ADVISORY GROUPS E-GUIDE

FINAL VERSION 3.2.

Index

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this guide is to maintain an information for Project partners and Advisory Groups(AGs). It includes; project summary, the types and qualifications of AGs, purposes of AGs, responsibilities of AGs and etc.

By this guide Project Partners will be guided among the formation and working process of AGs. Partners will learn the types and qualifications of AGs, how to find the advisors, how to communicate with them, how to integrate them to the project(or portal), how to get information from them, meeting methods, and AG Evaluation and Changing Process.

AGs will get the needed information for them about their responsibilities. Why are they in this project? What are their duties? How they will integrate to the project? How they will provide information? Results and etc.

ABOUT I-PORTAL PROJECT

Iportal is a European Project financed from lifelong learning programme. The main objective of the project is to promote language awareness and improve access to foreign language resources (methodology, tools, interactivity) through development of an entirely innovative environment based on accessible IT tools and thus to contribute to the implementation of European multilingualism policy.

The project also aims to:

- Develop and offer an accessible platform for language learning "without limits" by combining existing Internet tools for e-learning with a newly created environment (isle) in Second Life and an archive of video and audio lessons for self-training.

- Improve the quality of foreign language training by introducing more efficient, intensive and interactive communication among participants from various nationalities.

- Popularize innovative instruments of second or further language learning, notably less widely used and taught languages (LWULT) of EU importance

Iportal project consists of six members from six countries: Future 21st Century Foundation from Bulgaria, Teesdale Education Trust from United Kingdom, English Unlimited from Poland, Iniciativas Dd Proyectos De Formación from Spain, Wisamar Bildungsgesellschaft Gemeinnuetzige GmbH from Germany and Aksaray University from Turkey.

WHAT IS ADVISORY GROUP

An Advisory Group is a group comprising the experienced volunteers who will provide consultancy and help the project partners in successful implementation and completion of the project, in attaining products which can meet the needs of the target group, and in implementing the correct methods in the development of the project products, thus preventing the waste of resources and time. The Advisory Groups will comprise VETPROS, language education centers and language teachers. In selecting the members of the Advisory Group composed of language teachers and students, the disadvantaged individuals will be given the priority.

THE AIMS OF ADVISORY GROUPS

The purposes of the establishment of the Advisory Groups include the following:

to utilize the expertise, knowledge and teaching methodologies of all partners and to identify the expectations of the key stakeholders in order to ensure that the materials and iPortal developed and used within the project are useful to end users.

TYPES AND QUALIFICATIONS OF ADVISORY GROUPS

3 advisory groups to be formed:

a) Language courses methodologists and IT specialists – this group will focus on the innovative content of iPortal. The advisory group will consist of at least 12 language

courses methodologists (minimum 2 from each partner country) and 12 IT specialists (2 from each partner country).

b) Language training centres and VETPROS – at least 24 organizations (minimum 4 from each partner country) represented by their educational managers/decision makers and 12 freelance language teachers (2 from a partner county) that will be using the platform for provision of language trainings. Priority will be given to people with disabilities. The group will focus on the practical aspects of IT language training provision, incl. applicability of innovative tools for language learning such as video recording and Internet radio, 3D virtual class rooms and lessons, learning in multicultural environment, peer-to-peer learning, etc.

c) Trainees – 60 trainees (10 from each partner country). Priority will be given to disabled. The aim of this group will be to list the expectations of language learners while using iPortal when learning foreign languages.

CONTRIBUTONS OF AGs TO THE PROJECT

The AGs will provide consultancy services during the development, implementation, evaluation and dissemination stages of the project. By this way, the project works will be carried out in a nore effective and efficient way.

First of all, the points to be taken into consideration in the development of the iPortal will be determined by means of the survey to be conducted on the AGs. By this way, information will be obtained on how the design of the web site should be, what content it should have and how to reach to the end users.

Second of all, the web site applications will be carried out. The AGs will use the we b site and meetings and training activities will be carried out through the web site. They will examine the training modules and take part in the interactive training. After they carry out and try these applications, they will made evaluations and state their opinions on them and the portal will be improved based on these evaluations and opinions. Thus, the portal will be able to present more effective and efficient services to the end users.

Finally, after the completion of the portal, the AGs will be asked for their opinions about what kind of works should be carried out in order to ensure the dissemination of the web site and to

reach more people. Works will be carried out based on their opinions. Besides, in the case that there are organizations among the AGs, they will be requested to disseminate the use of the portal within their organization and to reach to other organizations they are working in cooperation with. The AGs which are "real persons" will be asked to carry out dissemination in the organizations they work in and among their colleagues, fellow students and other acquaintances.

HOW TO FORM AGs

AGs can be legal entities or real persons. If AGs are legal entities, this brings about a number of advantages as well as some disadvantages. As an advantage, this may allow to receive ideas from institutionalized and experienced organizations. Moreover, opinions of more than one person may be presented to you in a summarized way. However, if your communication with the organization is not very well and structured, they may delay works and you may have difficulty in finding a direct addressee to communicate.

In determining AGs, it is advisable to get into contact first with the people and/or organizations you know. You may get into contact with institutions which have been carrying out activities similar to the present one. You may communicate with language courses and educational institutions. Besides, you may seek help from public institutions working with the citizens of your country living abroad.

Since the AGs will work on a voluntary basis, it is advisable to offer reference letters or certificates for them in order to increase the appeal of participation in the works.

In order to determine the 1st Group AGs, you need to get into contact with language methodologist and IT specialist. It is advisable to find at least one person from each of these professions, since these people will provide support in loading the educational content into the portal and in developing various educational modules. By means of various methods and applications as well as interactive educational modules they will develop, they will contribute to easier and more enjoyable learning.

The 2nd Group of AGs should be composed of Language Education Centers and/or Expert. You may get into contact with and include the language courses and universities in your

country. This group will provide contribution to the development of the educational content. Thus, it will be an advantage if the consultants to be selected are qualified and experienced.

You may compose the 3rd Group AGS of universities, language course and foreign students' associations. The 3rd Group is the group which can best represent the end users. Thus, it is important to form this group in order to be able to provide quality services based on the opinions you get from them.

HOW TO GET OPINIONS OF AGs AND MEETİNG METHODS

The first method coming to the mind in exchanging ideas is the face-to-face meeting. Though it is an effective method, the face-to-face meeting is not considered AG be very efficient in programs with a long duration, because the AGs may have difficulty in finding time to make face-to-face meetings since they will be working and have their own daily workload. Thus, it ia advisable to hold periodic meetings.

Besides, it would be helpful if you establish a mail group and a social media network. Through your mail group, you can share the surveys, content texts, documents, etc. to be produced within the scope of the project. Through the social media network, you can share your instant ideas. You can also include in this group the consultants who will not continually take part in your meetings but are ready to present opinions.

Other than the abovementioned methods, you can also use Skype meetings and visits to the institutions as means of exchanging your ideas.

INTEGRATION OF AGs TO PROJECT

On-line sessions will be organized between project partners in order to coordinate and organize the meetings of AGs.

Leaders of AGs will prepare lists of potential participants and make a schedule for the on-line meetings of their group. Each AG leader will be responsible for conducting a needs analysis for each of the work packages highlighting the different perspectives and needs of the individual groups and also will develop a questionnaire for relevant AG participants that will be agreed with project partners. Agenda for each AG will be prepared and distributed to

participants. The on-line meetings of each AG will be organized in live to exchange opinions amongst participants.

EVALUATION AND ALTERATION OF ADVISORS

It is advisable to evaluate your consultants periodically. The reason for that is that you may want to replace some consultants since you have not been able to obtain effective results, due to various reasons, from the groups you formed in the initial meetings and the consultants may not want to leave the project voluntarily.

You may use the form given below in evaluations. It is advisable to replace the consultants getting an average grade below 3 when they are applied the form.

The Form for the Evaluation of Consultants
(1- Very Poor, 2- Poor, 3- Medium, 4- Good, 5- Very Good)

EXPRESSION	POINT
The level of being able to get into contact via telephone and e-mail?	
The level of responding to your instant needs (through the social media group)?	
The level of participating in the meetings?	
The level of fulfilling the tasks given to him/her?	
The level of his/her general contributions to the project?	