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Deliverable D5.1 Project Dissemination Plan

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Abstract

This deliverable describes the Project Dissemination Plan for the Micro-credentials for Higher Education systems of Georgia and Armenia: South Caucasus lighthouse project (MICRO-GEAR). The deliverable is related to Work Package 5 Task 5.1 Dissemination and Communication Planning, Monitoring and Reporting and provides information about dissemination/communication goals, target groups, channels, monitoring and impact evaluation.



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Executive Summary

The aim of MICRO-GEAR project is to enhance institutional capacity of the higher education system in Armenia and Georgia, mainly to design, develop, promote and deliver and recognise micro-credentials for building most demanded competences with the goal of solving various economic and social problems.

The purpose of the dissemination and outreach plan is to contribute to the implementation of project objectives and maximise its visibility among stakeholders in a coordinated way. Taking into account the wide range of potential stakeholders, Task 5.1 Dissemination and Communication Planning, Monitoring and Reporting will work in close cooperation with all six work packages of the project to develop and implement this plan. The objectives, structure and available resources of the MICRO-GEAR project were carefully considered during the development of the dissemination plan.

This report provides an overview of dissemination strategy and plan, stakeholder groups, engagement channels and content of communication, dissemination targets, monitoring and evaluation.

During identifying, contacting and engaging with the stakeholders the project will comply with the General Data Protection Regulation GDPR on the protection of collection and processing of the personal data.

In the process of project implementation analytical information on the performed activities will be systematically collected and analysed to maximise the impact using project key performance indicators KPIs and internal ones.

1. Introduction

The overall objective of the MICRO-GEAR project is to contribute towards further modernization and improving responsiveness of the system of Higher Education HE in Georgia and Armenia by supporting structural reforms aimed at the introduction of micro-credentials into educational practice as relevant, flexible and efficient means of delivering education and skills. This will stimulate and contribute to the economic development of the South Caucasus region. For these reason main activities and work plan of the project presented below are carefully considered:

1. To support updating of national educational policies and framework regulations which would allow offering a unified standard of competence-oriented micro-credentials by the variety of providers.
2. To synchronize the development of national standards for micro-credentials with those emerging in the EU as a result of the Council Recommendation on micro-credentials.
3. To provide a guiding support for potential providers of micro-credentials (academia and beyond).
4. To build a comprehensive capacity in local HEI to co-design and deliver micro-credentials in accordance with the local needs and realities by employing cutting edge technologies.
5. To engage with relevant stakeholders in order to maximize the impact of the project.
6. To develop a set of short educational units leading to micro- credentials in various fields, addressing market needs (focus on digital competences), in order to practically validate the built capacities and provide evidence-based feedback for policy reforms.
7. To spread the excellence built by the project to all regional HEIs and other education and training, economic and other stakeholders.
8. To establish the local community of micro-credentials practitioners and supporters and link it to the respective European communities for best practice exchange and cooperation.

The deliverable describes the project dissemination plan consisting of description Work Package 5 objectives including cooperation with other work packages of the project (Section 2), identification and analyses of stakeholder groups (Section 2.1), definition of relevant engagement channels and content (Section 2.2) and monitoring and evaluation of conducted engagement activities (Section 2.3). The final Section 3 draws some conclusions. Document also contains Appendix 1 with short information about already organized by the project events and presentations at external events.

The report aims to provide guidance in stakeholder mapping and communication to all work packages and tasks of the project. This will lead to more efficient and targeted dissemination strategy and will provide high quality important contributions from the stakeholders.

2. Project Dissemination Strategy and Plan

The MICRO-GEAR project description of work specifies the following objectives for WP5 Awareness, Excellence and Sustainability:

- To define policy support actions for the different target groups;
- To establish and implement a dissemination and exploitation plan;
- To reach out to the different stakeholders;
- To create and maintain online dissemination channels;
- To identify workshops, events, and conferences to disseminate the project results;
- To lead the exploitation of project results and activities;
- To develop a sustainability plan.

The figure below shows the structure of the work in the project and how different work packages and tasks will interact with each other. Project dissemination plan will therefore support the objectives of the project by enabling synergy between the work packages and tasks in order to maximise its visibility to its stakeholders in a coordinated way.

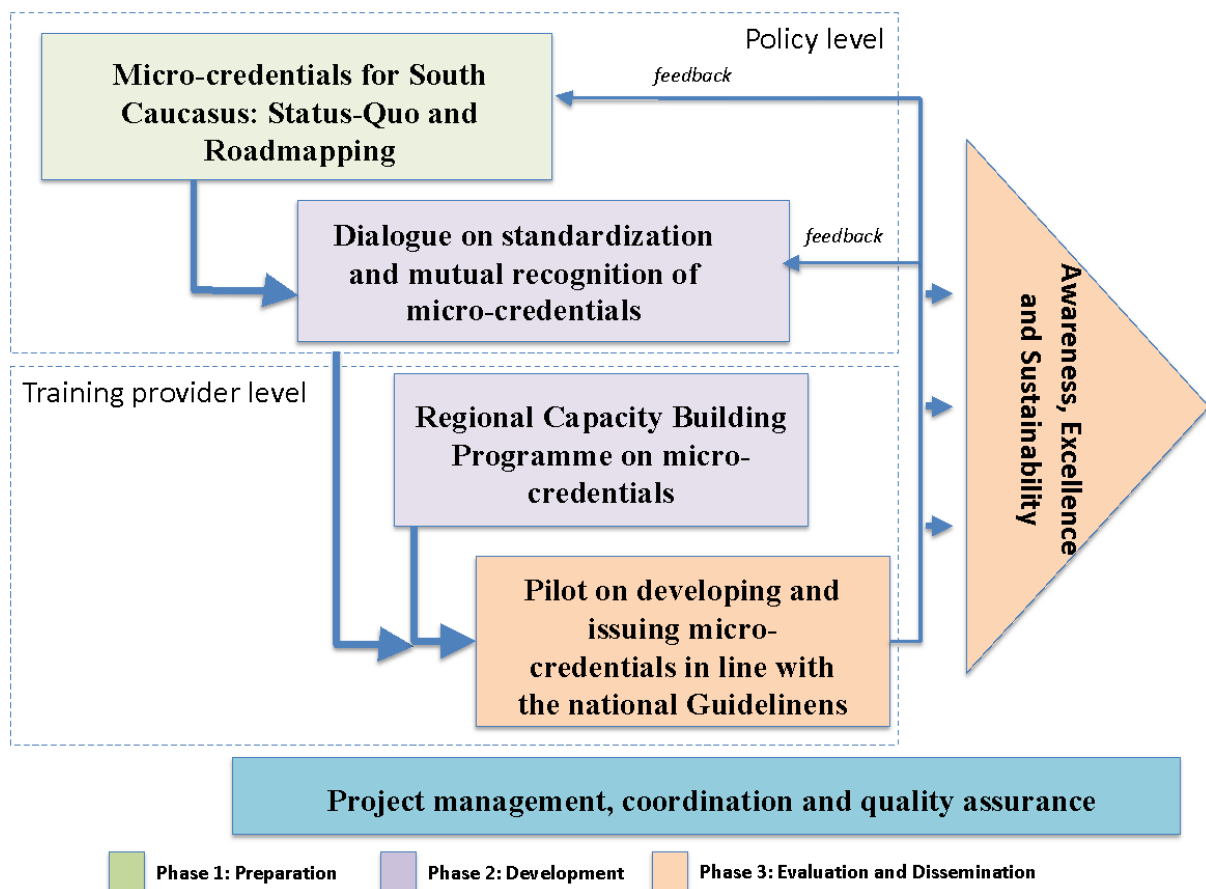


Figure 2.1 Structure of work packages in MICRO-GEAR project



The project dissemination plan defines the target groups to be addressed and content that will be communicated to meet the project objectives by

- Identifying target groups and defining communication channels and content to address these groups.
- Providing an ongoing communication content and design service to the Work Packages/Tasks/Participants to support their objectives.
- Developing and managing project communications channels including website, social media and events.
- Ensuring the ongoing visibility of the project and its achievements within these channels, via regular news items, articles, interviews and event attendance.
- Monitoring website traffic and social media activity via relevant tools and ensure that ongoing activity for all channels meet agreed KPIs.
- Systematically collecting and analyzing analytical information on the performed activities to maximise the impact.

2.1 Stakeholder Identification

Stakeholder identification and mapping is an important step in understanding who the stakeholders are, what interest and expertise do they have and how they can contribute to the project. The objective of dissemination activity is to ensure that stakeholders are continuously up to date with the MICRO-GEAR project progress.

The following activities are proposed for identifying and engaging with stakeholders (target groups):

- Identify stakeholders – the individuals and/or organizations who have an interest and provide input to the project. The special stakeholder groups will be established for the policy-setting bodies Ministries of Education, also National HE Accreditation Bodies (ANQA and NCEQE respectively in Armenia and Georgia) with the key expertise and role in ensuring quality of education on the national levels. The fact that Ministries of Education and National HE Accreditation Bodies are partners in the project is big advantage.
- Stakeholder mapping: identify the role of each stakeholder or organization, what expertise they have and how they can contribute to the success and sustainability of the project.
- Establish engagement activity appropriate to each stakeholder group.
- Execute adopted engagement plan.
- Review the engagement activity to evaluate success, analyse lessons learned and revise the plan for further improvement.

The initial analysis of stakeholder landscape was carried out during proposal preparation. The project has diverse range of stakeholders, including:

- Project management, work package Leaders, task leaders and project participants
- Project partner organizations
- Universities
- Vocational education institutions
- Ministries of Education
- National HE Accreditation Bodies
- Training providers
- Industry
- Business association
- EU institutions, including European Commission
- General public

2.2 Engagement Channels and Content of Communications

In order to reach various stakeholder groups, the channels for engagement are wide-ranging. The selection of channels and content of communication depends on the stakeholder type and aim of the engagement.

- **Project website** - <https://microgear.org/> the project website has following sections: project vision, work packages, public deliverables, meetings, news, dissemination materials and contact. The website will act as a key element in the communications and dissemination strategy of the project. The website itself will be updated on a regular basis, and all project participants will contribute with material to the website which will be managed and maintained by Task 5.2.
- **Project partner websites and newsletters** - websites of partners and newsletters will be utilised to help expand the appropriate content dissemination at national/regional level.
- **Social media** – it was decided to have presence at two social media platforms:
 - Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/MicroGeArProject/> taking into account platform popularity and wide spread in the region.
 - LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/micro-gear/> which offers great potential for professional networking and would help to expand the project audience.
- **Targeted mailings** via periodic newsletters.
- **Events:**
 - **Project workshops and trainings** – the following events are planned in the framework of the project to address knowledge and skills development:
 1. European best practice in micro-credentialing - Study visit and workshop M6;
 2. Council Recommendation on micro-credentials: practice of implementation – Workshop M12;
 3. Roundtables “Micro-credentials for Georgia and Armenia” – Event M12, M24;
 4. Course co-creation and collaborative instructional design for competence-oriented course development - Training workshop M12-M24;
 5. From MOOCs to micro-credentials: Micro-credentials in the development of online and blended short educational programmes - Training workshop M12-M24;
 6. Pedagogical and didactic aspects of teaching courses leading to micro-credentials - Training workshop M12-M24;
 7. EQAVET Quality criteria, descriptors and mechanisms for micro-credentials - Training workshop M12-M24;
 8. Blockchain technology and infrastructure for granting digital credentials - Study visit and training workshop M24;
 9. Pilot courses design workshop M20-M24;
 10. Evaluation methodology workshop M24-M30;
 11. Final project Conference M36.

- **Partner workshops and conferences:** WP5 is collecting input from project partners to identify and track relevant workshops and conferences that will be used to present project results.

Brief information about already conducted event is presented in Appendix 1.

The table below represents communication channels for reaching various target groups.

Target groups	Project website	Partner websites and newsletters	Targeted mailings	Social media	Events
Project participants	+	+	+	+	+
Project partner organizations	+	+	+	+	+
Universities	+	+	+	+	+
Vocational education institutions	+		+	+	+
Ministries of Education	+	+	+	+	+
National HE accreditation bodies	+	+	+	+	+
Training providers	+	+		+	
Industry	+	+		+	
Business association	+	+		+	
EU institutions	+		+	+	
General public	+			+	

Table 1 Usage of various communication channels for targeted audiences

Content will be created in such a way that it can be easily used or adapted by project partners. This will give partners the possibility to publish the content on their own channels increasing project reach. WP5 will engage and collaborate with all work packages to identify content



opportunities and work with relevant participants to create and publish this content in order to support the project objectives.

Two types of content will be developed: Informational and Usage oriented:

- Informational content will regularly provide updated information about project developments and achievements. This content will be devoted to all stakeholder groups. The most suitable communication channels for this content will include project and partner websites, social media and targeted mailings.
- Usage oriented content will consist of legal, technical, pedagogical and didactic aspects of the development and teaching micro-credential courses. This content will be mainly devoted to project participants, universities, vocational education institutions, National HE accreditation bodies and training providers. This type of content will be available on project website, during events and on dedicated platform for the developed courses.

While identifying, contacting and engaging with stakeholders MICRO-GEAR project will comply with the General Data Protection Regulation GDPR on the protection of collection and processing of the personal data. Some of the GDPR main requirements that will be fulfilled are presented below:

- When contacting the stakeholders, they will be asked to provide only a minimum of personal data, i.e. name, affiliation, role in the organization, country and contact data.
- No sensitive data will be collected from the stakeholders.
- The personal data collected from the stakeholders will not be publicly available. The personal data will not be shared with third parties and will only be used for the purpose of project's interaction with stakeholders.

2.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of the dissemination activities is essential for active communication of the diverse groups of stakeholders with the project. The input and feedback received from the stakeholders will be carefully analysed. This will give the possibility to measure the effectiveness of the project implementation and stakeholder engagement process and if needed establish further action items, revisit the original plans and implement new steps.

For this purpose, project key performance indicators KPIs will be used for regular analyses:

- Number of high-profile experts provided their contribution – 25 per country
- Number of policy-level documents developed – 2 per country
- Number of policy and labour market experts involved in roundtable discussions – 30 per country
- Number of guidelines on micro-credentials made public: 1 per country
- Number of joint task forces on mutual recognition: 1 per country
- Number of university teachers retrained: 60
- Number of technical personnel trained: 20
- Number of university administrators trained: 40
- Number of European solutions for digital micro-credentialing: 1 per country
- Number of micro-credentials co developed and piloted: 6 Volume of courses in equivalent of academic hours: 600
- Number of learners awarded with micro-credentials: 120
- Number of academic staff exposed to the project: 1000
- Total number of stakeholders exposed to the project: 1500
- Regionally visible events organized: 4

In addition, during monitoring and evaluation of conducted dissemination activities the following information will be collected:

- Web presence: number of pageviews per month on the MICRO-GEAR project website.
- Social media: number of impressions and engagements on posts related to MICRO-GEAR on each social media platform.
- MICRO-GEAR project featured on the websites of partners.

Based on this evaluation, if required, additional steps to intensify the dissemination process will be established and implemented. For the successful implementation of dissemination and outreach activities and communicate the findings with the stakeholders close collaboration between all work packages is necessary.



3 Conclusion

The aim of the MICRO-GEAR project is to introduce and facilitate the broad proliferation of micro-credentials as a tool for improving relevance, quality and flexibility of Higher Education. Taking into account this objective document provides an outline of the dissemination strategy and plan that is an important element for the successful implementation of the MICRO-GEAR project. The dissemination activities will provide a systematic outreach and efficient messaging to the target groups.

At the initial stage a detailed identification of stakeholder groups was performed. The wide range of stakeholder groups external to the project were established and are presented in this report. The diverse nature of stakeholder groups and their interests require close collaboration and coordination of all work packages as it is outlined in Section 2.

The report provides a detailed overview of engagement channels and the content of communication that will be used in the project. Project will comply with GDPR requirements in regard to collection and processing of the personal data.

Finally, dissemination and stakeholder engagement is an ongoing activity of the project and aims to build a sustainable two-way communication and collaboration with the most relevant stakeholders. Regular monitoring and evaluation of the engaging activities will be performed in order to explore areas for improvements.



References

MICRO-GEAR website	https://microgear.org/
MICRO-GEAR Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/MicroGeArProject/
MICRO-GEAR LinkedIn	https://www.linkedin.com/company/micro-gear/

Glossary

ANQA	National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation
D	Deliverable
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GRENA	Georgian Research and Educational Networking Association
HE	Higher Education
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
NCEQE	National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement
WP	Work Package
T	Task



Appendix 1

Brief information about events organized by the project and presentations at the external events

- On January 17-18, 2024 MICRO-GEAR project kick-off meeting was held at the Georgian Technical University and was attended by the project partners and main stakeholders. Representatives from various organizations, including Ministries of Education, educational institutions, and international partners, played an important role in the meeting.
https://microgear.org/Micro_credentials_for_Higher_Education_systems_of_Georgia_and_Armenia_South_Caucasus_lighthouse_project_Micro_GEAR/en/
- On February 12, 2024 workshop took place at Yerevan State University, gathering experts and specialists from partner Armenian universities, ArmENIC, and ANQA. At the workshop, the focus was on organizing Work Package 1 Micro-credentials for South Caucasus: Status-Quo and Roadmapping.
https://microgear.org/workshop_at_yerevan_state_university/en/
- On March 5-6, 2024 Tamara Gvenetadze attended GÉANT SIG-Marcomms meeting held in Ljubljana, Slovenia. The event was hosted by the Academic and Research Network of Slovenia ARNES. 27 representatives of European national research and educational networks participated in the event. Tamara Gvenetadze made a presentation on the topic: Marketing tools of GRENA in Education Program and talked regarding the MICRO-GEAR project.
<https://connect.geant.org/2024/03/12/giving-voice-to-the-ren-community-sig-marcomms-meets-in-ljubljana>
https://microgear.org/The_Micro_GEAR_project_was_discussed_at_the_GEANT_SIG_Marcomms_meeting/en/
- On March 11-12, 2024 “A Framework for Effective Micro-credential Design: Best Practices and Guidelines for Developing High-Quality Credentials” regional webinar was held online. Chiara Finocchietti the Director of CIMEA – NARIC Italia was the speaker at the webinar.
https://microgear.org/A_Framework_for_Effective_Microcredential_Design/en/
- On April 11, 2024 working meeting for the MICRO-GEAR project was organized at the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement of Georgia. Partners of the MICRO-GEAR project gathered to discuss various project-related matters and plan future actions. The meeting addressed the situation regarding the micro-credentials questionnaire in Georgia and outlined plans for conducting the research.
https://microgear.org/Micro_GEAR_Project_Working_Meeting/en/