



**COMMIT | Committing to the social dimension in
universities**

Final Report

Public Part

Project information

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Executive Summary

COMMIT intended to increase commitment to the social dimension of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), support strategies to increase attainment and thus embed the policy and practice of University Lifelong Learning (ULLL) in a strategy of wider social interaction.

The project **reviewed and developed the three tools of a previous EU project - ALLUME¹ - adding** new features to take on board a clearer idea of the social dimension aspects in Higher Education (HE):

- *Tool1 - Strategy process tool*
- *Tool2 - Strategy content tool*
- *Tool3 - Benchmarking tool (European Universities' Charter on LLL²)*

In addition to this, COMMIT has elaborated a **new tool – Tool 4 - Monitoring attainment tool** - specifically designed to monitor attainment in HE, taking into account data in terms of socio-economic background, disability, ethnicity, migrant status and so on.

The **visit templates** created by the ALLUME project were also reviewed and adapted to the new project needs and research objectives and turned into a full 'Visit Kit' that includes existing reviewed documents and brand new ones:

- Welcome
- Short information leaflet for the participants and promotional Leaflet
- Template Fact Sheet
- Template Agenda
- Template Report Host
- Template Report Visitor
- Step by step procedure (two versions available: one with external expert advice during the process and one without it)

The whole process was underpinned by a **1-day training event: The Capacity Building Activity**, organised in combination with the first Full Partners Meeting (May 2014). The main aim of the training activity was to develop a common understanding of the project goals and to establish with all partners the exact use of the self-evaluation tools and the visits. The training event included inputs from several experts and other related EU-funded projects such as EU-USR (*Comparative Research on University Social Responsibility in Europe*³), HEAD (*Opening Higher Education to Adults*⁴) and PL4SD (*Peer-Learning Initiative for the Social Dimension*⁵), the participation of an expert in university management, a facilitator to steer the discussion and the external evaluator (also expert in the social dimension of universities).

The 4 self-evaluation tools formed the basis of a collective learning process whose key moment were the peer learning visits each partner received and carried out in their turn. Visits took place between Sep14 and Apr15. Partners 2-13 hosted a partner as visitor and visited a different partner themselves. Thus, each partner had close contact and collaboration with two partners in the visits period. P1 attended two of the visits as an external observer: the first visit of the programme to P8 (Boğaziçi University) to see how the Visit Kit and the used tools worked during a real activity, take notes of possible improvements and to make the appropriate amendments, and the visit to P7 (Dublin City University), first partner to use the new Tool 4.

¹ <http://allume.eucen.eu>

² [http://www.eua.be/Libraries/higher-education/eua_charter_eng_ly-\(5\).pdf?sfvrsn=0](http://www.eua.be/Libraries/higher-education/eua_charter_eng_ly-(5).pdf?sfvrsn=0)

³ <http://www.eu-usr.eu/>

⁴ http://commit.eucen.eu/sites/commit.eucen.eu/files/HEAD_FinalReport.pdf

⁵ <http://www.pl4sd.eu/>

The approach taken during the visits was to involve different members of staff from different managerial levels (connected to ULLL/Continuing Education/Outreach/Social Services) in each partner institution in the interviews, with the aim of making the group aware of the COMMIT tools, generate organisational learning and reinforce commitment towards university social dimension.

The following project phase consisted in carrying out the transversal analysis of the visit reports and of the tools completed by partners, to produce and publish a set of focused reports on the project results, including a feasibility study on the tool for monitoring attainment.

To promote the project products and valorise their use, each university partner in the project organised a National Valorisation Event, in their own countries. The primary target group of the national valorisation events comprised: President/Rector of HEIs, Faculty/Department Deans, Directors of CE/LLL/Outreach/Social Services unit/department, representatives of relevant national ministry (or regional government), representatives of the National Network for ULLL other national stakeholders. All the events included a presentation of the Tools and an active, 'hands-on' learning session, to allow participants to test the tools.

The project had planned to hold its Final Learning event in Brussels on 04 April 2016. Unfortunately, due to the terrorist attacks that hit Brussels at the end of March, the flights to/from Brussels were totally affected: all the non-nationals attending the event (both the guests and most important the key presenters) cancelled their participation. For this reason, the event was cancelled and postponed, split into two activities:

- The valorisation event in Louvain-la-Neuve (BE) held on 26 May, in combination with the COMMIT Belgian valorisation learning event organised by the Université catholique de Louvain, open to European policy makers and bodies. This activity included a presentation from the project's EACEA officer. A total of 24 participants attended the event (a higher number was expected but could not be reached due to an unexpected railway strike held on the day of the event that precluded attendees to reach the meeting venue)
- The final valorisation event in Dublin, held on 1 June 2016 prior to the 48th **eucen** Conference. The event saw the participation of key European and also international stakeholders (5), representatives from European National Networks of University Lifelong Learning (7) and also representatives of many European universities who showed interest in the COMMIT tools and in the opportunity of adopting them in their own institution (22). The group continued working the following day during a dedicated workshop (24) lead by the Irish colleagues from Dublin City University, partner in the project. Also during the conference there was a presentation of the COMMIT policy reminders in a plenary session with all the participants to the conference (131) followed by a policy debate with a panel and open discussion.

In addition to this, three extra events in non-partner countries were organised: two in Poland and one in Austria. These events included a presentation of the Tools and an active, 'hands-on' learning session, to allow participants to test the tools. Articles and other activities have evolved from these events, (e.g. the publication of an article in a Polish national educational magazine with reach to 3000 academic individuals).

Aims and objectives

1. Improve and enhance the social dimension of HE universities in Europe
2. Support the development of a comprehensive strategy for promoting and monitoring increased levels of attainment in HE
3. Embed the social dimension in the strategy and practice universities, particularly in those countries with below average attainment rates in tertiary education in 2011

4. Promote and support the commitment to change in universities in Europe.
5. Embed the policy and practice of ULLL in a strategy of wider social interaction

Target groups

The **primary target group** comprised: universities Management teams (President/Rector teams), Directors of ULLL/Continuing Education (CE)/Outreach/Social Services Units, Faculty/Department Deans, who were directly involved in the use of the self-assessment tools and participated in the visits. Student representatives were also a primary target group. An average of 5 individuals were involved in each team, in 12 different institutions and countries, thus engaging a total of around 60 primary target individuals.

The partnership

The partnership was composed of 13 full partners, which included 5 countries with a good track record of attainment – BE, FI, FR, ES, IE – and 7 countries that had more work to do in this regard – RO, DE, GR, HU, IT, PT and TR. From the 13 partners of the consortium, 6 had taken part in the ALLUME project (5 as full partners and 1 as a testing university), to provide continuity with the previous project experience, and 7 partners that had not taken part in that project. Partners were at different stages of developing the social dimension of HE, therefore a valuable and stimulating exchange was expected, each partner having something to teach and to learn, making it an ideal combination to promote commitment by all. Apart from **euцен**, 10 partners within the consortium are currently actors in their respective national network for ULLL (P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P12, P13). And all partners act as multipliers at national level through formal and informal professional networks.

Major products

1. A refined set of 3 self-evaluation tools based on ALLUME's products. (EN/FR version)
2. A new tool for monitoring attainment. (EN/FR version)
3. A revised set of visit templates, the 'Visit Kit', constituting an enhanced and extended version of the one used in the ALLUME project. In the second half of the project, the Visit Kit was renamed "**Self-assessment Kit**" and adapted to assist non-partner universities in carrying out their own self-evaluation process, beyond the project lifetime (EN/FR version)
4. Presentations during the Capacity Building Activity. (EN version)
5. 12 sets of Visit Reports prepared by the visitor and the visited university. Report of each visit are confidential to the partnership. Extracts were used in the final reports (Technical Report).
6. An Executive Summary, summarising the main results of the project and the research carried out (EN/FR)
7. Policy Reminders, containing relevant policy lessons and recommendations addressed to European, national and regional stakeholders (EN/FR)
8. A Technical Report, containing information on the theoretical settings, the methodology and the findings obtained out of the data collection and the analysis carried out (EN)
9. A website dedicated to the project, hosted by **euцен** under its domain, containing all main information, all the project final products and giving access to over 40 background resources: <http://commit.euцен.eu/>
10. A Moodle platform, comprising two separate areas:
 - a. Closed area for partners only: with all the project documents and products regularly updated in the course of the project (EN)
 - b. An open section available to the general public, where the Commit Tools and the Self-Assessment Kit have been adapted in the form of courses in order to be accessed and used on-line by interested users (EN). One of the courses holds all the products in FR

11. A document entitled “My ideal LLL University”, an additional product not listed among the expected outcomes, which emerged as a result of an intellectual exercise and which lists the main features of a university that would be an ideal place for lifelong learning. (EN)
12. The Social Dimension matrix, another extra product, which summarises and systemises the concepts and activities included in the Social Dimension, helping universities to organise ideas within the given frame. (EN)

Associate Partners

A number of institutions showed interest to join the project as Associate Partners and submitted official request letters:

- Mykolo Romerio Universiteto (Lithuania)
- Instituto Politecnico de Leiria (Portugal)
- Université Rennes 2 (France)
- Dokuz Eylul University (Turkey)
- Tallinna Ülikool, Open University (Estonia)

The Associate Partners were invited to the final valorisation event of the project and to test the tools on Moodle giving feedback on their usability and understanding.

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1. Project Objectives

COMMIT project aimed to:

1. Improve and enhance the social dimension of HE universities in Europe
2. Support the development of a comprehensive strategy for promoting and monitoring increased levels of attainment in HE
3. Firmly embed the social dimension in the strategy and practice universities, particularly in those countries which had below average attainment rates in tertiary education in 2011
4. Promote and support the commitment to change in universities in Europe
5. Embed the policy and practice of ULLL in a strategy of wider social interaction

More specifically, COMMIT's objectives were to:

1. Provide a common understanding of the universities' social dimension
2. Review and adapt the self-evaluation tools developed in the ALLUME project in order to account for a wider social dimension
3. Design a new tool, specifically designed for monitoring attainment, and test its feasibility
4. Train partners from 12 European universities of 12 different countries on the completion of the self-evaluation tools and prepare them for the collaborative peer learning visits
5. Undertake 12 peer learning visits, so that each partner visits one other and is visited by a different one. Each visit aiming to promote, support and reflect on developing strategies to strengthen the universities social dimension.
6. Make the visits an opportunity for organisational learning
7. Undertake, at the end of the project, 2 additional visits in countries where COMMIT had no partners and where ALLUME had not done any visits. This was meant to further valorise the tools and the project results
8. Produce a transversal analysis of the data collected from the completed tools
9. Produce a feasibility report on the new tool
10. Create learning exchanges with 3 other European projects (HEAD, EU-USR and PL4SD)
11. Engage at least 4 National Networks from countries not represented in the consortium, inviting them to become Associate Partners or to include a presentation of COMMIT in their own events or disseminate the project final products nationally.
12. Engage at least 3 European Associations with the project, inviting them to become Associate Partners or to include a presentation of COMMIT in their own events towards the end of the project, or at least encourage them to disseminate the products.
13. Valorise and exploit the results at national level through active learning events (workshops using the tools) in each of the 12 partner countries and at European level in a transnational event
14. Disseminate information about the project throughout the whole period

During **Year 1** (Oct13-Sep14) the project reached several milestones:

1. Set up the partner agreements, prepared the Management Team (MT) kick-off meeting and drafted papers. (Oct-Nov13)
2. Kick-off meeting of the MT, with definition of roles and responsibilities. (Jan14)
3. Review and adaptation of the 3 self-evaluation tools developed by the ALLUME project. (Jan-May14)

4. New features added to Tools 1, 2 and 3 to analyse the relations of the social dimension of Lifelong Learning (LLL) in the strategic context of the institution
5. Design of a new tool for monitoring attainment. (Jan-May14)
6. Design of the training activity in view of the visits phase, including content and method. (Feb-May14)
7. Delivery of blended training for all partners Mar-Jun14. On-line preparation (docs and guidelines for visits, tools and briefing) Apr14. 1day-and a-half-face2face event (May14). On-line follow-up to clarify and discuss details (Jun14)
8. Kick-off meeting of the project partnership (May14)
9. Meeting of MT following training session to review progress and plan forward. (May14)
10. Finalisation of visits' scheduled by 31Jul14

During **Year2** (Oct14-Apr15) the project accomplished the following milestones:

11. Production and collection of the 4 self-assessment tools completed by all partners for their own institution, assembling data for visits to be ready 2 weeks before respective visit (from May14)
12. Completion of 12 peer learning visits (Aug14-Apr15)
13. Debriefing, reflection and production of reports on each tool for each visit, done collaboratively on-line (30Apr15)
14. Additional creation of an introductory guide in the 4 tools for new users (30Apr15)
15. Preparation and submission of the project progress report to EACEA (30Apr15)
16. Preparation of a feasibility report on the use of the new tool based on the relevant sections of the 12 visit reports. (by 31Oct15)
17. Transversal analysis of 12 visit reports on the first 3 tools. (by 31Oct15)

During **Year 3** the project:

18. Held a face-to-face partners meeting to validate the results and the draft final products from Groups A and B (Nov15)
19. Held a meeting of MT (Nov15)
20. Finalised and published Executive Summary, Technical Report, Policy recommendations (Feb16)
21. Drafted "The ideal LLL University", an additional product not listed among the expected outcomes, as a result of an intellectual exercise. The document lists the main features of a university that would be an ideal place for lifelong learning.
22. Produced the Social Dimension matrix, another extra product, which summarises and systemises the concepts and activities included in the Social Dimension, helping universities to organise ideas within the given frame.
23. Translated the 4 Tools, the Self-Assessment Kit, the Executive Summary and the Policy Reminders into French (Feb16)
24. Held 12 National Active Learning events in 12 different countries (Jan-May16)
25. Held two Final Valorisation Learning events in Louvain-la-Neuve (May16) and Dublin (Jun16), to launch the final project products
26. Visited two extra countries (AT and PL) and hold active learning events to validate the final tools (May16)
27. Published all the final products on the project website <http://commit.eucen.eu/about>
28. Adapted and launched all the Tools and the Self-Assessment Kit in a Moodle platform in the format of courses open to the public (Jun16)
29. Contacted 5 different national networks and 1 regional network from countries not represented in the consortium inviting them to disseminate the project final products nationally.
30. Contacted and informed 23 different associations, inviting them to include a presentation of COMMIT in their own events or disseminate the project products.

31. Presentation of the project at several key stakeholders' conferences or events (UNESCO, ESREA, PASCAL Observatory, EAEA, ESRALE, etc.)
32. Widely distributed the final products of COMMIT to stakeholders and interested actors (Jun16)
33. Prepared and submitted the project final report to EACEA (Sep16)

Benefits for target groups

Ultimately, the project will benefit lifelong learners and the well-being and equality of citizens. However, the **primary target group** comprised: universities Management teams (President/Rector teams), Directors of ULLL/CE/Outreach/Social Services Units, Faculty/Department Deans. The primary target group was directly involved in the use of the self-assessment tools, participated in the visits and received the reports. The project involved an average of 5 individuals in each team, in 12 different institutions of 12 different countries, thus engaging at least 60 individuals.

The aim was to involve not only an isolated person, but to work with a group of people from the management team (in charge of ULLL/CE/Outreach/Social Services) in order to generate organisational change and learning. The overall aim of the project was in fact to **reinforce commitment** to change and have a greater impact at institutional and organisational level. This is why the approach chosen in the visits was to have a team of different people involved in each partner institution.

Since organisational and cultural change in universities cannot be expected as a direct and immediate result of the project - change within university institutions takes time and depends on several factors - the realistic aim of COMMIT was to work for individual and collective training and for the professional development of a critical mass of key actors at organisational level, providing tools to promote group reflection, sharing experience and best practices, thereby stimulating commitment to organisational change. This process was initiated as it appears from the visit reports, and was further enhanced thanks to the **national valorisation events** that partners organised in the last stage of the project (Feb-Jul16). These took the form of 12 (+2) active learning events (expected ½ day workshops) with the target to directly reach universities and other relevant stakeholders.

A carefully-planned dissemination strategy ensured that information concerning the project reached and will reach large numbers within the target group.

2. Project Approach

The project work has been designed to be appropriately distributed among the partners. The **contractor and coordinator – eucen (P1)** – has been monitoring the overall work of the partnership, taking care of administration, general coordination, service meetings, liaison with experts and evaluators, internal quality, management and coordination of dissemination, relation with EACEA, support communications with and between partners and externals.

eucen was also the contractor and coordinator of the ALLUME project as well as other related European projects, and has therefore a strong record of experience in the solid management of projects, as well as in effective dissemination and valorisation.

To enable a better coordination and harmonization of activities, a **Management Team (MT)** was established, having the responsibility to draft, consult and finalise the tools and the transversal analysis reports on the outcomes of the activities. The Management Team has had the tasks of taking care of the academic content of the project and supervising the collective learning process. Each member of the MT has taken overall responsibility for an aspect of the project work:

- Training event: P1
- Tools: P2-strategy process; P3-strategy content; P4-new attainment tool; P5-charter tool; P1 and P6 templates/guidelines for visits
- Proof reading documents/editing of final products: P7

All partners have been constantly involved in the process of exchange throughout the project activities (mostly on-line, at a distance) and all the work was underpinned by training and active collective learning at individual, team and organisational level.

Sub-groups took responsibility for the analysis and reports:

Group A: led by P4 (with Ps 6, 9, 10, 12, 13): analysed the results on the use of the new attainment tool as reported in visits and produced a feasibility report

Group B: led by P2 (with Ps 3, 5, 7, 8, 11): collated the transversal analysis from the partners

Between face-to-face meetings, the management and coordination of the project was assured at a distance using on-line facilities such as the project website, email, video conferencing, shared google docs, etc. These facilities supported the work of the consortium by aiding proper transparency and communication amongst the partners, also allowing for the sustainability and cost-effectiveness of the project.

Full partners' virtual meetings have been organised on-line using the GoToMeeting software: Sep14, Jan15 and Mar15, May15, Sep15, Feb16. Virtual Management Team meeting have also taken place Apr14, Feb15, and Sep15. Partners have been given access to a project intranet system (Moodle platform) where they can easily access and download documents, templates, task assignments, etc.

The MT took the opportunity to meet at other events to gather and work on COMMIT issues: in Warsaw Jun14, in Istanbul Jun15 and again in Dublin Jun16.

Rationale for setting-up the consortium

The 13 partners that form the consortium were chosen for different reasons: COMMIT involved 5 countries with a good track record of attainment – BE, FI, FR, ES, IE (they are above the European average, according to Eurostat data) – and 7 countries that have more work to do to reach the 2020 targets – RO, DE, GR, HU, IT, PT and TR. At a different level, 6 of the partners had taken part in the ALLUME project (5 that were full partners and 1 that was a testing university), to provide continuity with that experience, and 7 new partners who had not participated in ALLUME. Finally, partners were at different stages of developing the social dimension of HE, some having more experience than others. All partners operate in

different cultural contexts and have different priorities, thus allowing for a truly valuable and stimulating exchange, with each of them having something to teach and to learn. These dynamics represent an ideal condition to promote commitment by all.

Apart from **eucen**, 10 partners within the consortium are currently actors in their respective national network for ULLL (P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P12, P13), and all partners act as multipliers at national level through formal and informal professional networks.

COMMIT's work **approach** has been based on social learning, on learning from one's own experience and the experience of others and is about individual and mutual learning, collective and team learning, as well as organisational learning. The whole process of tools revision and peer learning visits was underpinned by a training Capacity Building Activity which all partners attended in May14. The main aim of the training activity was to establish a common understanding on the use of the self-evaluation tools and the visits, so that they could, in their turn, brief their colleagues back in their institution and effectively prepare the self-evaluation process and the visits. The event also responded to suggestions made by the ALLUME project which recommended that in any future projects with peer-visits it would be useful to have some training for the visitors and the visited together before the actual visits took place, in order to explore expectations and desired benefits, anticipate possible difficulties and obtain the maximum advantages for all.

The involvement of experts from other related EU projects considerably contributed to enhance the quality of the training activities. Furthermore, an expert in university management was actively involved in the training event. Lastly, an external evaluator was sub-contracted to take part in the first consortium meeting and in the training event, guaranteeing an element of externality and objectivity to the project and providing the partnership with useful insights.

Dissemination and Exploitation Strategy

A detailed dissemination and valorisation work plan with a timetable was developed by P1, agreed on with the MT in Jan14 and validated by the full partnership in May14.

A number of tools and **dissemination** channels were launched or activated to carry out dissemination of the project activities to the target groups:

- **Public website:** the website <http://commit.eucen.eu/> was created as an information source for those who want to know more about the project and its outcomes. It contains a RSS point.
- **Newsletters:** a periodical newsletter was sent to partners' contacts. Five newsletters have been sent out during the project lifetime (Dec14, Mar15, Sep15, Feb16, and Jun16). Each partner submitted to the project coordinator a minimum of 10 contacts interested in COMMIT's topic in the first half of the project. These contacts have built up a targeted mailing list for dissemination. By Aug15 each partner submitted 10 more contacts. This ensured, in total, a number of 250 targeted individuals directly interested in the project
- **Grey material published:** including abstracts for conferences, articles for on-line journals, "News" in different stakeholder websites, etc. The planned total target to publish 30 "grey" publication by the end of the project has been achieved by large and doubled by July 2016.
- **Internal Forum:** a dedicated space was habilitated in **eucen**'s Moodle platform, where partners and associate partners were able to share draft papers and other documents. Communications between partners have been primarily carried out by email. In the second part of the project, the consortium tested the usability and efficacy of the Moodle internal forum to carry out specific tasks, but email exchanges proved to be the most effective internal communication channel.

Other dissemination tools/channels used are:

- **Final Products:** Four self-assessment Tools, a Self-Assessment Kit, Executive Summary, Recommendations and Policy paper, that were printed and distributed to participants to the final event, members of **eucen** and all the ministries of Education of the 27 EU member states. Tools and Reports were created in electronic format and are available on-line in **eucen**'s Moodle platform (see below). The main final products are available in both English and French: the 4 Tools, the Self-Assessment Kit, the Executive Summary and the Policy Reminders.
- **National network events:** 10 partners with links to their National Networks used their network's activities to distribute materials (leaflets and posters) and to hold presentations of the project where possible within the programme; these networks were also invited to attend the transnational event. The COMMIT project has managed to involve in their activities national networks from countries non-partners of the project. Apart from AT and PL (visited by the project in May), representatives of CZ, EE, RU and UK have participated in the Final European Transnational Learning Activity in Dublin actively (see below). Representatives from CH and SK have been approached individually and have received detailed information and materials of the project in Dublin, June 2016.
- **EUA, ENQA, EAN, ESU:** they joined the project's mailing list and have been invited to attend various events and to distribute information about the project. A total of 23 key stakeholder associations (including these 4) have received original COMMIT materials by postal mail and support from COMMIT in case a learning activity has to be organised for their own members.

A number of activities were used to disseminate, **valorise and exploit** the results, more actively through testing and using the tools, discussing recommendations in depth, etc.:

- **National Active Learning Events:** each partner (P2 to P13) organised a national workshop (for a total of 241 attending the events, overall) to discuss and test the tools in depth in an institutional/national context, focusing on the tools more adequate to the specific context of the attendees. These events included a presentation of the Tools and an active, 'hands-on' learning session, to allow participants to test the tools.
- **Further National Networks:** in addition, some non-partner countries that have shown high interest are planning to organise presentations of the COMMIT activities in their national activities (i.e. EE, SK, UK and CZ)
- **Transnational dissemination and valorisation event:** The original event was scheduled in Brussels for April 16 but was cancelled due to the terrorist attacks of March 16 and flight cancellations that negatively affected the participation of overseas speakers and of many participants (more than 60% of the attendees' had to cancel their presence). The event was replaced and split into two different final activities:
 - The valorisation event held in Louvain-la-Neuve, 26 May 16, in combination with the Belgian national valorisation event, with 24 participants, including the EACEA project officer and representatives of HEIs.
 - The valorisation event held in Dublin, 01 June 16, prior to the 48th eucen Conference, with 34 participants: key European and international stakeholders (5), representatives from European National Networks of University Lifelong Learning (7) and representatives of European universities (22). The group

continued working during a dedicated workshop lead by the Irish colleagues from Dublin City University, partner in the project. A presentation of the policy reminders and a panel debate on policy was also done in one of the plenary sessions of the conference, giving thus access to 131 participants to hear and discuss the outcomes of COMMIT.

- **Resources space in a Moodle platform:** the COMMIT final products have been adapted into an online version and made available on **euцен**'s Moodle platform, where open access is ensured for a minimum of 5 years after the end of the project

Project sustainability

The project planned a solid **sustainability** structure, intended to continue to propagate the tools and project results at national and transnational level. This will be done in a coordinated manner through the National Networks for ULLL and trans-nationally through **euцен**, its members, and its network of stakeholders and contacts (particularly other European networks and associations).

euцен - its membership and its Steering Committee - is committed to an established policy aiming to maintain, protect and promote products from projects beyond the lifespan of the project. **euцен** manages a very large number of resources developed throughout its 25 years of life and has adopted an open licensing strategy for project products to ensure the reusability and adaptability of the products without restrictions (apart from the obligation for users to acknowledge the source). COMMIT products were added to these resources and promoted through **euцен**'s channels of distribution which include 185 institutions from 35 different countries and 17 National Networks for ULLL with reach of over 700 institutions. The described structure will guarantee long term sustainability to the project.

Furthermore, all project partners are active in both formal and informal, national and professional networks, and act as multipliers of the project activities and results at every useful opportunity. More specifically, partners will:

- Prepare articles in professional and academic journals on the project results (after the project ends because often long time is needed for publication)
- Incorporate results into their academic research, teaching and publications
- Use tools in future **euцен** events
- Disseminate information to new representatives of National Networks, new **euцен** members, new participants in future **euцен** conferences
- Follow up contacts with Ministries to review one year after the end of the project what changes have taken place since May16
- Include tools and results in future presentations of **euцен** at different levels in different sectors
- Disseminate final results at stakeholder organisations' events such as EUA, ENQA and EAN
- Invite other organisations/networks events to present the project and its results

3. Project Outcomes & Results

In the first part of the project, the revision of the three ALLUME self-assessment tools took place, adding new features to take on board a wider and clearer idea of the social dimension of HE, particularly the impact of ULLL on social dimension and social engagement. This included the revision and improvement of the Spider Diagram linked to Tool 3, which allows users of this tool to visualise their answers in an image. Similarly, the ‘Visit Kit’ (later called Self-Assessment kit) was created taking as starting point the initial documents prepared by ALLUME. The new Visit Kit included new documents (sheet for participants, a presentation leaflet and the “Step by step” procedure) and reviewed templates (Fact Sheet, Agenda, Report Host and Report Visitor). The revision of the three tools and the Visit Kit was done in different stages:

- Initial update by the appointed responsible partners
- Discussion of modifications at Management Team level
- Refining after the Capacity Building Activity in Barcelona
- Use in some of the peer-to-peer visits and reporting of any problems/recommended improvements
- Re-refining and updating for the subsequent peer-to-peer visits obtaining, thus, a final version of the tools and templates

		VISITED INSTITUTIONS											EXTRA VISITS			
		BE	FI	FR	PT	DE	IE	TR	IT	GR	RO	ES	HU	AT	PL	
EXPERT VISITORS	eucen						•	•								•
	BE						•									
	FI							•								
	FR								•							
	PT									•						
	DE												•	•		
	IE		•													
	TR					•										
	IT	•														
	GR										•					
	RO				•											
	ES			•												
	HU											•				

Table 1: Peer-to-peer visits and Extra visits to non-partner countries

The new 4th tool for monitoring attainment in HE was developed too. The new tool was tested as follows:

- Initial desk research to draft the tool
- Discussion of draft version at Management Team level
- Refining of the draft version at the Capacity Building Activity in Barcelona

- Use in some of the peer-to-peer visits and reporting of recommendations for improvement
- Re-refining and updating for following peer-to-peer visits, obtaining, thus a new version of the 4th new tool.
- After a cross analysis of the results obtained, enhanced with a questionnaire filled in by all the partners, a feasibility report was produced, as well as a final version of the tool.

During the peer-to-peer visits (see matrix of visits in Table 1 above - page 15) partners have detected that, although ready, the four tools were complex and could be improved for external use if an introductory guide was included. Users would be able to understand what each tool is for and how to use it. All the tools were therefore provided with a specific **introduction**. The Tools have also been translated into French.

After the conclusion of the peer-learning visits, the analysis of the visit reports and of the Tools filled in by the partners was carried out, leading to the production of the final project products.

Major products

1. A refined set of 3 self-evaluation tools based on ALLUME's products. (EN/FR version)
2. A new tool for monitoring attainment. (EN/FR version)
3. A revised set of visit templates, the 'Visit Kit', constituting an enhanced and extended version of the one used in the ALLUME project. In the second half of the project, the Visit Kit was renamed "Self-assessment Kit" and adapted to assist non-partner universities in carrying out their own self-evaluation process, beyond the project lifetime (EN/FR version)
4. Presentations during the Capacity Building Activity. (EN version)
5. 12 sets of Visit Reports prepared by the visitor and the visited university. Report of each visit are confidential to the partnership. Extracts were used in the final reports (Technical Report).
6. An Executive Summary, summarising the main results of the project and the research carried out (EN/FR)
7. Policy Reminders, containing relevant policy lessons and recommendations addressed to European, national and regional stakeholders (EN/FR)
8. A Technical Report, containing information on the theoretical settings, the methodology and the findings obtained out of the data collection and the analysis carried out (EN)
9. A website dedicated to the project, hosted by **eucen** under its domain, containing all main information, all the project final products and giving access to over 40 background resources: <http://commit.eucen.eu/>
10. A Moodle platform, comprising two separate areas:
 - a. Closed area for partners only: with all the project documents and products regularly updated in the course of the project (EN)
 - b. An open section available to the general public, where the Commit Tools and the Self-Assessment Kit have been adapted in the form of courses in order to be accessed and used on-line by interested users (EN). One of the courses holds all the products in FR
11. A document entitled "The ideal LLL University", an additional "product not listed among the expected outcomes, which emerged as a result of an intellectual exercise and lists the main features of a university that would be an ideal place for lifelong learning. (EN)
12. The Social Dimension matrix, another extra product, which summarises and systemises the concepts and activities included in the Social Dimension, helping universities to organise ideas within the given frame. (EN)

COMMIT invited **Associate Partners** to see the tools and give feedback on their usability, structure and appearance. The final formatting of the layout was done immediately afterwards in parallel with the translation of the tools into French. In June 2016 the tools were made openly available in the Moodle platform.

In terms of Dissemination, the **website** of COMMIT <http://commit.eucen.eu/> was developed and opened in December 2013. In this online site users can find over 40 background papers and/or links identified as useful to those interested in the project topic. These papers can be downloaded from the section “Background” and/or “Activities” (this section includes de presentations made by experts at the COMMIT Capacity Building Activity in May 2014).

The project designed a **leaflet** and basic **poster** for general dissemination. A reviewed version was designed in November 2015.

COMMIT produced a Newsletter template and distributed **5 newsletters** (in December 2014, March 2015, September 2015, February 2016 and June 2016) to a list of targeted potential users of **250 individuals** obtained from the project partners. These newsletters have also been distributed by all partners to their own lists of contacts (e.g. to all eucen members and stakeholders that could **reach over 700 individuals**).



Partners have been very active and carried out many dissemination activities. We have recorded distribution of **leaflets** in over 38 national/international events and **presentations** (oral or poster) in at least 40 events, **reaching over 5627 individuals**, in a total of 21 different countries.

Also done in this period:

- Regular posting of articles in COMMIT’s dedicated website
- Short articles about the project within **eucen’s** newsletters in October 2013, October 2014, March 2015, March 2016 and June 2016.
- Creation of dedicated project webpage within the Lifelong Learning Centre website of the University of Stuttgart
- At least 55 posts and articles on the social media pages (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter) of the project partners
- At least 35 articles on COMMIT on the project partners’ webpages
- At least 4 articles on other webpages or media (newspapers, etc.)

Each partner (P2 to P13) organised a national workshop (for a total of 241 attending the events, overall) to discuss and test the tools in depth in an institutional/national context, focusing on the tools more adequate to the specific context of the attendees. These events included a presentation of the Tools and an active, ‘hands-on’ learning session, to allow participants to test the tools.

The original final transnational event scheduled in Brussels for April16 was cancelled due to the terrorist attacks of March16 and was replaced by two different final activities:

- The valorisation event held in Louvain-la-Neuve (with 24 participants)
- The valorisation event held in Dublin, 01 June 16, prior to the 48th eucen Conference, with 34 participants

The COMMIT final products have been adapted into an online version and made available on **eucen’s** Moodle platform, where open access is ensured for a minimum of 5 years after the end of the project.

4. Partnerships

A number of considerations were taken into account when selecting the COMMIT project partners with the objective to ensure a balanced variety of partners that would allow the consortium to achieve and fulfil all the planned work:

Territory

The partnership comprised 13 strong institutions from 12 different European countries, representing thus a broad coverage of Southern, Northern, Western and Eastern Europe.

Expertise

The partnership demonstrated a wealth of experience and knowledge in the HE sector with their different learning cultures, traditions and education systems.

The project is coordinated by **euцен**, which counts with 185 members from 35 different countries. **euцен** has coordinated multinational European projects for over 20 years and disposes of ample experience in connecting key stakeholders from all educational areas and sectors to contribute to the further development of LLL policies and practices.

National Attainment Record

According to the Eurostat data in 2011, the partnership combined 5 countries with a good track record of attainment (BE, FI, FR, ES and IE) and 7 countries that have considerably more work to do to reach the targets (RO, DE, GR, HU, IT, PT and TR).

Development of Social Dimension of HE at National level

The selected partners are at different stages of developing the social dimension of HE, some more experienced, others less. But all are working on this topic in a different cultural context. All the partners visited another partner and were visited. The peer-to-peer learning visits have been key learning events to acquire knowledge about what is happening in other countries in the EU.

Capacity to work in groups for the analysis and subsequent reports

The consortium was divided in 2 groups as follows:

- Group A led by P4, with Ps 6, 9, 10, 12 and 13, analysed the results of using the new attainment tool as reported in the visits and produced a feasibility report
- Group B led by P2 and P1, with Ps 3, 5, 7, 8 and 11, collated the transversal analyses from the partners responsible for each tool/activity, edited and finalised the full and final report

These works were done in the second half of the project.

Connection to previous work developed by ALLUME

The consortium was constituted in two groups:

- 6 partners connected to ALLUME: 5 partners that were part of the consortium of the ALLUME project and 1 partner that was a tester visited university. These six partners familiar with the ALLUME products were also aware of the challenges encountered during the peer-to-peer visits undertaken in 2010-2011 and therefore in a position to recommend real identified improvements
- 7 new partners that were not connected to ALLUME. These seven new partners did not have a pre-conception of the tools and were expected to act as testers of what it was going to be a new product for them

In the same way, the Management Team was composed by 5 partners from the ALLUME project, 1 tester university from the ALLUME project and 1 new partner that was not familiar with the ALLUME work and could bring that particular perspective to the group.

Active connection to National Networks

10 of the partners have active connection to their national network for ULLL (BE, FI, FR, PT, DE, IE, TR, IT, ES, HU). **euцен** has used its links to the national network in AT, CH, EE, LT, PL, SK and UK to make the COMMIT products known and to encourage these networks to organise national meetings to present them. In countries like CZ or RU, where there is not an established national network for ULLL, **euцен** has engaged key universities in the final valorisation event that have confirmed their intention to present the work done in national events.

Further active external connections

In addition, **euцен** has engaged external stakeholders in Europe (e.g. EUA, EAN, EfVET, EAEA) and overseas (e.g. AAACE, RECLA) and individual experts representing other EU-funded projects (e.g. HEAD, EU-USR or PS4SD) with COMMIT. COMMIT has also been presented in other EU-funded projects' activities (e.g. LETAE, UNIBILITY). The link to the EU-funded projects started when COMMIT invited representatives from the EU-funded projects HEAD, EU-USR and PS4SD to attend the COMMIT Capacity Building Activity and present their work. **euцен** has tried to maintain the synergies with different EU-funded projects active through the project.

Quality assurance care

Apart from the internal quality assurance monitored by **euцен** and the academic quality assurance that the Management Team has monitored throughout the project, the consortium engaged an external evaluator with an expertise on the topic of COMMIT to give objective advice to the consortium throughout the project about the work planned and done, as well as the results to be achieved. Two full reports have been submitted by the external evaluator to give guidance and also to re-assure the evolution of the work done during the project.

5. Plans for the Future

Online tools

The final products from the COMMIT project have been uploaded in an on-line platform, under open and free access criteria. The platform chosen has been “Moodle”. The reason is that this system is widely used on a day-to-day basis in the world of academia, principal target audience of this project. Since the main objective is to give easy access to the potential users of the COMMIT tools and to encourage their use, the consortium agreed Moodle would be the best environment for our materials. The COMMIT Moodle platform has been developed at the end of the project, when the final version of the tools and their translation into French have been all available.

Thus, the project outputs can be found in this platform, grouped in 6 modules or “courses”:

- An introductory module called “Welcome” and its translation into French (“Bienvenue”, that includes all the COMMIT outputs translated into French) have been prepared with the aim to enable users to understand the structure of the documents, its meaning and its application in the self-assessment process.
- The other four modules or “courses” (i.e. the tools themselves) are available in English. The modules have been broken into smaller sections to allow users to choose to work with specific parts of the tools (if they only are interested to use one aspect of the materials) or with the full version of the tools (if they want to undertake a full self-assessment), depending on the needs, objectives and the amount of time that can be dedicated to the process.

For those who do not want to follow the guidance and structure of the Moodle online courses, all the COMMIT materials have also been made available online in the project website, under the “*Aims and Products*” section <http://commit.eucen.eu/about>. The materials available in the project website are also open and free to use (only proper acknowledgement is requested in the web and the Moodle platform, in case of adaptation or mention in further works).

Activities related to the Policy Agenda

The final Executive Summary and Policy Reminders were discussed during the second full partners meeting in Brussels, 18-19 November 2015, and finalised in early 2016.

Several virtual meetings for the Management Team group and for the Full partnership took place in the 2nd half of the project to finalise the content of these documents. These documents have been made available to policy makers and key stakeholders either in electronic format or in printed format when meeting them face-to-face in meetings and events or via a postal mail shot that was done at the end of the project.

The Policy Reminders have been well received and widely spread at the National Learning Activities as well as at the Final Valorisation events in Louvain-la-Neuve and Dublin.

A total of 17 national network representatives and 90 key stakeholders connected to policy making processes (at national or European level) have received these documents between May-July 2016.

Valorisation of the project

The valorisation approach for the final part of the project was discussed with the partners of COMMIT. Partners felt that, since they had regular contact with their National Network for ULLL, it was not necessary to set up a formal approach.

The result was that 10 of the 12 academic partners of COMMIT have managed to coordinate their National Learning events in conjunction with activities carried out by their National Network for ULLL. P12 (ES), for example, did two activities with its network.

The value of these activities has been very relevant because the COMMIT materials have been presented to 12 different countries in 10 different languages other than EN. Participants have felt the purpose and use of the materials was very clear and most confirmed they would talk about these products to colleagues in or outside their own institutions.

Extra visits to non-partner countries

Partners 1 and 6 have visited PL and AT respectively and have presented the project products in Active Learning events during May 2016. The products of the project were tested and validated by external final users who were totally unfamiliar with the tools produced by COMMIT. Participants to these activities found the COMMIT materials very interesting and relevant. Some already expressed interest to test them in their institutions.

The PL community has published information about the project and its results in one of their national journals. Some of the participants were very interested specifically in the full technical report and the details of the findings made during the project visits (WP4).

Involvement of non-partner National Networks for ULLL and other key stakeholders

The COMMIT project has managed to involve national networks from countries non-partners of the project in their activities. Apart from AT and PL (visited by the project in May), representatives of CZ, EE, NO, RU have actively participated in the Final European Transnational Learning Activity in Dublin (see below). Representatives from CH and SK have been approached individually and have received detailed information and materials of the project in Dublin, June 2016. All these representatives have confirmed their collaboration re-distributing the executive summary and the policy reminders of the project.

Final European Transnational Active Learning Activity

The major 1 full day event planned in Brussels, 04 April 2016, had to be cancelled due to the terrorist attacks in the city 10 days before the activity because the overseas keynote presenters could not travel to Brussels.

As a consequence, the Final European Transnational Active Learning Activity was split into two events in an attempt to reach the wider audience possible:

- The first one was co-organised with the national learning event in Belgium
- The second was co-organised with the national learning event in Ireland and in parallel with the 48th **euцен** Annual Conference.

Key stakeholders were invited to these events, for example representatives from National Networks for ULLL or European associations. The events included keynote presentations and active learning workshops that allowed participants to be guided in the process of using the tools and gave them the opportunity to discuss the reports prepared by the project in detail.

During the Final Activity organised in Dublin there was also a presentation of the Policy Reminders in plenary session of the **euцен** Conference. This was followed by a policy discussion with panellists such as the representative of the DG Education and Culture or the representative of AAACE (American Association of Adult Continuing Education). The discussion, opened to the audience, was very active and interesting.

Dissemination activities

Partners have carried out constant dissemination activities throughout the project, following the individual dissemination plans drafted in early 2014 and the global dissemination plan of the project.

Regarding presentations to international audiences, COMMIT was presented at:

- the 46th **euцен** Annual Conference in Warsaw, where the poster “*COMMIT: Exploring the commitment of LLL universities towards social investment*” was presented
- the 2015 Autumn Seminar in Brussels, where the poster “*Self-evaluation system for universities – COMMIT project*” was presented
- the 47th **euцен** Annual Conference in Istanbul, 03-05 June 2015, where **euцен** presented a specific aspect of the project: *Partnership with external actors in relation with the labour market*
- at the ESREA Conference workshop at the University of Ljubljana in June 2015
- at the 2016 Winter School on Adult and Lifelong Learning of University of Würzburg
- at the ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council) Seminar in the UK in March 2016
- at the 13th PASCAL Observatory International Conference in June 2016
- at the 2016 EAEA Conference in Brussels

A total of 5 newsletters have been prepared and widely distributed by the project (i.e. December 2014, March and September 2015, and February and June 2016). The newsletters have been sent to more than 250 individuals every time.

euцен has mail posted the final products to key actors not able to attend the final European Transnational Active Learning Activities in 2016. A follow up to these key actors is planned to be done in autumn 2016, to collect impressions on the work done.

Packs with Executive Summaries and Policy Reminders (50 of each) have been sent to all the project partners for their distribution at national level to key stakeholders. Similar packs have also been shipped to other key contacts who have agreed to distribute the materials nationally.

Synergies with other EU-funded projects

The COMMIT project started establishing exchange and interaction activities with some EU-funded projects such as EU-USR, HEAD or PS4SD. Information about the project has been sent to these projects during the 3 years of its lifespan, after them showing interest in being kept updated with the results. In June 2016, when the products have been fully available, other EU-funded projects have shown interest in the work done. For example:

- the project LETAE invited **euцен** to present the outcomes of COMMIT at their final event in Barcelona, 20 June 2016
- the coordinators of UNIBILITY have also shown interest to receive the final materials and to know more about COMMIT. The COMMIT project has also been included, as an example of good practice, in the Toolkit of University Social Responsibility practices, one of the intellectual outputs developed by the UNIBILITY project.

euцен, that has started working in the new project HE4u2 in January 2016, has presented the outcomes of COMMIT to its partners and encouraged them to do further diffusion in their institutions.

Other forthcoming activities

Due to its distribution of final products, there are a number of activities that have been already planned to present COMMIT in near and mid-term future events, for example:

- LLL Platform activity “LLL Week” in Brussels 10-13 October 2016: distribution of printed material
- Invitation to present COMMIT at the LLL Week organised in Bratislava by AIVD on 17-23 October 2016 – the Association of Adult Education Institutions in the Slovak Republic
- SADE (Swedish Association for Distance Education):
 - o conference in 14 October 2016: short presentation of final products located in the moodle platform
 - o announcement in the newsletter
 - o announcement in the website
- 2016 eucen Autumn Seminar, in Barcelona (ES) 24-25 November 2016: distribution of printed materials
- 49th eucen Conference, in Mainz (DE), June 2017: distribution of printed materials
- Invitation by the HERE Serbian National Team to present COMMIT via video-conference in March 2017
- Presentation of COMMIT at UALL (Universities Association for Lifelong Learning) conference in York (UK) 05-07 April 2017

6. Contribution to EU policies

In the framework of the Bologna process, the Ministers responsible for HE agreed on a common definition of university social dimension: “The student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of the population” (London Communiqué, 2007). After several years and many projects carried out in this field, statistics still show that reality is far from the desired results, and much has to be done to reach the target levels of access, retention and attainment of adults in HE.

Europe 2020 aims at 40% participation by 30-34 year olds in tertiary education. Eurostat data for 2011 show an average attainment for this age group of 30.8 for men and 38.5 for women. EU2020 and Eurostat data thus reveal the scale of the task to be achieved in a relatively short period of time and provide important analytical elements to frame the work that needs to be carried out. These averages also hide considerable differences between countries, institutions and disciplines, with many countries falling below the average.

COMMIT addressed Europe 2020 Strategy by improving LLL strategies and thus widening access to HE and fostering stronger links between universities and regional, national and European partners. The project consortium included countries whose data for 2011 show they have considerable work to do to attain the 2020 targets. The experience of the ALLUME project offered a solid basis for moving forward in the process and in the partners involved; the new partners in new countries brought new contexts, principles, practice and experience that challenged existing responses to the challenges of 2020. Whatever may be the countries' status in international tables, COMMIT intended to promote peer learning between countries having different levels of achievement in relation to the 2020 targets. The project provided an important opportunity for real exchange of experience, for example through the peer-learning visits carried out in the first half of the project, and through the work and collective learning promoted at institution and transnational level in the course of the project. The achievement of the 2020 targets is supported by COMMIT tools and the data collected, representing an easy access to the best experience of LLL in universities, expanding it and embedding it in a strong commitment to a more effective social dimension of HE.

COMMIT addressed ET2020 policy area by improving and bringing forward the implementation of coherent and comprehensive LLL strategies. By enlarging the possibility of universities to self-evaluate their performance relevant to the social dimension, COMMIT contributes to the development of quality LLL and to the promotion of a European dimension in systems and practices in the field. Enhancing strategic LLL development is the basis for raising the attractiveness of the higher education system to all sections of society, for facilitating adults' access to learning and for refining guidance and counselling systems.

It is important to highlight that the project brought to the light not only the direct interaction of LLL with the Social Dimension, but also the fact that, even if the “Social Dimension” is often not part of the daily vocabulary of universities, when looking at the evidences it is clear that many universities tend to refer to some activities which could be easily referred to as “Social Dimension” as “Lifelong Learning”.

COMMIT contributes to increasing attainment levels and strengthening the social dimension of higher education in two key ways: firstly, by defining what is involved in the social dimension of HE more clearly via concrete examples and illustration within LLL universities; and, secondly, by promoting strategies for a more comprehensive approach to LLL, including diversity of participation and monitoring not just participation but also attainment levels. COMMIT proposes, in particular, a consistent monitoring tool, which could be customized in order to reflect the environment characteristics and the priorities at the national/regional or university levels. The project contributes to increasing the participation of people of all ages, including those with special needs and/or disadvantaged groups by developing new tools to monitor participation and attainment level in HEIs.

COMMIT aims to facilitate a virtuous circle through European partnership, in the firm knowledge that the process is at its best when shared internationally and fed back into a national and institutional process. As a result of its peer and collective approach, and the active learning events that it organised, COMMIT supported the advancement of the European Area of HE, and increased the quality and volume of the multi-lateral cooperation between HEIs in Europe. Facilitating the implementation of LLL strategies also contributes to the flagships of Youth on the Move and the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs of the EU2020.