet or in journals and relevant magazines;
- Newsletters and other information material produced by the partners and disseminated through the internet (including publications in social networks, project's entry at Wikipedia etc.).

E- media is primarily concerned with the project's website and the services made available there and includes:

- Content published on IMPROVe_AGRO website;
- Content published on the partners' institution/establishment websites about the IMPROVe_AGRO project.

Social media refers to the creation of a project page on **Facebook, VK** and other social media sites relevant to the project.

2.5. DISSEMINATION MATERIAL

An important stage in the context of the IMPROVe_AGRO plan is the production of promotional materials. Examples of dissemination materials to be produced, include:

- Presentation Template
- Dissemination Report (Internal Project Management document)
- Project logo
- Project leaflet
- Project roll-up banner

2.6. DISSEMINATION MANAGEMENT ROLES, COMMITTEES AND TOOLS

Each partner based on its role in each WP will support the dissemination activities by:

- Producing dissemination materials;
- Contributing to the newsletters, website and social media content;
- Managing the means / tools to support dissemination activities;
- Coordinating and managing the relevant activities that deal with the partner's work or application field on the project;
- Managing the partner's internal inter-organizational dissemination issues;
- Organizing events.

The Dissemination Manager (DM) of the project will be responsible for the coordination of dissemination activities throughout the project in cooperation with the Project Coordinator and the Consortium as a whole. The DM will have to deal with the following aspects of the project:

- Coordinating the dissemination activities in the project;
- Drafting and updating the dissemination plan;
- Organizing and chairing dissemination events;
- Reporting on dissemination to the Project Consortium;
- Producing newsletters using the contribution by all partners.

The main electronic means / tools to assist these activities are as follows:

- The project website, which is to include a MOODLE internal communication platform, acting as a common file repository amongst the project partners and a public area, acting as a dissemination platform for IMPROVe_AGRO project.
- Mailing lists including all partners as appropriate.
- Social media websites where the project can be advertised (e.g. Facebook).
- Organizations' websites, where the project will be advertised, with the links provided to the main project website.

3. DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

Three main types of activities can be identified, according to the aiming target group. Specifically:

- Dissemination events for professionals / practitioners
- Dissemination events for participants of the academic process
- Dissemination events for policy makers and other stakeholders

Dissemination events include, among others, the organization of **Dissemination Seminars** by the project's partners. Each partner will be responsible of organizing seminar/s in accordance with its foreseen budget with the aim to inform stakeholders and potential users on the results of the project. The project's partners are encouraged to organize more informal dissemination meetings with the target groups mentioned during the project for which additional reporting will be provided accordingly.

Project activities can be presented at **conferences** that are either organized by the project team or by third parties who are willing to host a presenter from the IMPROVe_AGRO project team. Conferences can be a very useful forum to consult with our target audiences in a face-to-face capacity and to address issues relevant to the work of our project.

One-to-one conversations and meetings proved to be very useful to target key people who will enhance the chances of success of our project.

Additionally, the final dissemination events will be the **Final Conference**, where the results of the project will be presented in the wide public.

4. DISSEMINATION REPORTING

In order to keep track of all dissemination activities, a Quarterly Dissemination Report template will be made available for all partners. Every four months each partner should fill a Quarterly Dissemination Report including a detailed description of every Dissemination Activity that took place during that period and send it to the Dissemination Manager.

Each partner will collect evidence such as screen shots, photos, list of participants (compulsory if the costs are covered by the project), agenda, info-packs etc. duly indicated in English description and reference number included in the template. In this way, IMPROVe_AGRO will keep track of the effectiveness of dissemination and of all parties reached via the project.

A dissemination report will be an essential part of the Interim Technical report to the EACEA describing all the dissemination activities of the project realized in the previous period. It will be prepared by the Dissemination Manager after receiving all relevant information and evidences from the other partners in the requested format and provided to the Projects coordinators. The Quarterly Dissemination Reports will form the basis of the preparation of the Progress and Final Dissemination Reports.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The dissemination strategy aims at covering and organizing all dissemination-related activities in the project, which will ensure enriching the user-base and will increase public awareness of the new possibilities arising from the IMPROVe_AGRO products.

The dissemination planning is to assist IMPROVe_AGRO project partners by defining communication goals, objectives and strategies with specified dissemination events to participate and dissemination activities to perform. The overall aim is to obtain a reputation that is consistent with the objectives of IMPROVe_AGRO.

To conclude, it is assumed that all partners in the consortium should make it a priority to disseminate information about the project in any relevant public events (e.g., conferences, seminars, meetings, etc.) using the materials and means described in this document.